

Luiz Alberto Moniz Bandeira

The Second Cold War

Geopolitics and the Strategic Dimensions of the USA



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Foreword by Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães

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*“On ne peut guère lire l’histoire sans
concevoir de l’horreur pour le genre
humain.”*

Voltaire (1964, S. 234)

*“Il y a deux Histoires:
l’Histoire officielle, menteuse, qui nous est
enseignée, l’Histoire ad usum delphini;
puis l’Histoire secrète, où se trouvent les
véritables causes des événements,
une Histoire honteuse.”*

Honoré de Balzac (1962, S. 591)

*In memoriam
my ancestor, the philosopher Antônio Ferrão
Moniz de Aragão (1813–1887) on the year of
his 200th birthday
To Margot,
my dear wife and love of my life, with all the
usual affection
To our son Egas,
who honors our family's tradition of loving
knowledge
To my old friends,
the journalist Nahum Sirotsky who lives in
Israel, and the Argentinian writers
Isidoro Gilbert, Rogelio Garcia-Lupo,
and Alberto Justo Sosa*

Foreword: US, Geopolitics, Rebellions: Overview

Professor Luiz Alberto Moniz Bandeira has established himself as one of the main scholars, analysts, and historians of Brazilian domestic and foreign policy and of contemporary international politics through works on Brazilian domestic politics, on the coup in Chile, on the relations between Brazil, Argentina, and the United States, and on international politics.

In this new book, Moniz Bandeira unearths the causes and explores the horizons of the conflicts in the Near East and Central Asia, the first clashes of what could be a future (albeit not so distant and perhaps already happening) dispute for hegemony between the United States and the People's Republic of China. Or, to put it differently, between the developed but stagnated capitalist West and the dynamic but still underdeveloped capitalist East.

The earliest origins of these conflicts, their complex contradictions, and entangled interests must be sought as far as 1945, in the new world that emerged after the Second World War. The United Nations, a brainchild of the United States, were accepted by the Soviet Union because it saw it as a protection against the more aggressive promoters of capitalism, such as Winston Churchill; by Britain because it was indebted, politically and economically, to the United States; by France because of the sorry figure it cut during the war; and by China because it was then irrelevant.

The Charter of the United Nations was approved at the Conference in San Francisco by 51 States, most of them weak and anxious to preserve their sovereignty. It established that the principles of non-intervention, self-determination, and respect for borders would remain essential to maintaining peace in the international order it meant to create. These principles are diametrically opposed to regime changes, government overthrows, or military interventions, especially when the internal political and economic affairs of countries are concerned. In a certain way, this was a condition for the smaller countries to sign on to the shared dominion of the great powers in the Security Council, and to their right, when unanimous, to use force when peace was breached.

In the postwar period, however, in which the Soviet Union was quickly cast as the main antagonist of the United States, Americans made it a matter of policy not only to shape the international system in their own image and likeness but also to employ regime change to target mostly socialist governments where a confrontation was more complicated because of the Soviet presence. They also targeted other States in their own sphere of influence, however, whose regimes they judged to be an inconvenience to American interests. As a result, we witnessed the wave of military coups in Latin America that put ferocious dictatorships into place. And when no longer convenient, these regimes were dropped because of their human rights record and the American support to the organizations that opposed them. During this period, which extends until the Reagan administration, those countries that were unconditionally aligned with the United States were spared, but also other countries that were more or less fiercely opposed to American economic policies and its military.

This long cycle of regime change ended victoriously with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its adherence to capitalism, with the revolutions (counterrevolutions) in the socialist States of Eastern Europe, and with the partial and gradual adherence of the People's Republic of China to the capitalist economic system, if not to neoliberalism. The attention of the United States then turned to other countries through the activation or reactivation of political and economic pressure mechanisms, such as the conditions required for the renegotiation of their foreign debts, the unilateral retaliations provided by US Trade Law, ad hoc military interventions, and the growing influence in the domestic politics of the countries at the periphery of its native allies, spellbound as it was by neoliberal ideology and committed to The New World Order proclaimed by George Bush.

Today, the most vigorous and sophisticated implementation of American (economic and political) regime change policy occurs in the region extending from the Maghreb to Central Asia, where the Arab and Muslim countries can be found, employing everything from the most extensive media manipulation at a global level to the infiltration of special forces and the supply of modern and powerful weapons. To understand the events that unfolded and continue to unfold with great unrest in the countries and societies of the Maghreb, the Near and Middle East, and Central Asia, it pays to first reflect on the permanent strategic objectives of American foreign policy and on the instruments of its imperial power. To a significant extent, American foreign policy determines the international agenda, creates and influences events in all corners of the world, and, as such, has been and continues being a factor in the political and economic events of the Arab and Muslim world, especially after the Second World War and the creation of the State of Israel and, now, the Arab Spring.

No other State has the same power or international influence as the United States. Some can participate as actors in international politics, due to their size and strength, but most limit themselves to reacting to the initiatives and actions of American policy.

The declared national and international project of the United States is explicitly hegemonic. Today, this is summarized by the term full spectrum dominance. That

is, establishing and maintaining American hegemony under the ideological guise of defending universal values, which, incidentally, are only followed when they suit American interests, as made clear by the practice of selective assassinations, the use of drones, and the illegal wiretapping of all means of communication, in all countries, through the Prism program.

The main strategic objectives of the United States are:

- Maintain its military hegemony in all regions of the globe through the presence of land, naval, and aerial forces capable of discouraging or preventing the emergence of rival states that have the military capability to oppose or even dissuade the United States of using force. This objective includes the disarming of peripheral States through all kinds of agreements under the ideological mantle of reducing tensions and promoting international peace and security. The US maintains 750 military bases abroad and 1.4 million soldiers, of which 350,000 are stationed in 130 countries;
- Maintain its hegemony over communication and information systems (i.e., over the development and spread of content through the means of communication, namely news agencies, movies, radio and television stations, and, now, also the Internet), which shape the mind-set of different elites of distinct states and companies, especially regarding the interpretation of international events (which include psychological warfare operations), spreading the idea of superior American values and of the altruistic objectives of its foreign policy;
- Maintain its hegemony in international economic (trade and financial) organizations, such as the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund, as they are the ones that set the international rules that govern the relations between the Member States, imposing them through the funding of investments and the aid programs offered during balance of payments deficits;
- Maintain its hegemony over the access to natural resources in the territory of third countries, in addition to its hegemony and control over the access ways to these resources, which are essential to the functioning of both the American and the other highly developed capitalist economies, which harbor American megamultinationals and which are the main markets for American exports and sources of remittance payments to the United States;
- Maintain its political hegemony through the control, as far as possible, of the Security Council of the United Nations, the only international body that can authorize sanctions and the use of military force against any State, with the exception of the permanent members, with the close cooperation of the Western capitalist powers, i.e., England and France, reserving the right to act unilaterally whenever the interests of the United States so require, as explicitly stated by President Obama and his predecessors;
- Maintain American leadership in the scientific and technological development of civil and military applications, which is a condition for its hegemony in other areas;
- Keep the markets of all countries open to its capital and exports of goods and services, and consolidate multilateral (e.g., WTO) and bilateral (e.g., free trade

treaties) rules to ensure this opening. It's in light of some of these objectives that the events and origins of the Arab spring and the political developments in Arab and Muslim countries can be understood, which are so well described, documented, and analyzed by Luiz Alberto Moniz Bandeira in his book.

The media, influenced as they are, consciously or unconsciously, by American strategic interests, have briefly and superficially reported on the political, economic, and military evolution of these first clashes between China, the United States, and Russia, interpreting them as spontaneous uprisings of the "democratic" masses against the Anti-Western and Anti-American dictatorial regimes of these countries. But in fact they involve complex, deeply interwoven, and interacting geopolitical (including social and military) and geoeconomic aspects.

Relying on material from the most diverse official sources, academic studies, and the media of different countries, Moniz Bandeira analyzes the evolution of these conflicts and concludes, in short, that we're witnessing the first movements of the Second Cold War, arising from the evolution of American policy, which he described so masterfully in *Formation of the American Empire* (*Formação do Império Americano*), one of the rare books of this Brazilian author on international politics.

The main geoeconomic aspect of these clashes is the fight for control over the vast oil and gas producing region that encompasses the countries of the Mediterranean basin, the states of the Persian Gulf, Iran and Iraq, and the new Muslim republics of Central Asia, which splintered from the former Soviet Union.

The production of oil and gas in the countries of the Maghreb and the Gulf is of critical importance for the countries of Western Europe, in particular for France and Italy, but also for Japan and China.

The former Soviet republics in Central Asia hold vast oil and gas reserves in the Caspian Sea, and the control and access to these reserves are of strategic importance to Russia, as large producer and exporter, and to China, as buyer, because of the permanent political volatility of the Near East and because of the Western and, more specifically, American influence in those countries.

The Maghreb, the Near East, and the Persian Gulf have suffered direct and overwhelming influence of the major oil companies. This influence has been gradually affected by the rise of secular regimes and by their efforts to take ownership of growing shares of the oil revenue through the constitution of state companies and the control of oil production and prices through OPEC. In this regard, it's interesting to remember that Libya was one of the first countries to renegotiate the production and price conditions of its oil, after the seizure of power by Muammar Gaddafi.

The situation in the Near East would gradually become more convoluted with the presence of Israel, with the expulsion of the Palestinians, with the Israeli-Arab wars, with the permanent American economic and military support, and with the aggressive policy of territorial conquest adopted by Israel in defiance of all the decisions of the Security Council. This set of circumstances led to the 1973 oil crisis, which saw a fourfold increase in the price of this commodity, causing an

acute shock to the American and European economies and to all other oil importing countries.

The oil crises would have enormous geopolitical consequences, encouraging the search for new sources of energy (e.g., nuclear energy in France) and for new suppliers, with the Soviet Union now supplying Western Europe through the construction of a long pipeline, despite the vigorous objections and threats of President Ronald Reagan.

The Iranian Revolution would bring about the fall of Shah Reza Pahlavi and his corrupt, unpopular, antinational, violent, and decadent regime; the rise to power of the religious Shiite; the second oil shock to the United States; the strengthening of economic ties between Iran and Russia and China; and a permanent confrontation of the United States with Iran, the latter accused of belonging to the axis of evil and the former of being the Great Satan. This would mark the beginning of a long standoff that would have its effects on the Palestinian conflict and the politics of the region, including the Syria crisis.

Recent developments from the geoeconomic (but also geopolitical) perspective include the growing presence and activity of China in the region as a new customer for its oil (Libya, in particular, would come to harbor 20,000 Chinese), the dispute for the resources of the Caspian Sea, and the fight over the construction of gas pipelines linking Central Asia to the Mediterranean.

The central geopolitical question for the Near East, for the Maghreb, and for the Middle East, and perhaps even for Central Asia, is Israel's Zionist policy with American financial and military support.

To a certain extent, the historic, unwavering and permanent economic, military, and political cooperation between the United States and Israel regarding the Arab countries and the Palestinian population, inside and outside the illegally occupied territories, is the underlying factor behind the fundamentalist revolts against the secular regimes in the Arab countries, which are considered to be culturally and religiously alienated and submissive to the United States.

The secular Arab States have sought to modernize (actually Westernize, often with Christian and therefore infidel values) their societies in situations that involve numerous and antagonistic Muslim religious sects—societies that are frequently dominated by minorities, such as the Alawites in Syria and the Sunni Muslims in Iraq.

Faced with the failure of their economic modernization policies and their impotence to oppose Israel militarily and politically, these secular regimes became the targets of fundamentalist religious organizations, which arose neither by chance nor as a result of indigenous and spontaneous movements in these societies, as demonstrated by Moniz Bandeira through extensive documentation.

Many of these secular Muslim regimes have opposed the United States' policy regarding Israel in the past and often clashed with American interests in general. Libya stood out for years because of its antagonistic and militant position, up until

the moment it decided to meet American requirements and demands regarding the compensation payments to the victims of the airplane bombings and to give up on the development of weapons of mass destruction. The theocratic States of the Persian Gulf, on the other hand, including spawns of British colonialism such as Saudi Arabia and the large oil producing and weapon purchasing micro-states, have always had a policy of cooperation with the United States, including in the fight against the secular states and in relation to Israel.

This makes up the complex mosaic and web of economic, political, military, and religious interests in the Mediterranean region, where Christianity is confronted with Islam and where the Crusades are still remembered.

The important contribution of Moniz Bandeira's work is the documented revelation that the uprisings of the Arab Spring were not spontaneous and even less democratic. Instead, the United States played an important role in promoting unrest and subversion by sending weapons and personnel, directly or indirectly, through Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Its strategy starts with the training of special forces for covert intervention, with the training of infiltrated agent provocateurs who organize peaceful demonstrations based on the instructions of professor Gene Sharp's manual *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, which was translated into 24 languages and distributed by the CIA and by foundations and NGOs. These demonstrations then lead to a reaction from the governments, who are accused of excesses in the suppression of these manifestations and the violation of the human rights of its people, which then becomes the justification for armed rebellion, funded and equipped from the outside and, eventually, for humanitarian intervention.

Ultimately, however, the Western world, the large multinational companies, and the complicit and condoning governments in these large regime change operations will be surprised by the emergence of Muslim fundamentalist regimes that are not docile to their interests, and by their steadfast objective of establishing theocratic regimes and societies based on shari'ah, or religious law. The discovery and application of efficient technologies for the exploration of the huge shale gas reserves in the United States, which allow American gas to reach Europe at a price 30% below current levels, will enable American industry to recover its competitiveness and reduce the geoeconomic importance of the Near East (and of Israel) for the United States. But it will not reduce the region's importance from the broader military and economic perspective, as an essential part of American strategy in the confrontation with Russia and with China.

The information gathered and analyzed by Moniz Bandeira reveals the orchestrated operation of the great powers, NGOs, the media, and private and public foundations to fund regime change in countries that they consider relevant, including their resolve to use techniques that blatantly violate human rights, such as kill/capture, i.e., kill and then capture the body, the use of torture, selective assassinations, the use of drones, and, now, the overall control of information. These are the heralds of the future of automated and electronic battles against the rebel provinces that seek their independence from the imperial metropolis.

Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães*

* The ambassador Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães was Secretary-General of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations (2003–2009), Minister of the Secretariat of Strategic Affairs (SAE) (2009–2010), and High Representative-General of the Mercosur (2011–2012). He is a professor at the Rio Branco Institute and author of the books *Quinhentos anos de periferia* (UFRGS/Contraponto, 1999) and *Desafios brasileiros na era dos gigantes* (Contraponto, 2006), a book that earned him the title Intellectual of the Year 2006 and the Juca Pato award from the Brazilian Writers Union.

Preface

In 2008, the ambassadors Jerônimo Moscardo, president of Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão, and Carlos Henrique Cardim, director of the Instituto de Pesquisa de Relações Internacionais (IPRI), invited me to write an essay on the geopolitics and the strategic dimension of the United States and to present it at the Third National Conference on Foreign Policy and International Politics, held in Rio de Janeiro on September 29, 2008. The essay was subsequently published by the Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão in 2009, along with other works written by me addressing the geopolitics and strategic dimension of the United States, Brazil, and South America.

The uprisings that occurred in North Africa and the Middle East after 2010, however, made me realize it would be necessary to expand and update the study. I took it upon myself to do this between March and November 2012, when the events were unfolding, i.e., when history was still flowing, always renewing, progressing, as the waters of a river. But as Antonio Gramsci taught us, “*se scrivere storia significa fare storia del presente, è grande libro di storia quello che nel presente aiuta le forze in isviluppo a divenire più consapevoli di se stesse e quindi più concretamente attive e fattive.*”¹ This is what I tried to do as Political Scientist.

This work—*The Second Cold War—The Geopolitics and Strategic Dimension of the United States (From the Rebellions in Eurasia to North Africa and the Middle East)*—fleshes out various aspects and builds upon and updates another work of mine—*Formation of the American Empire (From the War against Spain to the War in Iraq)*—published in 2005 by the publisher Civilização Brasileira, which has already been translated and published in Argentina, Cuba, and the People’s Republic of China.

¹“If writing history means making history of the present, a great book of history is one which in the present moment helps emerging forces to become more aware of themselves and hence more concretely active and energetic.” Gramsci (2010, p. 48).

There is no doubt I could not have written this book without relying on the support of various sources and people, most of whom have asked me not to mention them. As such, I must thank the ambassadors Jerônimo Moscardo, Carlos Henrique Cardim, Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães, Cesário Melantonio, former ambassador to Iran, Turkey, and Egypt and then Brazilian representative of Middle Eastern Affairs, and Arnaldo Carrilho, for the support and collaboration they've always given me. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Professor Paulo Fernando de Moraes Farias of the Department of African Studies at the University of Birmingham (England), my childhood friend who I have often consulted, as well as Professor Alberto Justo Sosa, who, in spite of his obligations in Buenos Aires, was kind enough to proofread the text of all chapters and made several suggestions.

The generous cooperation of these friends and others who I fail to mention does not mean they agree with my opinions and conclusions. And this is why it was of indispensable value.

This book was proofread by Dr. Paulo Fernando de Moraes Farias, Birmingham, and revisited by Gilberto Calcagnotto, Halstenbek. Its translation into English was sponsored by the Brazilian Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão (FUNAG).

St. Leon, Germany
June 24, 2013

Luiz Alberto Moniz Bandeira

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Chapter 1

The Geopolitical Great Game in Eurasia, the Middle East and North Africa

1.1 Eurasia, a Historical Pivot Region

Eurasia is the landmass stretching from Europe to Asia, separated by the Ural Mountains and with Russia and Turkey spread over the two continents. Its Heartland lies essentially between Central Asia and the Caspian Sea and encompasses Kazakhstan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Western Siberia and the northern part of Pakistan, and it is surrounded by Afghanistan, Russia, China, India and Iran.¹ At the beginning of the twentieth century, in a conference called “The Geographical Pivot of History”,² at London’s Royal Geographical Society, Sir Halford John Mackinder argued that this “*closed heartland of Euro-Asia*” was the “*pivot area*” of global equilibrium, and that the State that controlled it would be able to project power from one side of the region to the other. For strategic purposes, explained Mackinder, this Heartland should include the Baltic Sea, Asia Minor, Armenia, Persia, Tibet and Mongolia.³

¹“The Heartland for the purpose of strategic thinking, includes the Baltic Sea, Asia Minor, Armenia, Persia, Tibet, and Mongolia. Within it, therefore, were Brandenburg-Prussia and Austria-Hungary, as well as Russia—a vast triple base of man-power, which was lacking to the horse-riders of history”. Mackinder (1981, p. 110).

²Halford J. Mackinder, “The Geographical Pivot of History”, *Geographical Journal*, Royal Geographical Society London, April 1904, vol. XXIII pp. 421–444.

³Mackinder (1981, p. 110).

1.2 Mackinder's Theory

Here, land-based power had its greatest advantage. The Heartland's rivers flowed to the Mediterranean seas, making it inaccessible to any naval force coming from the Arctic Ocean, and not only could its existing natural resources be exploited, but also its terrestrial means of communication, which were faster than maritime ones. The State that dominated the Heartland, "*the greatest natural fortress on earth*", would therefore be able to control all of Eurasia, which Mackinder called the World Island.⁴

As a result of its geopolitical configuration, Russia is fundamentally an Euro-Asian State. Throughout history, it has extended over almost the entire Caucasus, the region between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, and it's inhabited, perhaps as no other country in the world, by dozens of heterogeneous ethnic and linguistic groups, since it has been the migration and displacement route between Asia and Europe since the earliest of times.⁵ These people include Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Chechens, Avars, the Ingush, Ossetians, Abkhazians, Circassians, Kabardians, and Balkars from different language families (Indo-European, Uralic and Caucasian), with a religious diversity that includes Sunni and Shia Muslims,⁶ Catholics, Orthodox Christians and Buddhists. And together with the imperatives of production, geography is one of the determining factors in the history of a society.

The Caucasus, which in 2011 was home to 21 million inhabitants, has always been a theater of war. The Russians, British, Persians and Turks quarreled over its control in the nineteenth century, and it remained only relatively quiet when it was a part of the Soviet Union. Most borders of the Caucasus, however, were arbitrarily defined between 1922 and 1936, during the Soviet regime, and after the Soviet collapse, the region became extremely unstable. Conflicts arose in Dagestan (1997–1999), between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in the Nagorno-Karabakh

⁴"The over setting of the balance of power in favor of the pivot states, resulting in its expansion on the marginal lands of Euro-Asia, would permit the use of vast continental resources for fleet-building, and the empire of the world would then be in sight". Idem, *ibidem*, p. 436. See a map in: CENTRAL ASIA—HEARTLAND. http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ACaucasus_central_asia_political_map_2000.jpg. Accessed 26.04.2015.

⁵Luxemburg (1979, p. 149).

⁶The main branches of Islam are the Sunni (Sunni) and Shia (Shiites). After the death of the Prophet Muhammad (ca.26.04.570–08.06.632), the Islamic peoples divided and waged a civil war after the death of the third caliph Otman. Two relatives of the Prophet Muhammad faced off in a dispute for the Caliphate. One was Ali, cousin of the prophet and husband of his daughter (Fatima). The other was Muawiyah, governor of Damascus and cousin of the last caliph. The Sunnis believe that the entire Islamic community (*ummah*) should recognize the authority of the first caliph Abu Bakr. Other currents of Islam, known as Shia-t-Ali (Party of Ali) or simply Shia (Shiites), however, believe the son-in-law of Muhammad, Ali, to be the legitimate successor of the Caliphate. Sunnis represent around 85% of Muslims, but the Shiites are predominant in Iran (ca 93.4%), Azerbaijan (75%), Iraq (62.5%), Bahrain (61.3%), and minorities in all other Muslim and Central Asian countries. There are, however, several currents and sub-branches, both among the Sunni and Shia Muslims.

territory (1988–1994), between Russia and Georgia because of the Abkhazia (1992–1993) and South Ossetia enclaves (2008), in Chechnya (1994–1996 and 1999 and 2009) and in Ingushetia (2007), caused by jihadists who'd fled from Chechnya, etc.

The conquest of the Caucasus began during the reign of Tsar Pyotr Alexeyevich Romanov—Peter the Great (1672–1725).⁷ The region has always been of vital geo-strategic importance to Russia. Its mountains to the south are a natural bulwark in the defense of the agricultural plains in the north. The loss of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, with the economic and military penetration of the United States/NATO, however, pushed Russian borders toward the northern part of the Caucasus, which encompasses Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, North Ossetia, Karachay-Cherkess, Kabardino-Balkar, Adygea and the district of Krasnodar—a very vulnerable and unstable region.

During the administration of President James Earl Carter (1977–1981), his National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, acknowledged that the contest between the United States and the Soviet Union wasn't one between two nations. It was one “*between two empires*”, i.e., between two nations that had acquired “*imperial attributes even before their post-World War II collision*”,⁸ between two “*colossal spaces*” (Raumkolosse), in the words of general Karl Haushofer,⁹ which confronted each other in East Asia and in Western Europe.

1.3 Nicholas Spykman's Rimland Theory

Unlike the Soviet Union, which was dominant in the “pivotal area” or the Heartland of Eurasia, the United States were, as Friedrich Ratzel put it, a “*Staat von Meere zum Meere*”,¹⁰ i.e., a State between two oceans—the Atlantic and the Pacific—without neighbors that could threaten its security. It occupied a unique position in the world—Nicholas J. Spykman emphasized.¹¹ Its continental landmass covered half of North America and was bathed by two oceans, which implies economic power and direct access to the most important trading regions of the world.¹² Located in North America, it lay outside the main theaters of battle.¹³ Its extensive coastline along the Atlantic and Pacific oceans made any blockage nearly impracticable.¹⁴ And when it became the largest industrial power in the 1890s, the United

⁷Baddeley (1969, p. 23).

⁸Brzezinski (1986, p. 16).

⁹Haushofer (1939, p. 188).

¹⁰Ratzel (1941, p. 232).

¹¹Spkyman (1942, pp. 43–44).

¹²Ibid., p. 43.

¹³Ibid., p. 187.

¹⁴Mahan (1987, p. 87).

States began strengthening its navy and projecting its influence from one side to the other, i.e., to the West and to the East, advancing over the seas that Britain still controlled as the “*chief builder and shipowner*” with “*vast imperial responsibilities*” in Asia and Africa.¹⁵

Brzezinski, however, would guide President Jimmy Carter’s foreign policy within the same parameters as Mackinder. He believed that the American approach to Eurasia was critical in the Cold War context, and that the State that would come to dominate this vast, geopolitically axial continent, would also control two of the three largest, most productive and advanced economic regions in the world, subordinating Africa and making the Western Hemisphere and Oceania peripheral from a geopolitical standpoint.¹⁶ This stood in contrast with the notions of the American geopolitical scholar Nicholas J. Spykman (1893–1943), who considered the Rimland, the coastal belt surrounding Eurasia that Mackinder called the “*Inner or marginal Crescent*”, to be more important for the control and containment of the Soviet Union. This Rimland, an intermediate region between the heartland and the marginal seas, included Scandinavia, Western Europe, Central Europe, Turkey, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia and the extremes of Asia—Indochina, Korea and western and northern China, stretching from the west to the east of Eurasia and acting as a vast buffer zone between naval power and land power.¹⁷

Spykman believed that the Heartland had become less important than the Rimland, or Randland, after the First World War, and that the two terrestrial and maritime powers of Britain and the United States would cooperate to control the coast of Europe and, therefore, constitute the essential power relationship in the world.¹⁸ 75% of the world population lived in Eurasia, however, and it harbored 3/4 of the known energy resources in the world.¹⁹

1.4 Brzezinski’s Strategy for a Third Front Against the Soviet Union

With the observation laid out above, Brzezinski persuaded President Carter to open a third front in the Cold War,²⁰ instigating against Moscow the Islamic people of Central Asia, in the heartland of Eurasia and within the Soviet Union. The goal was

¹⁵Mackinder (1925, p. 334).

¹⁶Brzezinski (1997, pp. 30–31).

¹⁷Spykman (1971, p. 174). See also Heartland and Rimland in: <http://infomapsplus.blogspot.de/2014/07/geostrategywhat-is-heartland.html>. Accessed 18.04.2015.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 177.

¹⁹Brzezinski (1997, p. 31).

²⁰Brzezinski’s strategy was based on the work *L’Empire éclaté*, in which its author, the French political scientist Hélène Carrère D’Encausse, predicted the disintegration of the Soviet Union as a

to create a green belt²¹ and contain the advance of communism toward the warm waters of the Persian Gulf and the oil fields of the Middle East.²² The idea that “*fanatical Islam*” could be incited against Russian orthodoxy wasn’t exactly new. It had already been mentioned in the bulletins of Napoleon Bonaparte’s Grande Armée and his manifest of 1806, which were translated by the French philologist Antoine Isaac, the Baron Silvestre de Sacy, who had specialized in several languages, particularly in Arabic, when he worked for the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs between 1805 and 1911.²³

In Brzezinski’s mind, such similar phenomena as the holy war (*Jihad*)²⁴ against the Soviets in Afghanistan, the fundamentalist revolution in Iran, the strong support to the Afghan *mujahidin*,²⁵ and the imposition of Islamic law (*shari’ah*) in Pakistan by President Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq (1979), all reflected the widespread awakening of a more self-assertive posture based on ethnicity and the Islamic faith. As such, the United States could effectively “*accelerate this alliance of hostility*” with radio transmissions to Central Asia, in the Soviet Union, where approximately

consequence of the revolts of the Muslim populations of its Asian Republics, such as Armenia, Azerbaydzhan, Kazakhstan and Chechnya. Carrère D’Encausse (1978, p. 282).

²¹The green color is a symbol of the Islamic flag.

²²Brzezinski (1983, p. 226). For more details see Moniz Bandeira (2006, pp. 377–402).

²³Said (1979, p. 124).

²⁴*Jihad*, word of Arab origin - *Ji-’hād*—means the Muslim’s inner struggle of moral discipline to improve himself and to help the community (Rashid 2002, p. 2). *Jihad* also means the war against those who threaten the community, against the non-believers or non-Muslims who break the pact of protection. The duty of *Jihad* is based on the 6th pillar of the Qur’an, which some currents in Islam believe to exist (Hourani, 1991, p. 151). There are two different forms of *Jihad*. The greater *Jihad*, the constant struggle of man for spiritual purity. And the lesser *Jihad*, which dictates the struggle against the unfaithful. There is the *daru-I -Islam*, the house of Islam, of faith, and there is *daru-I -harb*, the war against the infidels that needs to be won for the tranquility of the faithful. *Jihad* can be defensive or offensive. The *Jihad* against the infidels is an obligation, whether it’s defensive or offensive. But only a few need wage it: the *shahids*, i.e., martyrs. In light of certain criteria defined by religious jurisprudence, the word can roughly be translated as “Holy War”. In the Koran it is written: “O you, who believe! Fight those of the unbelievers who are near to you and let them find in you hardness.” Der Koran (Arabisch-Deutsch). Aus dem Arabisch von Max Henning. München: Diederich Verlag (Verlagsgruppe Random House), 2011. Teil 11—Sure 9—Die Reue, 125, p. 207.

²⁵A *Mujahid* is someone who practices *Jihad*, who dies in the battlefield during combat and can enter paradise immediately, while the enemies, the infidels, those who do not practice Islam, go to hell. “So when you meet those who disbelieve in battle, strike their necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure their bonds, and either confer favor afterwards or ransom them until the war lays down its burdens. That is the command. And if Allah had willed, He could have taken vengeance upon them Himself, but He ordered armed struggle to test some of you by means of others. And those who are killed in the cause of Allah—never will He waste their deeds. He will guide them and amend their condition. And admit them to Paradise, which He has made known to them.” Der Koran (Arabisch-Deutsch). Aus dem Arabisch von Max Henning. München: Diederich Verlag (Verlagsgruppe Random House), 2011. Teil 26—Sure 47—1—Muhammad—Geoffenbart zu Medina, p. 507.

50 million Muslims lived and Islam had not been eradicated.²⁶ And Islamic movements reemerged in all those countries, some of which wanted to restore Islam according to the *ahl-al-Qur'an* and impose *shari'ah* law, the code of justice and conduct, and the teachings of the Sunna, as in the times of the Prophet.

Despite all its efforts, the communist regime hadn't been able to effectively eradicate Islam and create the *homo sovieticus* (*Sovetskii Chalovek*). During the Second World War, approximately 1.6 million Muslims were drafted by the Soviet army, but more than half defected to the Germans.²⁷ They had no loyalty to the regime. And Russia has always faced enormous challenges in the northern Caucasus, where the greatest part of the Muslim population was concentrated, mainly in Dagestan, Ingushetia, Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkar and Karachaevo-Cherkessia.

Islam reached the Northern Caucasus in the middle of the seventh century, when the Arabs occupied the territory of the Sasanian Empire, nearly a millennium before the conquest of the region, which included the tartar Khanates (rule of a Khan)²⁸ of Kazan (1552) and Astrakhan (1556), by Czar Ivan IV (Ivan the terrible—1530–1584) in the sixteenth century. And between 1785 and 1791, Sheikh Mansour (Ushurma) Aldinsky (1732–1794) from Chechnya proclaimed the *Ghazawat* under the banner of Islam, i.e., a *Jihad* against the Russian Empire ruled by Catherine the Great (1762–1796), engulfing almost the entire Northern Caucasus. But his insurrection was defeated.²⁹

1.5 The 'Arc of Crisis' as the New Theater of the Great Game

Zbigniew Brzezinski argued that the Soviet Union threatened this region, a “*vital sphere*” of American interests that stretched from the Hindu Kush mountains in Afghanistan and Northwestern Pakistan, passing through Iran and the Middle East until the Bosphorus.³⁰ In his understanding, this “*arc of crisis*”,³¹ from Pakistan to Ethiopia encircled the States of the Middle East and their oil reserves. Hence the need to build “*a regional security framework*”, with the construction of air and naval bases in Oman, Somalia and Kenya, so the United States could effectively exert its power in a region of great strategic importance that contained more than 2/3 of the world's exportable oil and that, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan,

²⁶Brzezinski (1986, p. 226).

²⁷Hunter (2004, p. 30).

²⁸When Kublai Khan died in 1294, the mongol empire fractured into various Khanates—dominions under the rule of a Khan, Lord.

²⁹Sheikh Mansour was captured in the fortress of Anapa, on the Black Sea, and taken to St. Petersburg, where he was incarcerated and sentenced to life imprisonment. He died on April 13, 1794 in [Shlisselburg](#).

³⁰Brzezinski (1983, pp. 443–446).

³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 443–446.

saw the red army within 300 miles of the Indian Ocean and close to the Strait of Hormuz, the major artery through which most of the world's oil flowed.

1.6 The Great Game from the Caucasus to the Middle East and North Africa

So began another Great Game (*Bolshaya Igra*),³² just like the one the British Empire had played in the nineteenth century with the Russian Empire, which had signed a peace treaty with Persia in 1813 (Treaty of Gulistan), annexing Azerbaijan, Dagestan and Georgia, and threatening to expand toward India through Afghanistan.³³ On June 25, 1979, therefore, before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, President Jimmy Carter signed a finding³⁴ authorizing the CIA to provide covert assistance to the Afghan *Mujahidin* through psychological warfare operations, giving the population access to radio broadcasts from stations set up in third countries, such as Pakistan, in order to sustain the insurgency against the Moscow-backed government in Kabul. Operation Cyclone was born.

“The Soviet Union is now attempting to consolidate a strategic position, therefore, that poses a serious threat to the free movement of Middle East oil”—President Jimmy Carter said, announcing that *“an attempt by an outside force to*

³²The term *The Great Game* was coined by [Arthur Conolly](#), lieutenant of the 6th Bengal Light Cavalry of the British East India Company, who was sent as agent of the intelligence service to explore the area between the Caucasus and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, to the northwest of Pakistan, which was then part of British India on the border with Afghanistan. In 1842, he was captured with colonel Charles Stoddart. Both were decapitated as spies of the British Empire by order of the Emir Nasrullah Khan (Nasr-Allah bin Haydar Tora) of Bukhara, the emirate that existed until 1929 and whose territory is now mostly occupied by Uzbekistan, and less so by Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. See Hopkirk, 1994, pp. 123–124. Kleveman, 2003, p. 116. The British poet and writer [Rudyard Kipling](#) (1865–1936), born in Bombay, made the term *Great Game* popular, which he used several times in his novel *Kim* (1901): *“When he comes to the Great Game he must go alone—alone, and at peril of his head. Then, if he spits, or sneezes, or sits down other than as the people do whom he watches, he may be slain. Why hinder him now? Remember how the Persians say: The jackal that lives in the wilds of Mazanderan can only be caught by the hounds of Mazanderan.”* And later: *“Go up the hill and ask. Here begins the Great Game. (...) He considered the years to come when Kim would have been entered and made to the Great Game that never ceases day and night, throughout India. He foresaw honour and credit in the mouths of a chosen few, coming to him from his pupil. Lurgan Sahib had made E.23 what E.23 was, out of a bewildered, impertinent, lying, little North-West Province man.(...)”* *“When everyone is dead the Great Game is finished. Not before. Listen to me till the end There were Five Kings who prepared a sudden war three years ago, when thou wast given the stallion’s pedigree by Mahbub Ali. Upon them, because of that news, and ere they were ready, fell our Army.”*

³³For four centuries, the Russian Empire had expanded 20,000 square miles per year, on average, the equivalent to 55 square miles per day. Hopkirk (1994, p. 5).

³⁴A *finding* is an authorization given by the president of the United States, almost always in writing, in which he states (*finds*) that a covert action is important for national security. The *finding* is the most secret among the documents of the American government.

*gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.”*³⁵

1.7 Operation Cyclone in Afghanistan and the Role of Saudi Arabia

In a memorandum to President Carter dated December 26, 1979, Zbigniew Brzezinski remarked that, although the intervention of Moscow in Afghanistan would constitute a serious domestic and international challenge to the United States, Afghanistan could well become the “*Soviet Vietnam*”.³⁶ As such, it was “*essential that Afghanistani resistance continues*”. This meant providing “*more money as well as arms shipments to the rebels, and some technical advice*”, in addition to coming to an understanding with the Muslim countries to promote propaganda and covert actions to help the rebels (*mujahidin*), and to encourage China and Pakistan to do the same.³⁷ According to Brzezinski, Moscow’s long-held dream was to have direct access to the Indian Ocean. They were foiled first by Great Britain and then by Iran, but the latter was now embroiled in the Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and Pakistan was “*unstable internally and extremely apprehensive externally*.”³⁸

Robert Gates, former CIA director and later Secretary of Defense of the Obama administration, wrote in his memoirs that in 1982, William J. Casey, then CIA director, and Frank Carlucci, Deputy Secretary of Defense, made efforts to fund the *mujajidin* in Afghanistan at the rate of more than US\$ 20 million per year, with this funding program reaching US\$630 million in 1987,³⁹ or much more. General Muhammad Zia al-Haq, then president of Pakistan, and Prince Faisal Bin Turki, head of the Ri’āsāt Al-Istikhbārāt Al-‘Āmah, the intelligence service of Saudi Arabia, had close ties with Usamah bin Ladin and served as intermediaries for the CIA in the funding of the *mujahidin* mobilized to combat Soviet troops, many of them from Benghazi, Tobruk and Darnah, in Libya. This was the green belt against the red menace. But the *Jihad* didn’t end with the exit of Soviet troops. The United States had been an ally of circumstance. And approximately 600 to 1000 fundamentalists crossed the deserts of Morocco and Tunisia with the help of bin Ladin

³⁵ Jimmy Carter—State of the Union Address 1980. January 21, 1980.

³⁶ Memorandum—Secret—The White House, Washington. Memorandum for: The President—From: Zbigniew Brzezinski. Reflections on Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan. Archive of the Author.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Gates (1997, pp. 251–252).

and other sponsors of the *Jihad*, returning to Algeria and Libya, where they had been recruited.

Under the Reagan administration (1981–1989), terrorism entered the American agenda as a new threat, despite the fact that it had been the United States, under the guidance of Zbigniew Brzezinski, which had encouraged the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism in order to destabilize the Soviet Union through the Muslim republics of Central Asia, and to establish a green belt, i.e., an Islamic belt, with the collaboration of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, to promote the *jihad* against the “*communists atheists*” in Afghanistan. Terrorism wasn’t exactly new and in the 60s and 70s, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria, and the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) had all resorted to this method of struggle, without it being deemed an international threat.

Terrorism was only truly institutionalized on a large scale by the CIA, the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) of Pakistan, and the Ri’āsat Al-Istikhbārāt al-‘Āmah, the Saudi Intelligence Service, when they set up training camps in Afghanistan to combat the troops of the Soviet Union (1979–1989),⁴⁰ providing all sorts of resources and sophisticated war toys to the *mujahidin*—such as 300 to 500 Stinger anti-air missiles from the United States. General Perves Musharraf, the former dictator of Pakistan, confessed in his memoirs that “*we—the United States, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and all those who were allied with us in Afghan jihad—created our own Frankenstein monster*”.⁴¹ The CIA provided around US\$3.3 billion,⁴² of which at least half came from the government of Saudi Arabia.⁴³ More than US\$ 250 million would flow monthly to the *Mujahidin* from Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries.⁴⁴ The Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), which counted Mr. Kamal Adham of the Saudi intelligence service among its main shareholders, acted as intermediary of the CIA and the big arms dealer Adban Kashoggi,⁴⁵ and took it upon itself to launder a large part of the resources.⁴⁶

In the meantime ISI and CIA agents were recruiting and training between 16,000 and 18,000 *mujahidin*, to which Usamah BIN LADIN added a contingent of 35,000 Arabs-Afghans.⁴⁷ The British secret service MI6 (Secret Intelligence Service) also cooperated in the operation, providing radio equipment and instructors to the *mujahidin* of Amed Shah Massoud (1953–2001), an Afghan-Tajik Sunni who

⁴⁰Cooley (2000, p. 260) and Kenneth Katzman, “Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy”. May 3, 2012. Congressional Research Service 7-5700.

⁴¹Musharraf (2006, p. 209).

⁴²Ralph (2008, p. 256).

⁴³Yousaf and Adkin (2001, pp. 83, 90).

⁴⁴Van Linschoten and Kuehn (2012, p. 79) and Johnson (2006, p. 118).

⁴⁵Scott (2010) and Ruppert (2004, pp. 144–146).

⁴⁶Ahmed (2002, pp. 194–195) and Stich (1994, pp. 408–410). See the US-flow of resources to parties in: Us Aid to “Parties”. <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Afghanistankrieg-Ressourcen.svg>. Accessed 05.03.2015.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 118 and Johnson (2010, p. 49).

would later command the Northern Alliance against the Taliban.⁴⁸ Between 1982 and 1992, approximately 35,000 or more radical Islamists from the Middle East, North and East Africa, Central and East Asia would be trained in the camps created and maintained by the CIA and ISI in Afghanistan on the border with Pakistan, a country whose population was 75% Sunni (20% Shia) and where strong jihadist groups operated that sought to restore the caliphate, including Harakat ul-Jihad, founded by students of the Deobandi⁴⁹ madrasah,⁵⁰ Harakat ul-Mujahedin, Markaz Da'wa wal Irshad and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP).⁵¹

Saudi Arabia's motive in sponsoring the *mujahidin* and *jihad* in Afghanistan was spreading Wahhabi fundamentalism, which was also adopted by Harkat-ul Jihad-i-Islami, an organization the Pakistani military apparatus and ISI helped create in 1977, when general Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq (1924–1988) took power through a military coup and imposed *shari'ah* law on the country to promote the advancement of Islamic values throughout the region.⁵² The government of the United States, however, identified terrorism as a threat after 1979 in order to justify the massive budgetary resources that went into sustaining a military-industrial complex that created two million jobs in the 80s and bolstered a string of military bases and troops spread over various regions of the world. The National Security Council developed a project for the promotion of democracy and pressed Congress to create the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in 1983, as part of the public diplomacy program and to fund a network of relatively autonomous non-governmental and governmental organizations that could assist and train groups in “*political warfare*” and encourage the development of democracy.⁵³ Former CIA director William Colby remarked that many operations that previously had to be conducted covertly, could now be carried out openly and without

⁴⁸Urban (1996, pp. 35–37).

⁴⁹Sultan Salah el-Din el-Ayyoubi (1138–1193), better known as Saladin, first established the madrasah—an Islamic school for the exclusive study of the Qur'an, in order to fight the unorthodox Islamic sects in Egypt. Saladin took control of Egypt after the death of the Fatimid caliph in 1171. When the Crusaders attacked Egypt, setting fire to Cairo, Saladin fortified the city, resisted and became one of the great heroes of Islam through his humility, personal courage and administrative and military acumen, which allowed him to defeat the Christian armies. Saladin's rule lasted 24 years. He is a character in Walter Scott's novel—The Talisman.

⁵⁰Deobandi was a Sunni doctrine of the legal-religious school Hanafi, whose ideologues were Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi (1833–1877) and Rashid Nanautawi, the founders of the first *madrasah* of this Muslim branch in Deoband, close to New Delhi. Their disciples spread these Deobandi *madrasahs* across India and Afghanistan, and in 1967, there were already around 9000 of them throughout southern Asia. In Pakistan alone, there were some 4000 *madrasahs* in the early 90s, especially near the border with Afghanistan, where two million Afghan refugees lived in camps, whose children attended these seminars along with the Pakistani children of well-established families. Around 2001, the *madrasahs* had about a million students.

⁵¹Van Linschoten and Kuehn (2012, pp. 74, 75).

⁵²Coll (2005, pp. 26–29).

⁵³Peck (2010, pp. 95–97).

controversy.⁵⁴ But these non-governmental organizations would work in coordination with the State Department, the CIA and the United States embassies in the country.⁵⁵ And the public diplomacy guideline was “*overt democratic support where we can, covert activities where we must*”.⁵⁶

1.8 End of the 'Red Scare' and Beginning of the 'Green Threat'

The foreign policy rationale of the United States—the “Free World” against communism—was therefore changing. The “*green threat*” associated with Islamic fundamentalism, would take the place of the “*red scare*”, once represented by the Soviet Union, and “*international terrorism*” would start to occupy a significant space in the international agenda of the United States instead of “*international communism*”. President Reagan would still add fuel to the arms race in order to worsen the “*serious economic and political problems*” of the Soviet Union, as evaluated by the CIA’s Bureau of Soviet Analysis (SOVA).⁵⁷ By 1984, however, he would not target the organizations responsible for the attacks, but certain States in the Third World, which he classified as rogue states (irresponsible, undisciplined states) and accused of sponsoring terrorism (state-sponsored terrorism). And after the implosion of the Soviet Union, in the midst of “*growing consumer discontent, ethnic divisions*”⁵⁸ due to “*long continued investment priorities favoring heavy industry and defense, coupled with the rigid and cumbersome system of economic organization*”,⁵⁹ terrorism and drug trafficking would rise to the fore as the new enemies⁶⁰ that could justify the vast budgetary resources consumed by the industrial-military complex. The “*evil empire*”,⁶¹ as President Reagan called the Soviet Union, lay in ruins.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 96–97.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 96–97.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 202–223.

⁵⁷Douglas J. MacEachin—“CIA Assessments of the Soviet Union—*The Record Versus the Charges*”—Historical Document. This article originally appeared as an unclassified Intelligence Monograph published by CIA’s Center for the Study of Intelligence (CSI 96-001, May 1996).

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Guimarães, Samuel Pinheiro—“Esperanças e Ameaças: notas preliminares”. 23.10.1995. Original. Rio de Janeiro.

⁶¹President Reagan’s Speech to the National Association of Evangelicals—Orlando, Florida, March 8, 1983.

Chapter 2

The Second Cold War: A First Panoramic View

2.1 Protests in China and Repression in Tiananmen Square

In the course of a few months in 1989, the communist regimes of the Soviet bloc collapsed one after the other, and that same year George H. W. Bush (1989–1993) took over the presidency of the United States as successor to President Ronald Reagan. China, however, did not destabilize, despite the intensification of its domestic contradictions since 1986. Several student protests arose spontaneously after the funeral of Hu Yaobang, on April 15, 1989, and flared up again in several cities of the country until June 4, 1989. They were now being coordinated by certain leaders of various university campuses, however, and joined and supported by elements from other social classes, including new emerging entrepreneurs, such as the Stone Group computer company.¹ After the regime opened in 1980, the movement's leaders gained access to foreign media, particularly to the BBC, Voice of America and the press in Hong Kong, which, as instruments of *psychological warfare*,² inflamed the demonstrations. The protests became even more political in nature in Tiananmen Square, in Beijing, between June 3 and 4, 1989. Here, the reporters of foreign TV-networks, such as CBS, had already set up all their filming gear and were communicating through walkie-talkies with their broadcasting colleagues staying in the hotels of Beijing.³ All signs indicate that foreign agents were infiltrated in the demonstrations. “*Presumably the CIA, Taiwan and Hong Kong*”, stressed Harrison E. Salisbury,⁴ adding that agents were actually seen on the square, but there was no evidence that they played any role. Except, possibly, in moving funds from Hong Kong to the demonstrators.⁵ Either way, the army's troops were

¹Goldman (2011, pp. 246–259).

²Ibid., p. 251.

³Salisbury (1993, p. 453).

⁴Ibid., p. 450.

⁵Ibid., p. 450.

ordered on June 4, 1989, to intervene in Tiananmen Square and crush the attempted *luan* (uprising), as was the intent and battle cry of some demonstrators. Approximately 1000–2000 people died in the clashes,⁶ and the severity with which Mr. Deng Xiaoping crushed the demonstration in Tiananmen Square strengthened his position in the Communist Party and allowed him to continue China's policy of economic opening.

President George H. W. Bush had personal ties with Deng Xiaoping since 1976, when he headed the U.S. Liaison Office (USLO)⁷ in Beijing. He tried to avoid a serious destabilization of the relations with China because of the bloody events in Tiananmen Square. As such, his protests were more rhetoric than anything else, and the imposed sanctions basically consisted in no more than the suspension of weapon sales to Beijing. In line with Henry Kissinger's strategy, George H. W. Bush believed that the alliance with China, the second greatest power, should be maintained at all costs while the total collapse of Soviet military power had not occurred.⁸

2.2 Invasion of Kuwait: Saddam Hussein Back on the US Agenda

Shortly after Bush turned his attention to the Middle East. On August 18, 1990, he signed a *secret intelligence finding* authorizing the removal of Saddam Hussein from the government of Iraq, and in May 1991, he informed Congress that he had assigned something between US\$ 15 million and US\$ 20 million to the military coup that should take place there. Backed by his advisors, he apparently believed that it was possible to overthrow the regime without Iraq fragmenting into ethnic groups and rival tribes, which would clear the way for Iranian, Turkish and Syrian influence.⁹

Shortly after signing the *finding* authorizing the CIA to organize a revolt to remove Saddam Hussein, President George H. W. Bush ordered Operation Desert Shield, later called Operation Desert Storm, and sent troops to expel the forces of the Iraqi Republican Guard from Kuwait, which they had invaded on August 2, 1990. This was the first time the United States had declared a war without justifying it as a defense of democracy and human rights, for neither Kuwait, nor

⁶Ibid., p. 519.

⁷The predecessor of George H. W. Bush as head of the USLO was Harriman David K. E. Bruce, who had worked for the OSS (the American intelligence service that preceded the CIA) during the Second World War. Diplomatic relations between the United States and China were only officially resumed in 1979, during the Carter administration.

⁸Tarpley and Chaitkin (1992, pp. 517–521).

⁹Kenneth Katzman, "Iraq: U.S. Regime Change Efforts and Post-Saddam Governance CRS Report for Congress", *CRS Report for Congress*, Order Code RL31339, Updated October 22, 2004, Congressional Research Service, Washington, DC, The Library of Congress.

Iraq were models of democracy. The problem was that the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein would come to control a fifth of global oil reserves with the invasion of Kuwait.¹⁰ But despite the intense Psychological Operations (*psy-ops*) against Iraq promoted by the American Psyops Group and the British MI6,¹¹ Saddam Hussein continued in power after withdrawing his troops from Kuwait. The uprising of the Kurdish and Shiite populations, which the CIA had incited and whose funding had been authorized by President Bush, only occurred in March 1991, after the Gulf War (August 2, 1990–February 28, 1991). And it was stifled by Saddam Hussein.¹²

2.3 Islamic Radicalism and the Civil War in Algeria

When the Kurdish and Shiite uprising was crushed, the Bush administration was paralyzed by the events unfolding in Algeria in 1990–1991, where the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS) (*al-Jabhah al-Islamiyah lil-Monitoring dh*) won the elections. This organization adhered to Salafism, a radical current of Sunni Islam that is intolerant of other religions and advocates the practices and customs of the Salafis (the predecessors), i.e. the first five caliphs. Its goal was to establish an Islamic state based on *shari'ah*,¹³ and it had always been funded by Saudi Arabia and the oil monarchies of the Persian Gulf.

Faced with the victory of the Salafist *Front Islamique du Salut*, the *Front Libération Nationale* (FLN) and the heads of the *Armée Nationale Populaire* (ANP), consisting of the *Janviéristes/Décideurs* generals Mohamed Mediène, [Khaled Nezzar](#), [Larbi Belkheir](#), [Abdelmalek Guenaizia](#), Mohamed Lamari and [Mohammed Touati](#), voided the elections in 1992 and deposed President Chadli Bendjedid (1929–2012). And so the Islamic groups *Mouvement Islamique Armé* (MIA) and *Groupe Islamique Armé* (GIA), among others, unleashed a civil war that claimed 80,000 lives and lasted virtually until 1999.¹⁴

These Islamic groups had been formed by young men from Algeria and other countries. The Muslim Brotherhood, funded by charitable organizations in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, had recruited them in the early 80s for the *Jihad* against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan.¹⁵ After receiving training and theological education in Pakistan, these men returned with combat experience to Algeria—via Islamabad-Karachi-Tunis—and started using the mosques to promote the religious party and strengthen the Salafist sect *El-Hidjira* or *at-Takfir*. During this bloody and fierce civil war, *la sale guerre*, which saw massacres and terrorist attacks, the Muslim

¹⁰Kleveman (2003, p. 5).

¹¹Urban (1996, p. 163).

¹²Baer (2002, pp. 171–173).

¹³Cooley (2000, pp. 202–203).

¹⁴Gerges (1999, pp. 73–75).

¹⁵Samraoui (2003, pp. 88–89).

insurgents were treated as “*beasts, castrated, violated, killed*” at the Blida (*El Bouleïda*) military prison.¹⁶ In such conditions, many prisoners attempted suicide.

According to the former head of the Algerian *Sécurité Militaire*, Mohamed Samraoui, the *Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité* (DRS) and other intelligence services of the Algerian Army also infiltrated and manipulated the *Groupe Islamique Armé* in order to discredit the Islamic resistance to the coup of 1992, liquidate real opponents and obtain economic and military aid against terrorism from western countries.¹⁷ Most victims of the war were civilians, probably between 40,000 and 50,000,¹⁸ as Algeria devolved into chaos through Muslim and State terrorism, including summary executions and the flattening of entire villages.¹⁹

President George H. W. Bush didn't condemn the interruption of the democratic process in Algeria and kept a *low profile*, an apparently neutral position, which was perceived as tacit support to the coup by some sectors in Washington. Various diplomats within the State Department, however, concerned with a potential fundamentalist movement across Africa, feared that the victory of Islamic fundamentalists in the Algerian elections would have negative repercussions for the West and the Arab-Israeli peace process.²⁰ According to Fawaz A. Gerges, this partly explains why President George H.W. Bush decided to allow Saddam Hussein to crush the Shiite uprising in Iraq, preventing Iran from increasing its influence.²¹

2.4 Operation Restore Hope in Somalia

In this context, President George H. W. Bush initiated a period in which the United States executed successive military interventions in other countries to expand its economic and strategic interests, always under the pretext of defending humanitarian values.²² In 1992, he sent the 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta (1st SFOD-D), one of the most secret counter-terrorism units, to a Somalia in civil

¹⁶Souaïdia (2001, p. 277).

¹⁷Ibid., p. 215. Salima Mellah, “The Algerian Islamist Movement between Autonomy and Manipulation”, Extracts from a report presented by the Justice Commission for Algeria at the 32nd Session of the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal on Human Rights Violations in Algeria (1992–2004) 5–8 November 2004, May 2004.

¹⁸Souaïdia (2001, pp. 320–321).

¹⁹Ibid., p. 321.

²⁰Samraoui (2003, pp. 75–76).

²¹Ibid., p. 77.

²²Maia (2012, p. 152).

war.²³ They would be part of the Unified Task Force (Unitaf), a multinational force established by Resolution 794 of the UN security council.²⁴

The justification of Operation Restore Hope was the mission “to create a protected environment for conducting humanitarian operations”. But, in fact, the main objective was to restore security in Somalia, which held large reserves of natural gas and oil, particularly in the north of the country, and to protect the multimillion-dollar investments of four major US corporations—Conoco, Amoco, Chevron and Phillips Petroleum—who had already obtained concessions to prospect two thirds of the country’s territory (14.9 million acres) at the end of the 80s, before President Maxamed Siyaad Barre (Muhammad Siad Barre) was overthrown in January 1991.²⁵

The intervention had another objective: controlling access to the Gulf of Aden in the Indian Ocean, the strategically important sea lane to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal for the oil tankers traveling from the Persian Gulf to the United States, Europe and Japan. “*East Africa analysts and several prominent Somalis [alleged] that President Bush, a former Texas oilman, was moved to act in Somalia, at least in part, by the U.S. corporate oil stake*”, the journalist Mark Fineman wrote in the *Los Angeles Times*.²⁶

Under the mantle of the United Nations Operation on Somalia (Unosom), Operation Restore Hope obtained some success: it enabled the construction of 2000 km of roads for the transport needs of the four large oil companies already operating there.²⁷ But 700 civilians were massacred by the “*peace keepers*” since

²³War flared up in Somalia in 1991 between the forces of the then president Ali Mahdi Muhammad, supported by Islamic fundamentalists, and the clans loyal to General Maxamed Faarax Caydiid. To a significant extent, this war reflected the dispute over economic and commercial interests between two multinational companies: Sombana, a Dole Fresh Fruit supplier headquartered in the United States, and Somalfruit, a *joint venture* with capital from Italy (De Nadai Group), the Somali state and local growers, who fought over the control of the production and monthly export of 200,000 boxes of banana to Europe.

²⁴General Discretion in the Further Employment of Personnel of the United Nations Operation in Somalia, S.C. res 794, 47 U.N. SCOR at 63, U.N. Doc. S/RES/794 (1992), Peace Resource Center.

²⁵Mark Fineman, “The Oil Factor in Somalia: Four American petroleum giants had agreements with the African nation before its civil war began. They could reap big rewards if peace is restored”, *Los Angeles Times*, January 18, 1993.

²⁶*Ibid.* See the figure of the Operation in: Operation Restore Hope—December 9, 1992 to May 4, 1993. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/jhtml/jframe.html> and <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/images/restore-hope-map.gif>. Accessed 09.05.2015.

²⁷“*The largest and most purposeful enterprise going on in Somalia at the present time is Conoco’s quest for oil (...) Conoco is investing in oil exploration in Somalia on a scale unmatched by its rivals, building roads and airstrips, chartering one of the national airline’s three planes full time, and sending seismic survey teams to the edge of [Somaliland National Movement]-controlled territory.*” “Petroleum Exploration: Conoco Searches for Oil in Somalia”, Cable from US Embassy in Mogadishu to State Department Headquarters. March 21, 1990. Cable Number: Mogadishu 02844. Source: Freedom of Information Act release (2006-01-286) to Keith Yearman.

the start of the operation, and the country continued divided and unstable.²⁸ On October 3, 1993, however, the units of the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) and of Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta suffered a bitter defeat under the command of General William Garrison when they attacked Mogadishu in order to capture general Maxamed Faarax Caydiid (better known as Farrah Aidid).

500 Somalis died and more than 1000 were injured. 19 American soldiers, however, were also killed, and 77 were wounded and one captured. General Farrah Aidid's militias celebrated the victory by cheering and dragging the corpses of the American soldiers through the streets of Mogadishu. This dreary spectacle was broadcast on television, and the number of casualties shocked the United States. Faced with the outcry caused by the fiasco, President Bill Clinton, successor of George H. W. Bush, had no other alternative but to withdraw the troops from Somalia on March 31, 1994.

President George H.W. Bush also ordered an intervention in Panama, called Operation Just Cause, to overthrow and capture President Manuel Noriega (1983–1989), accused of drug trafficking. But he also had to deal with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the unraveling of the socialist block between 1989 and 1991, the greatest political events of the second half of the twentieth century, signaling the end of the Cold War.

No longer would another State or block of States be able to challenge or put at risk the economic, social and political system of the United States, whose military force had become the only one in the world since the second world war to have not a defensive, but an offensive mission. That is, it served not to protect its national borders, but to project itself on all the continents where it had placed the military commands representing its imperial power.²⁹ And these military commands began exerting a more significant influence on American foreign policy than the State department itself.

As the Soviet Union³⁰ crumbled, it not only lost dominion over its Eastern European states, but also over other republics, including those of the Baltic region, Central Asia and the Caucasus. Eight republics of this region (the Caucasus and Central Asia)—Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan,

²⁸Elizabeth Chamberlain, "Operation Restore Truth—U.S. relations with Somalia", Humanist, [FindArticles.com](https://www.findarticles.com), June 5, 2012.

²⁹The military commands were established by the United States with jurisdiction over continents and certain regions, dividing geographical responsibility: Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), Pacific Command (USPACOM), Central Command (USCENTCOM), European Command (USEUCOM), Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM). Commands with functional responsibility: Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM), Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM).

³⁰The Soviet Union was made up of 15 republics: Russia, Ukraine, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia.

Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan—proclaimed themselves as independent states, in which hundreds of ethnicities, linguistic groups and religious sects coexisted.

And general Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President George H. W. Bush, recommended that the government should preserve the “credible capability to forestall any potential adversary from competing militarily” with the United States,³¹ prevent Japan and Russia from remilitarizing and the European Union from becoming a military power outside of NATO, and discourage any challenge to its dominance or the established international economic and political order. He therefore signaled to the Armed Forces of Latin American countries what their new missions should be:

*to maintain only such military capabilities as are necessary for self-defense and alliance commitments, counter-narcotrafic efforts, disaster relief, international peacekeeping forces and consistent with their laws and constitutions and other missions, with the principles of the Organization of American States and United Nations Charters.*³²

Meanwhile, in 1992, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney issued a document in which he confirmed that the primary political and military mission of the United States after the Cold War was to prevent the emergence of any rival power in Europe, Asia or the now defunct Soviet Union. The goal was to ensure the status of *lonely*, hegemonic power to the United States as head and guide of an ultra-imperial system of western nations, attributing the monopoly of international violence to NATO as some sort of *global cop*. The original document—*Defense Planning Guidance*—drafted in 1990 together with Paul Wolfowitz, Lewis “Scooter” Libby and Eric Lewderman, all of them *neocons*, established that the strategic objective of the United States, as “*permanent unilateral superpower*”, consisted in gaining control of all Eurasia (Europe and Asia) and find the means “*to integrate the ‘new democracies’ of the former Soviet bloc into the U.S.-led system*”.³³

There was an awareness in Washington that the United States possessed “*overwhelming conventional military superiority*” and that the other nation-states could not threaten it directly. A direct and large-scale conflict, a conventional war, was therefore becoming increasingly unlikely. For the Pentagon, competition in an

³¹Powell (1992, p. 7). Draft Resolution—12 Cooperation for Security in the Hemisphere, Regional Contribution to Global Security—The General Assembly, recalling: Resolutions AG/RES. 1121 (XXX-091 and AG/RES. 1123 (XXI-091) for strengthening of peace and security in the hemisphere, and AG/RES. 1062 (XX090) against clandestine arms traffic.

³²Powell (1992, p. 7).

³³“Prevent the Reemergence of a New Rival”—The Making of the Cheney Regional Defense Strategy, 1991–1992—Declassified Studies from Cheney Pentagon Show Push for U.S. Military Predominance and a Strategy to “Prevent the Reemergence of a New Rival”—William Burr—National Security Archives. Ralph (2008, p. 257). Patrick E. Tyler, “U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Insuring No Rivals Develop A One-Superpower World. Pentagon’s Document Outlines Ways to Thwart Challenges to Primacy of America”, *The New York Times*, March 8, 1992. Jeffrey Steinberg, “LaRouche Demands Cheney’s Resignation”, *Executive Intelligence Review*, October 4, 2002.

international environment would coalesce into the undetermined and continuous use of instruments of power, especially with informal, “*irregular*”, “*asymmetric*” or “*unrestricted*” methods of war, such as guerrilla warfare, sabotage and insurgencies.³⁴ In this context of *unconventional war* (UW), the Special Operations Forces devoted themselves to the mission of *exporting democracy* and the *free market* in order to align the interests of recalcitrant countries with those of the United States.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Socialist block opened a *political vacuum*. And the deployment of the market economy, the exploitation of the immense oil and gas reserves and the construction of pipelines in the Caucasus region opened new opportunities for capitalist accumulation, that is, for the flow of capital from the western powers, particularly from the United States, to the non-capitalist economies of the newly independent countries. Soon President George H. W. Bush, his Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and the Prime Minister of Great Britain Tony Blair, were pressing the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Äbişılı Nazarbayev (since 1991), to secure large oil and gas exploration contracts, which could potentially rival those in Iraq, for Chevron, ConocoPhillips, Halliburton, British Petroleum and the BG Group.³⁵

In the 1990s, the United States was living its imperial *momentum*. It began to act internationally as *lonely*, hegemonic superpower, the sole center of authority, force and economic and political decision-making, dictating neoliberalism, based on the *Washington Consensus*,³⁶ as the path to economic

³⁴“Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare”. Field Manual No. 3-05.130—Headquarters Department of the Army, Washington, DC, 30 September 2008—DISTRIBUTION RESTRICTION: Distribution authorized to U.S. Government agencies and their contractors only to protect technical or operational information from automatic dissemination under the International Exchange Program or by other means. This determination was made on 28 August 2008. Other requests for this document must be referred to Commander, United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, ATTN: AOJK-DTD-JA, Fort Bragg, NC 28310-9610, or by e-mail to JAComments@soc.mil. DESTRUCTION NOTICE: Destroy by any method that will prevent disclosure of contents or reconstruction of the document. FOREIGN DISCLOSURE RESTRICTION (FD 6): This publication has been reviewed by the product developers in coordination with the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School foreign disclosure authority. This product is releasable to students from foreign countries on a case-by-case basis only. Headquarters, Department of the Army. This publication is available at Army Knowledge Online (www.us.army.mil) and General Dennis J. Reimer Training and Doctrine—Digital Library at (www.train.army.mil).

³⁵Aitken (2009, p. 168, 202).

³⁶The American economist John Williamson was author of the *Washington Consensus*, a document that contained ten recommendations for economic reform, which represented a broad consensus in Washington between members of Congress, the administration and technocrats of international financial institutions, economic agencies of the American government, the Federal Reserve Board, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and *think tanks*. These recommendations, which focused on monetary stability and the full restoration of market laws, consisted in: (1) Fiscal discipline; (2) Changes in public spending priorities; (3) Tax reform; (4) Positive interest rates; (5) Exchange rates dictated by the market; (6) Trade liberalization; (7) End of restrictions to foreign investments; (8) Privatization of state enterprises; (9) Deregulation of economic activities; (10) Guarantee of property rights. Williamson, 1990, pp. 9–33.

development.³⁷ By seeking greater multilateral commitments and emphasizing the interdependence of States in the globalization process,³⁸ President Bill Clinton (1993–2001) of the Democratic Party maintained significant portions of the foreign policy agenda of his Republican predecessors, Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, in the sense that he superimposed the concept of “*world government*”, i.e. the global governance under the leadership of the United States, over “*national sovereignty*”. This had been an increasing trend in American foreign policy since the end of the Second World War, and Democratic Senator J. William Fulbright explicitly stated in his book *Old Myths and New Realities* (1964): “*Indeed, the concept of national sovereignty has become in our time a principle of international anarchy*”, the most pervasive of the old myths “*that blind to the realities of our time*”.³⁹

2.5 Private Military Corporations

The recruitment of the first mercenaries to support (supply, maintenance etc.) the military services probably occurred in Incirlik Air Base, in Turkey, during Operation Desert Storm (1990–1991).⁴⁰ President Bill Clinton, however, advanced this *outsourcing* policy, the privatization of military services,⁴¹ in the mid-90s. This had been planned in the administration of President George H. W. Bush by his Secretary of Defense, Mr. Cheney, who had requested Brown & Root, the Engineering division of Halliburton, headquartered in Houston, to identify those services performed by the Armed Forces that could be taken over by the private sector.⁴² And so the *Private Military Contractors* (PMCs), mercenaries “*authorized to commit violence*” in name of their employers, gained ground. Or “*uncontrollable predatory bandits*” representing public power in the most remote regions, as professor Peter Dale Scott described them.⁴³ Jeremy Scahill wrote that these “*shadowy mercenary companies*”⁴⁴ employed “*some of the most feared professional killers in the world*”, accustomed to operate without regard for legal consequences, far from Congressional oversight; and with “*remarkable power and*

³⁷See Bresser-Pereira (2009, p. 29).

³⁸Ibid., p. 38.

³⁹Fulbright (1964, p. 87 e 147).

⁴⁰Chetterjee (2009, p. 56).

⁴¹Chesterman and Lehnardt (2007, p. 99).

⁴²Klein (2007, p. 291).

⁴³Peter Dale Scott, “The Real Grand Chessboard and the Profiteers of War”, Global Research, August 11, 2009.

⁴⁴The *Private Military Contractors* relived the *Grandes Compagnies*, the mercenary companies mobilized during the Hundred Years’ War (1337–1453), especially by Philippe De Bourgogne, Jean II and Charles V of France, and the *Condottieri*, hired by the city-states and the Papacy between 1350 and 1530.

protection within the U.S. war apparatus". They committed acts of violence "*with impunity, including the cold-blooded murder of non-combatant Civilians*".⁴⁵ President Bill Clinton gave lucrative contracts to Halliburton to operate in the wars in the Balkans—Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo (1999).⁴⁶ Cheney had taken the helm at the company after leaving the Secretary of Defense, and in 5 years he had doubled its turnover, which jumped from US\$ 1.2 billion to US\$ 2.3 billion, extracted from the United States Treasury.⁴⁷ And his personal wealth also increased.

"Counter-terrorism" continued to be "*a top priority for the Clinton Administration*", as the White House announced in 1995.⁴⁸ Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State during his administration, emphasized that terrorism was the most important threat the United States and the world would face in the beginning of the twenty-first century, and senior American officials recognized that terrorists were more than ever capable of obtaining and using nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

Politics in Washington, however, was still guided by the Cold War mentality and overflowing with triumphalism because of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Following the *Defense Planning Guidance* (DPG), President Bill Clinton violated the commitments President George H. W. Bush had made to President Mikhail S. Gorbachev and expanded NATO until the borders of Russia, incorporating states that previously belonged to the socialist block, such as the former Soviet republics of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. The United States also imposed its prominence on the Balkans with the breakup of former Yugoslavia, encouraged free market and democratic, i.e. pro-western, reforms in the Eastern European countries of the former Soviet Union's sphere of influence, and occupied the political *vacuum* caused by the debacle of the Soviet Union in the Baltic region, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Russian President Boris N. Yeltsin (1991–1999), no doubt pressured by his Armed Forces, wrote a letter to President Clinton opposing NATO's expansion to the countries of Eastern Europe, including the Czech Republic and Poland.⁴⁹ "We are against the expansion of NATO to the East toward the borders of the Russian Federation. We are firm in our position", reiterated Yeltsin before his meeting with Clinton in Helsinki in March 1997.⁵⁰ But Russia had been crippled since the end of the Soviet Union, involved in a war against the *mujahidin* in Chechnya, which drained at least US\$ 5 billion from its coffers, and mired in a deep financial crisis, which led Russia to a default on August 17, 1998. It had neither the strength nor the

⁴⁵Scahill (2007, pp. XVIII–XXVII).

⁴⁶Ibid., p. XVI.

⁴⁷Klein (2007, p. 292).

⁴⁸The White House—Office of the Press Secretary—Fact Sheet—Counter-Terrorism—The White House's Position on Terrorism—State Fair Arena, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, April 23, 1995.

⁴⁹Roger Cohen, "Yeltsin Opposes Expansion of NATO in Eastern Europe", *The New York Times*, October 2, 1993.

⁵⁰Richard C. Paddock, "Yeltsin Sees Deal on Expansion of NATO Diplomacy: Russian president says he still opposes spread of alliance but is committed to resolving dispute during meeting with Clinton in Helsinki next month", *Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 1997.

conditions to prevent NATO's continued incursions into its former eastern republics, such as Georgia and Ukraine, transforming itself into a kind of UN, a political arbitrator with authority to intervene against any regime, as it did in Serbia with the situation in Kosovo, which harbored an Albanian population,⁵¹ when Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina separated from Yugoslavia in the early 90s.

2.6 NED and Subversion in Yugoslavia

NATO and the United States bombed Serbia (and Montenegro) in Operation Allied Force between March and June 1999, killing more than 1200 civilians, according to the Yugoslav Committee for Cooperation with Unicef, although the numbers may be as high as 5000 and 5700, if a longer period and the various ways one can lose one's life, are considered. But the covert intervention in Serbia began in 1998, when a group of students sparked the movement called OTPOR (resistance), and with the financial support of the United States through the US National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which helped mobilize the population to overthrow the government of President Slobodan Milošević by calling for the *Bager revolucija* (Bulldozer Revolution) in 2000.⁵² Paul B. McCarthy, director of the National Endowment for Democracy funded by the United States Congress, revealed that after the disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation, his organization started giving assistance to movements advocating democracy in Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, and that after September 1998, a significant amount of dollars began to flow to OTPOR, with around US\$ 3 million being spent in Serbia.⁵³ The NED operated in conjunction with the Soros Foundation and some European foundations and concentrated funding on the following areas: independent media;

⁵¹George Friedman, "Georgia and Kosovo: A Single Intertwined Crisis", *Stratfor*, August 25, 2008.

⁵²Roger Cohen, "Who Really Brought Down Milosevic?", *The New York Times Magazine*, November 26, 2000. Vejvoda (2009, pp. 307–316). "After its success, Serbia's Otpor would continue receiving funds from the West and become a 'CIA-coup college' of sorts, under the name CANVAS, or 'Center for Applied Non-Violent Action and Strategies'. It appears that after the Egyptian April 6 Youth Movement finished attending the US State Department funded confab in New York City in 2008, it would make a trip to visit CANVAS in 2009. From there, it took CANVAS's 'curriculum' and apparently their logo, and began assembling a US-funded mob in Egypt. Amongst CANVAS's current 'partners' are the Albert Einstein Institution, Freedom House, and the International Republican Institute (IRI). The IRI includes amongst its board of directors John McCain, Lindsey Graham, and Brent Scowcroft. When John McCain says 'We should have seen this coming,' in regards to the unrest in Egypt, he obviously isn't talking about himself since he helped make it happen." Tony Cartalucci, "CIA Coup-College", *Land Destroyer Report*, February 19, 2011.

⁵³Roger Cohen, "Who Really Brought Down Milosevic?", *The New York Times Magazine*, November 26, 2000.

non-governmental organizations (NGOs); human rights organizations; *various think tanks*; trade unions, etc.⁵⁴

Of the US\$ 25 million corresponding to the budget of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in 1999, “*several hundred thousand dollars were given directly to OTPOR for demonstration-support material, like T-shirts and stickers*”, declared the Senior Director for Foreign Service of that organization.⁵⁵ In addition to other covert resources, the leaders of OTPOR received around US\$ 1.8 million in 1999 from the International Republican Institute (IRI), another non-governmental organization that sought to “*advance freedom and democracy worldwide by developing political parties, civic institutions, open elections, democratic governance and the rule of law*”.⁵⁶ The leaders of OTPOR—Srđa Popović and Davorin Popović—never denied receiving resources from the United States, but they argued that the money only accelerated Milošević’ fall, which would have happened sooner or later, and facilitated a non-violent transition. The European Union invested US\$ 17 million and between 1995 and 2002 the United States government added more than US\$ 23 million, mostly through USAID, to assist the opposition media alone.⁵⁷ During the 18 months preceding the fall of Slobodan Milošević, they spent a total of approximately US\$ 80 million.⁵⁸ And the multimillionaire George Soros, who had invested in Yugoslavia since 1991, spent more than US\$ 100 million to fund the anti-Milošević movement, including the OTPOR group. And when the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) took control after the expulsion of Serbian forces by NATO, he invested US\$ 50 million in an attempt to buy the Trepca mining complex, a conglomerate of about 40 mines and factories, most of them in Kosovo, valued at US\$ 5 billion.⁵⁹

⁵⁴Statement by Paul B. McCarthy National Endowment for Democracy to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe 2172 Rayburn House Office Building December 10, 1998, “How the U.S. has Created a Corrupt Opposition in Serbia”.

⁵⁵Roger Cohen, “Who Really Brought Down Milosevic?”, *The New York Times Magazine*, November 26, 2000.

⁵⁶The International Republican Institute: <http://www.iri.org/>

⁵⁷Rich McClear, Suzi McClear e Peter Graves, “U.S. Media Assistance Programs in Serbia—July 1997–June 2002”, PPC Evaluation Working Paper No. 10, Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, PN-ACT-553, November 2003.

⁵⁸Abel Polese and Donnacha Ó Beacháin, “The Color Revolution Virus and Authoritarian Antidotes Political Protest and Regime Counterattacks Regime in Post-Communist spaces,” Academia.edu.

⁵⁹Richard Poe, “George Soros and America’s Coming Election Crisis (Part 1)”, *FreeRepublic.com*, July 16, 2004.

2.7 Access to Oil and Gas, a Matter of US National Security

President Bill Clinton saw clearly that the national security of the United States mainly meant economic security, and that this depended on its international engagement, on the benefits it could bring to the American middle class, and on the efforts to encourage economic reforms and the opening of markets to foreign investments in all regions. The president himself stated that “*our ‘foreign’ policies are not really foreign at all*”.⁶⁰ National security could no longer be defined in the strict military terms of the Cold War and distinguish foreign from domestic policy.⁶¹ As President Lyndon B. Johnson (1963–1969) had done before him, Clinton blurred the distinction between the domestic and international responsibilities of the United States.⁶² And the conviction grew that if any other power would come to dominate Central Asia and the Middle East, then it would have a powerful weapon to threaten American society, whose energy security had become quite vulnerable, since it depended on imports for 50% or more of its oil. This became one of the most important guiding principles of American foreign policy after 1990. And Russia, Iran and Central Asia held 15% or more of global oil reserves and 50% of gas reserves.

The national security of the United States necessarily implied the control of energy resources and their transport routes in Central Asia and in the Middle East, where around 64.5% of known oil reserves are found, and in Africa, where around 90% of oil reserves and production was concentrated in six countries—Nigeria, Libya, Algeria, Angola (oil), Sudan (oil) and Egypt (gas). Production had increased in these countries from 53.3 billion barrels in 1980, to 117.2 billion in 2006, and approximately 210 billion in 2012, representing around 13% of world reserves.⁶³ But important reserves were also discovered in Ghana, Tanzania, Mozambique and Uganda, with exploration of fields in other countries, such as Sierra Leone, Mali and Kenya. All unstable countries, where oil interests probably contributed to the escalation of the tribal and ethnic conflicts, constant revolts and civil wars that plagued these nations.

⁶⁰“A New Covenant for American Security”, Remarks by Governor Bill Clinton to Students at Georgetown University in 1991, December 12, 1991. William J. Clinton Presidential Center.

⁶¹*Ibid.*

⁶²President Lyndon B. Johnson declared on January 20, 1965: “*Terrific dangers and troubles we once called ‘foreign’ now live among us. If American lives must end, and American treasure be spilled in countries that we barely know, then that is the price that change has demanded for conviction and of our enduring government.*” *The President’s Inaugural Address*, January 20, 1965.

⁶³Aaron Levitt, “Africa: The Next Great Energy Growth Story—Often ignored continent just waiting to break out”, *Investor Place*, February 23, 2012.

Chapter 3

The Second Cold War Under the Sign of Oil and Gas

3.1 Oil Potential of the Caspian Sea and US Penetration in the Heartland of Eurasia

In 1994, the United States Department of Energy estimated that there were enormous potential oil reserves in the region of the Caspian Sea. These reserves could diversify American sources of import and reduce the dependence on the Persian Gulf. This idea guided the strategic objective of the United States to expand its influence and domain over Central Asia, a region spanning one million square miles including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, countries with vast natural resources, and which are surrounded by China, Russia, South Asia and the Middle East. The geopolitical priority of the US was to pull the countries of the Central Asian/Caucasian space into the orbit of the Euro-Atlantic sphere through military involvement and a policy of *regime change* and *nation-building*, installing governments that would go along with a free-market economy, open trade and western investments, and allow it to control oil and gas resources and their transportation routes.¹

In the 90s, the United States advanced and penetrated into the *heartland* of Eurasia, especially into Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, all countries on the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea that had seceded from the socialist block, but not yet integrated into the global capitalist system². They were once the poorest republics of the former Soviet Union, but they also possessed

¹Salih Dogan, "Tajikistan in the New Central Asia: Geopolitics, Great Power Rivalry and Radical Islam". *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*. Ajay Patnaik, "Regime Change and US Geopolitical strategy in Central Asia", *Eurasia Critic*, May 2008. See a map of Central Asia in: http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-GW_dDcbl7tc/T6ERIUjf8AI/AAAAAAAAACRA/Yfz7yfid30c/s1600/Central-Asia-Political-Map.png. Accessed 11.03.2015.

²"Der Imperialismus ist der politische Ausdruck des Prozesses der Kapitalakkumulation in ihrem Konkurrenzkampf um die Reste des noch nicht mit Beschlag belegten nichtkapitalistischen Weltmilieu". Luxemburg (1990, p. 391).

vast reserves of crude oil, equal to or greater than those of Saudi Arabia, and the richest natural gas reserves in the world, a proven, virtually untapped reservoir of 236 trillion cubic meters.

The reserves of Uzbekistan were estimated at over 2 trillion cubic meters of gas and 594 million barrels of oil, exploited in 171 oil and gas fields, 60% of which in the region of Bukhara–Kiva, which was responsible for 70% of the country's oil production, and 20% in the region of Fergana.³ The oil reserves of Kazakhstan, estimated at more than 4 billion barrels, ranked second among the countries of the extinct Soviet Union. The country also had proven natural gas reserves in the order of 65–70 trillion cubic feet.⁴ The total value of the hydrocarbon reserves held by Kazakhstan was US\$ 8.7 trillion. The Task Force chaired by Dick Cheney estimated that the proven reserves of these two countries—Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan—and of sectors of the Caspian Sea amounted to 20 billion barrels, more than in the North Sea and slightly less than in the United States.⁵

Turkmenistan had more than 3 trillion cubic meters in gas reserves.⁶ The total oil reserves of the entire region could exceed the 60 billion barrel mark, and even reach as high as 200 billion, as John J. Maresca, Vice President of International Relations of the UNOCAL Corporation, revealed in his testimony to the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific and the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives on February 12, 1998. And the western companies had the means to increase production by more than 500%, from something in the order of only 870,000 barrels in 1995, to 4.5 million in 2010, the equivalent to 5% of global crude oil production.⁷

President Bill Clinton's administration estimated through its National Security Strategy that the Caspian Sea basin held reserves of 160 billion barrels, which would play an important role in satisfying the world's increasing demand for energy.⁸ To maintain control and ensure the security of these energy resources and oil and gas pipelines, the United States began militarizing the transport routes from the eastern Mediterranean to the edge of China's western borders, to win the *Great Game* in the *heartland* of Eurasia. That is why the document *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* provided that, "*to deter aggression and secure our own interests, we maintain about 100,000 military personnel in the region*".⁹ And further on:

³Energy-Oil, available on: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/centralasia/uzbek-energy.htm>

⁴"Kazakhstan natural gas industry overview and features. About Kazakhstan", available on: <http://aboutkazakhstan.com/about-kazakhstan-economy/natural-gas>

⁵Scahill (2007, p. 189).

⁶Bernard A. Gelb, "Caspian Oil and Gas: Production and Prospects", CRS Report for Congress, Order Code RS21190, September 8, 2006, Resources, Science, and Industry Division EIA, Caspian Sea Region: Survey of Key Oil and Gas Statistics and Forecasts, July 2006.

⁷Moniz Bandeira (2006, pp. 585–586).

⁸A National Security Strategy for a New Century, The White House, December 1999, available on: <http://clinton4.nara.gov/media/pdf/nssr-1299.pdf>

⁹Ibid.

A stable and prosperous Caucasus and Central Asia will facilitate rapid development and transport to international markets of large Caspian oil and gas resources with substantial US commercial participations. Resolution of regional conflicts such as Nagorno-Karabakh¹⁰ and Abkhazia is important for creating the stability necessary for development and transport of Caspian resources.¹¹

3.2 The Silk Road Strategy

In 1999, the United States Congress approved the *Silk Road*¹² Strategy (SRS), renewing the *Foreign Assistance Act of 1961*, in order to increase the assistance, economic support and the political independence of the countries of the southern Caucasus and Central Asia, advance American geostrategic interests in the region, and oppose the growing political influence of regional powers like China, Russia and Iran.¹³ The *Silk Road Strategy* laid out that this region of the southern Caucasus and Central Asia could produce enough oil and gas to reduce American dependence on the energy resources of the unstable and volatile Persian Gulf.¹⁴ Some calculations indicated that “landlocked” Central Asia could supply more than 80% of the oil imported by the United States by around 2050, which explains the urgent need to control the oil reserves of the region and the pipelines through Afghanistan and Turkey.

¹⁰After the collapse of the Soviet Union, an ethnic conflict flared up in Nagorno-Karabakh, the enclave situated in the southwest of Azerbaijan. There was ethnic cleansing, pogroms and thousands of people had to take refuge in neighboring countries. Armenia invaded and occupied the territory. Azerbaijan went to war with Armenia from 1992 to 1994, when Russia managed to broker a ceasefire. The enclave is under the de facto government of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, although it's not recognized, and it's occupied by Armenian settlers, although the UN recognizes Nagorno Karabakh as belonging to Azerbaijan. Gerald Frost, “Azerbaijan—A Pivotal Nation in a Critical Region—A Study of Azerbaijan since Independence”, Caspian Information Centre, September 2011, pp. 30–40. Kleveman (2003, pp. 128–129) and Brzezinski (1997, pp. 128–129).

¹¹A National Security Strategy for a New Century, The White House, December 1999, available on: <http://clinton4.nara.gov/media/pdf/nssr-1299.pdf>. See also: Geopolitical Projections of the Caspian Sea. <http://www.steinbergrecherche.com/20050927%20persien%20zentral.jpg>, Accessed 11.03.2015.

¹²The *Silk Road* or *Seidenstraße*, as the German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen named it in the nineteenth century, is probably the most ancient trade route in history. It dates back to thousands of years before Christ, probably to the eighth Millennium, and through it trade caravans flowed, establishing the connection between Asia and Europe. Marco Polo (1254–1324), a Merchant from Venice, traveled it in the thirteenth century going until China, where he met the emperor Kublai Khan (1215–1294). This 7000 mile-long route began in Chang’An (current X’ian), in China, crossed Asia, the north of India and the Middle East—Iran, Syria, Iraq, Jordan—until Europe.

¹³Silk Road Strategy Act of 1999, 106th CONGRESS—1st Session—S. 579.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

The Shah Deniz Production Sharing Agreement (PSA) consortium operated one of the largest natural-gas condensate fields in the world, located in the deep waters of the Caspian Sea to the southwest of Baku, and which should produce 8.6 billion cubic meters of gas per year, i.e., 50,000 barrels. After December 2006, this consortium began transporting gas from Azerbaijan via Georgia to Turkey. Until its final phase, The Shah Deniz FFD would be using three pipelines: the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP), in operation since May 21, 2006, and, after 2019, the Trans-Anatolian-Pipeline (Transanap) and the Trans-Adria-Pipeline (TAP). The United States was clearly diverting the gas supply routes to the West away from Russia. The Nabucco pipeline served the same purpose: diverting the western energy supply routes away from Russia. Preparations for this pipeline began in 2002 as a rival to the Gazprom-Eni South Stream project. It was signed-off in 2009 and should be completed in 2017, taking gas from the Caspian Sea via Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary to Austria.

3.3 Oil: The Priority of George W. Bush's Administration

With the rise of George W. Bush to the Presidency—“*he was installed, not elected*”—,¹⁵ the *neocons*, the “*hard right*” of the Republican Party, took it upon themselves to guide American foreign policy according to the *Defense Planning Guidance* (DPG) and the *Project for the new American Century* (PNAC). Their objective was to increase defense spending, strengthen democratic ties and challenge those “regimes hostile to the interests and values” of the United States, promote “political freedom” throughout the world, and assume for the United States the exclusive role of preserving and extending “an international order *friendly* to our security, our prosperity, and our principles.”

After his inauguration in early 2001, increasing the flow of oil from abroad became President Bush's top priority because of the reduction of American oil and natural gas stocks. This fact was made more salient by the *blackouts* in California arising from market manipulation, while oil imports were poised to exceed 50% of internal consumption. And the attacks of September 11, 2001, against the twin-towers of the World Trade Center in New York served as *casus belli* to invade Afghanistan and allowed Washington, under the banner of the *war on terrorism*, to intensify the militarization of its foreign policy and to deploy its campaign to secure the energy resources—gas and oil—and supply routes of the Hindu Kush mountains, ranging from Afghanistan and Northwestern Pakistan to the Bosphorus, involving Iran and the Middle East.¹⁶

¹⁵The Supreme Court of the United States handed the victory to George W. Bush against his opponent of the Democrat Party, Albert Gore, by a 5-4 decision. Blumenthal (2004, p. 771).

¹⁶Brzezinski (1983, pp. 443–446).

3.4 Operation Against the Taliban Planned Before 9/11

President George W. Bush said in 2004 that the attacks of September 11 “*had been the Pearl Harbor of the third war—against terrorism*”.¹⁷ In fact, the attacks had been neither accidental nor surprising. They were convenient. The diplomat Niaz Naik, former secretary of Foreign Relations in Pakistan, revealed to the BBC that he had been informed by American officials in Berlin that the United States was planning the operation against the Taliban before the attacks of September 11. The military operation would have been executed in mid-October from bases in Tajikistan and its objective was to kill or capture Bin Ladin and Mullah Omar and install a moderate transition government with the former King Zahir Shah.¹⁸ General Hamid Gul, former Director General of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in Pakistan, also considered that the plans to overthrow the Taliban regime “*predated 9/11*”,¹⁹ so much so that RQ-1 Predator drones, the unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) that first took flight in 1994, were flying over Afghanistan to monitor the region before the terrorist attacks against the WTC and the Pentagon.²⁰

In his book *The Grand Chessboard* (1997), Zbigniew Brzezinski recalled that the American public had only supported American involvement in the Second World War because of the shock caused by Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor.²¹ A plot that had been hatched 5 years earlier in a cave in Afghanistan could not have gone unnoticed to the most sophisticated and expensive human and electronic espionage system, A system that had swallowed trillions of dollars in spending since the Cold War, according to John Farmer, senior consultant of the 9/11 Commission of the US congress.²² Richard Clarke, National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counter-terrorism during the administration of President George W. Bush, revealed in his memoirs that he had received repeated warnings about the threat of al-Qa’ida to the United States before September 11.²³ The warnings of terrorist attacks against the United States increased “*dramatically*”²⁴ since the Millennium Alert, a plot that was expected to occur on December 31st during the transition to the year 2001.

On January 5, 2001, 8 months before the attack on the Twin Towers, the French intelligence service *Direction Générale des Services Extérieurs* (DGSE) had warned the American government in a five page memo—“*Projet de détournement d’avion par des islamistes radicaux*”—that al-Qa’ida could be planning suicide

¹⁷Blix (2005a, p. 278).

¹⁸“US ‘planned attack on Taleban’”, *BBC News*, September 18, 2001.

¹⁹Jeremy R. Hammond, “Ex-ISI Chief Says Purpose of New Afghan Intelligence Agency RAMA Is ‘to Destabilize Pakistan’”, *Foreign Policy Journal*, August 12, 2009.

²⁰“Armed UAV Operations 10 Years on”, *Stratfor—Global Intelligence*, January 12, 2012.

²¹Brzezinski (1997, p. 25) and Ruppert (2004, p. 575).

²²Farmer (2009, pp. 91–92).

²³Clarke (2004, p. X).

²⁴Farmer (2009, pp. 54–55).

attacks in New York and Washington, according to a document revealed by the journalist Guillaume Dasquié in the French newspaper *Le Monde*, on April 4, 2007.

Three of the hijackers had entered the United States using passports that tied them to Islamic extremism and al-Qa'ida; two others used passports that had been fraudulently manipulated; and again two others had had visa problems.²⁵ Nevertheless, they entered the United States 33 times in 22 months through nine airports.²⁶ And the journalists Evan Thomas and Mark Hosenball wrote in *Newsweek* that one day before the attacks, i.e., on September 10, senior officers of the Pentagon suddenly canceled travel plans for the next morning, apparently because of security issues. The state of alert state had been declared 2 weeks before and an urgent warning was received by the Pentagon on the eve of September 11, which led “a group of top Pentagon officials” to suspend their travel plans.²⁷ *Newsweek* reported that the upper echelons of the United States military intelligence community were in on something and seriously considered the information. The *9/11 Commission Report* of the US Congress stated that “Bush and his principal advisers had all received briefing on terrorism, including bin Ladin”.²⁸ Two months before the September 11 attacks against the twin towers of the World Trade Center (WTC), President George W. Bush had been informed by both the CIA and the FBI about the possibility of terrorists hijacking a plane and using it to attack some target in the United States. According to the *9/11 Commission Report*, he received a “top-secret briefing memo” prepared by the CIA and entitled *Bin Laden Determined to Strike in U.S.* on August 6, 2001 (see Annex 3).²⁹

3.5 The Warning of Agent Phoenix

This document, which was declassified on April 10, 2004 under pressure from Congress, carried a message from agent Phoenix (Kenneth Williams) of the FBI, stating that “clandestine, foreign government, and media reports indicate Bin Laden since 1997 has wanted to conduct terrorist attacks in the US”, following the example of the terrorist Ramzi Yousef, who had detonated a bomb underneath the WTC on February 26, 1993. Agent Phoenix declared he had not been able

to corroborate some of the most sensational threats, such as a [redacted] service report of 1998 saying that Bin Ladin wanted to hijack an American aircraft to gain the release of the

²⁵Ibid., p. 337.

²⁶Ibid., p. 337.

²⁷Michael Hirsh, “We have hit the targets”, *Newsweek*, 13/9/2001. Evan Thomas and Mark Hosenball, “Bush: “‘We’re at War’. As the deadliest attack on American soil in history opens a scary new kind of conflict, the manhunt begins”, *Newsweek*, 24/9/2001.

²⁸*The 9/11 Commission Report—Final of National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*, Authorized Edition, p. 198.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 128–129, 198, 254–262, 272.

“Blind Sheykh” [as Sheykh Umar Abd al-Rahman was known] and other extremists held in the United States. FBI Information from that time further indicated patterns of suspicious activity in the country that were consistent with the preparations of hijackings or other types of attack, including recent stakeouts of federal buildings in New York.

Professor Amy B. Zegart of the University of California considered that even though the agent Phoenix *memo* didn’t contain a direct warning of the September 11 plot, it was “*a timely and outstanding piece of strategic analysis*”, including a serious and severe warning about the security of the United States and recommendations on what the FBI and the CIA could do.³⁰ Robert Mueller, appointed FBI director on September 4, 2001, later reflected that “*you are not going to have a better intelligence product than the Phoenix memo*”.³¹

National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and White House spokesman Ary Fleischer implicitly confirmed they knew that an attack would occur, even if not how it would be carried out, when they claimed that nobody imagined “the use of planes as missiles” or that they would be launched against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.³² Other White House officials explained that President George W. Bush didn’t take the warning very seriously because there was a lack of more recent information. And the lieutenant general of the Air Force Michael V. Hayden, director of the National Security Agency (NSA), justified this by saying there was no indication that al-Qa’ida was targeting New York and Washington, or even that it was planning an attack on American soil.

But Eleanor Hill, former Inspector General for the Department of Defense and head of the team formed by the congressional Committee to investigate the 9/11 attacks, revealed that the CIA, the FBI and other intelligence services of the United States had repeatedly received reports between 1998 and August 2001 regarding a potential al-Qa’ida attack on Washington and New York, using aircraft or other means. The *International Herald Tribune* reported that the joint committee of the Senate-House of Representatives established that certain administration analysts in Washington had already pinpointed the possibility that terrorists would use “airplanes as weapons”.

Andreas von Bülow is the author of the best seller *Die CIA und der 11 September*, former Secretary of State of the German Ministry of Defense (1976) and former Minister of Research and Technology (1980–1982) in the Helmut Schmidt government. In his capacity as parliament member and supervisor of the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND, the German intelligence service), he found it strange that American intelligence would do nothing to prevent the attacks from occurring, but then go on to release, only 48 h after the strikes, the names of the 19 kidnappers, of which 13 were Saudis (the others were from Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon, there were no Afghanis or Iraqis), in addition to

³⁰Zegart (2007, pp. 160–161).

³¹Ibid., p. 161.

³²Griffin (2004, p. 67).

pinpointing the Saudi millionaire Usamah bin Ladin, leader of al-Qa'ida, as the operation's Mastermind.³³

The CIA had a lot of information on the activities of the terrorists. In 1999, the Bundesnachrichtendienst had already provided the name and phone number of Marwan al-Shehhi, the terrorist who took control of flight United Airlines 175 and slammed it into one of the towers of the World Trade Center. The names were obtained by monitoring the telephone of Muhammad Heidar Zammar, a militant Islamist residing in Hamburg who was intimately tied to the al-Qa'ida conspirators in the coordination of the September 11 attacks. Some of the terrorists, like Zechariah Moussaoui, Ahmed Ressam, Khalid Almihdhar, Nawaf al-Hazmi and Salim al-Hazmi, had already been detained by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) of the United States and were being watched by the CIA and the FBI.

It was no secret to either the CIA or the FBI that Zechariah Moussaoui, who had even been arrested before September 11, had been taking flight lessons at the Airman Flight School in Norman (Oklahoma) and at the Pan-Am International Flight Academy in Eagan, Minnesota. An FBI agent who handled the case of Zacharias Moussaoui in conjunction with the representative of the Minneapolis Joint Terrorism Task Force quickly realized that Moussaoui had "*jihadist beliefs*" and suspected that he was planning to hijack a plane and training for a potential attack. But the FBI put a stop to the investigation claiming there was no probable cause.³⁴ Muhammad Heidar Zammar was probably also under CIA surveillance, between May and June 2001, when he was taking flying lessons in Frankfurt/Main, Germany. But strangely enough nothing was passed on to the INS and he was allowed to enter the United States and to take pilot lessons, including at the Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama. Muhammad Atta was also allowed to enter the country after a trip to Germany, despite the violation of his visa status.

For Andreas von Bülow, there was no credibility to the official version of the American government and he admitted that the attacks of September 11 could possibly have been a covert action, since the oil companies wanted to secure the reserves of the middle east before they dried up. It's without a doubt difficult, if not impossible, to collect all the evidence of a covert operation, especially since most of it has certainly been destroyed.

Eckehardt Werthbach, ex-president of the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV) (1991–1995), Germany's internal security service, however, also remarked that the "deadly accuracy" and the "magnitude of the planning" behind 9/11 would have required years of preparation and that such a sophisticated operation would require the "fixed frame" of a state intelligence service, something not found in the

³³Bülow (2003, pp. 44–54).

³⁴Schwartz (2002, p. 238).

isolated group of terrorists led by Muhammad Atta, who studied in Hamburg.³⁵ The former president of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf revealed in his memoirs—*In the Line of fire*—that in early October 2001, the *Khufiya Bureau*—India’s Central Intelligence Bureau (IB), was informed that, shortly before 9/11, general Mahmoud Ahmad, head of the ISI, had ordered Omar Ahmed Saeed Sheikh,³⁶ a terrorist who also had ties with the British MI6, to send a wire to Dubai requesting the transfer of US\$100,000 to two banks in Florida, as payment to Muhammad Atta.³⁷

Sibel Edmonds, who worked with classified documents as a translator of Turkish, Farsi and other Central Asian languages for the Washington Field Office (WFO) of the FBI,³⁸ also revealed in the *Mike Malloy Show* (2009) that the United States maintained “*intimate relations*” with bin Ladin and the Taliban “*all the way until that day of September 11*”.³⁹ The “*high-level*” of corruption, said Sibel Edmonds, compromised the ability of the American intelligence community to continue its investigation of the people who planned the 9/11 attacks and that this was the “*key mechanism*” ensuring Congress stayed quiet.⁴⁰ The terrorists had been incubated precisely by the “*key allies*” of the United States, such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. “*Both Republican and Democratic representatives in the House and Senate came up in FBI counterintelligence investigations for taking bribes from foreign agents*”, she added.⁴¹

The Congress’ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, however, possessed 27 classified pages linked to documents showing that the government of Saudi Arabia not only had provided significant resources and assistance to the hijackers, but also that it had authorized the flow of millions of dollars to al-Qa’ida through suspicious charitable organizations (*Saudi-sponsored charities*), such as the *zakah*, the religious tribute that Muslims must pay each year to the poorest members

³⁵Christopher Bollyn, “European intelligence experts not believing Bush’s war on terrorism is all it is claimed to be because 9–11 was ‘not’ just the work of terrorists—Euro intel experts dismiss ‘war on terrorism’ as deception”, *American Free Press*, December 4, 2001, December 10, 2001, Centre for Research on Globalisation (CRG), globalresearch.ca, December 12, 2001. Vidal (2002, p. 52).

³⁶Saeed Sheikh was responsible for the kidnapping and murder of Daniel Pearl, reporter of the *Wall Street Journal*. According to the former president of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf, he also worked for MI6 when studying at the London School of Economics, in London, and he was sent to the Balkans (Kosovo) to join the operations of the jihadis and “*at some point, he probably became a rogue or double agent*”. Musharraf (2006, pp. 224–225).

³⁷Chidanand Rajghatta, “US to try KSM for Pearl murder”, *The Times of India*, October 14, 2006.

³⁸Sibel Edmonds was obstructed twice (2002 and 2004), by George W. Bush’s prosecutor-General John Ashcroft, from testifying in the Senate Judiciary Committee on the attacks of September 11, citing the principle of “*State secrets privilege*”.

³⁹“Bombshell: Bin Laden Worked for US Until 9/11”, a partial transcript from an interview Sibel Edmonds gave to Brad Friedman, guest-hosting the *Mike Malloy Show* (audio), *Daily Kos*, Jul 31, 2009.

⁴⁰Ahmed, “Al Qaeda: Enemy or Asset?”, *CounterPunch*. <http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/05/20/al-qaeda-enemy-or-asset/>

⁴¹*Ibid.*

of the Muslim community (*ummah*).⁴² “*I am convinced that there was a direct line between at least some of the terrorists who carried out the September 11th attacks and the government of Saudi Arabia*,” declared democratic Senator Bob Graham from Florida.⁴³ And former Senator Bob Kerrey from Nebraska stated in the Congressional Commission that “*significant questions remain unanswered*” regarding the role of Saudi institutions in the September 11 attacks, and that they had not been properly investigated.⁴⁴ But the fact was that while Washington pointed to the charitable organizations as the main source of funding for al-Qa’ida, it also worked hard to hide that the resources originated in part from drug trafficking activities and the illegal arms trade.⁴⁵

On June 26, 2003, Senator Jon Kyl opened the session of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security of the Committee on the Judiciary by declaring that Wahhabism was “*a major force behind terrorist groups, like Al Qaeda*”, which according to the FBI, was the “*number one terrorist threat to the U.S. today*”.⁴⁶ And, citing the scholar Bernard Lewis, the senator declared that its oil revenues had enabled Saudi Arabia to spread “*this fanatical, destructive form of Islam*” throughout the Muslim world. He added that “*without oil and the creation of the Saudi kingdom, Wahhabism would have remained a lunatic fringe*”.⁴⁷ According to sources in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi monarchy donated approximately US\$ 70 billion as aid in the last 25 years, since the mid-70s. According to information from other countries, however, this amount should be closer to 281 billion Saudi riyal, the equivalent to US\$ 2.5 billion per year.⁴⁸ In the same session of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Stephen Schwartz of the Foundation for the defense of Democracies revealed that 80% of the mosques in the United States, at least 600 of a total of 1200, were under Wahhabi control.⁴⁹ There were also Shiite and Sufi organizations, said Schwartz, but he stressed that the Wahhabis were virtually the only ones who had access to and were received by the White House, in addition to basically being the sole interlocutors of the FBI.⁵⁰

⁴²Josh Meyer, “Report Links Saudi Government to 9/11 Hijackers, Sources Say”, *Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 2003.

⁴³Eric Lichtblau, “Saudi Arabia May Be Tied to 9/11, 2 Ex-Senators Say”, *The New York Times*, February 29, 2012.

⁴⁴Ibid. Rym Momtaz and Trevor J. Ladd, “Ex-Senators Say Saudi Arabia May Be Linked to 9/11”, *ABC News*, March 1, 2012.

⁴⁵Edmonds (2012, pp. 97–98).

⁴⁶*Terrorism: Growing Wahhabi Influence in the United States*, Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology And Homeland Security of the Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate—One Hundred Eighth Congress—First Session June 26, 2003- Serial No. J-108-21—Printed for the use of the Committee on the Judiciary—Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office—91–326 DTP 2004. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-108shrg91326/pdf/CHRG-108shrg91326.pdf>. Accessed 16.10.2014.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 15.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 15.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 17–19.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 22.

Saudi Arabia had always maintained a two-faced policy. On the one hand, it was an ally of the United States, from whom it received armaments and luscious commissions in exchange for oil, and with whom it did other types of big business, including with the family of President George W. Bush and the Carlyle Group.⁵¹ On the other, the Saudis wouldn't accept the presence of US troops, who they considered to be infidels, near Islam's holy cities of Mecca (*Makka al-Mukarrama*) and Medina, and they funded and encouraged the most radical trends of the Wahhabi-Salafi sect.⁵² The Saudi monarchy endorsed the madrassas and mosques fostering the *Jihadists* and managed the charitable organizations that funded them. And through these channels they pointed them toward the West without leaving clues.⁵³ al-Qa'ida's main objective was to expel the American armed forces stationed in those cities and in the Arab Peninsula, and 95% of Saudis supported bin Ladin on this issue.⁵⁴

It would have been very hard for one man, hidden in some cave in Kandahar or Tora Bora in the Hindu Kush mountains, the likely whereabouts of bin Ladin, to organize and guide attacks of that scale against the WTC and the Pentagon, unless he could count on the support of the intelligence service of some state. The leader of the Taliban, Mullah Muhammad Omar, publicly stated on September 14 that he regretted the terrorist incident and denied that Usamah bin Ladin had been involved, for he wouldn't have been able to undertake such a sophisticated operation.⁵⁵ John Farmer, Advisor of the 9/11 Commission of the United States Congress, subsequently declared that, at some level and at a certain point, "*there was an agreement not to tell the truth about what had happened*".⁵⁶ Likewise, general Hamid Gul, Director-General of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) between 1987 and 1989, described the attacks to the 9/11 Commission of the United States Congress as "*a cover up*". And he added: "*I think the American people have been*

⁵¹President George W. Bush himself, who owned the company Arbusto Energy, was involved in the transactions, which were denounced as irregular and illegal, with the firm Harken Energy in the early 90s, together with the broker James R. Bath, director of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, representative of Saudi interests, including the bin Ladin family. Jonathan Beaty e S. C. Gwynne, "A Mysterious Mover of Money and Planes", *Time Magazine*, October 28, 1991. Wisniewski, 2003, pp. 328–332.

⁵²Wahhabism is one of the branches of Sunni Islam, founded by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792), who wanted to purge Islam of the impurities and contamination by the more modern customs exported by Europe. The terms *Wahhabi* and *Salafi*, just as *ahl al-Hadith* (people of Hadith), refer to practically the same current, but Wahhabism is an even more conservative perspective predominant in Saudi Arabia. It has great influence in the Middle East and influences the education of various Shaikhs because of the traditional alliance between political and financial power of the house of Abdul-Aziz (1876–1953), known as Ibn Saud and a follower of the teachings of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. It was under his tyranny that the large-scale exploitation of oil (discovered in 1938) by Standard Oil of California and other American companies began in 1944.

⁵³Baer (2003, pp. 205–207) and Ahmed (2002, pp. 194–197).

⁵⁴Pape (2005, p. 43, 51 e 182).

⁵⁵Van Linschoten and Kuehn (2012, p. 227).

⁵⁶Scott (2010, p. 194).

made fools of."⁵⁷ Andreas von Bülow, in turn, alluded to the possibility of a covert operation to influence and brainwash the American people for a very prolonged conflict with the Muslim world in order to conquer Eurasia, the "Geopolitical prize", as Brzezinski put it,⁵⁸ and to capture the oil and gas reserves from the Caspian Sea to the Middle East.⁵⁹

In any case, the terrorists of al-Qa'ida, who had once been fostered by the CIA, ISI, and Saudi Arabia to combat the Soviet Union in the 80s, now came to represent the deep, underground forces in the Arab world, and in Saudi Arabia in particular, where the people were imbued with fundamentalism and unwilling to accept the alliance of their monarchy with the United States, especially because they considered that the permanence of American troops on their land desecrated their holy places, something that was perceived as a sacrilege and offense throughout the Muslim world. These forces would spread across the Middle East until the Caucasus. As the Portuguese political scientist António de Sousa Lara keenly observed, this outbreak of Islamic fundamentalism represented, above all, "the most recent reaction against secularism, against westernization and the oligarchies deriving from it, against reformism and the compromise between the *Qur'an* and Western Progress", or, to put it more succinctly, "a crisis of identity in the Arab world".⁶⁰

The oil-driven development process has enriched the Arabs, but it also contaminated them with western habits, including its consumerism, its addictions, its pleasures and its individualism. The more religiously inclined, relying on the five pillars of Islam (*ark n-al-Islām*), on the *Ahadith*, the traditions of the Prophet, considered this dishonorable and sacrilegious, the marks of American culture, which threatened to destroy Islam through the globalization, interdependence and secular trade promoted by the United States.⁶¹ But the strategic objective of the sectarian monarchies of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, with their "semifeudal" regime, as Henry Kissinger had classified them,⁶² had always been to expand the Salafist/Wahhabi doctrine and purge Islam of its impurities, funding terrorist groups, including in the Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina), in Chechnya and in several other countries, and promoting the *Jihad*, especially after they acquired enormous wealth through the production of oil. Instead of modernizing the archaic social structure of the Wahhabi sect, the oil-driven rise in economic power had strengthened it as *instrumentum regni*. In 1940, the house of Saud created the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (*mutawwa*), the religious police, and instructed its soldiers, the *mutawwi'in*, with the mission of scouring markets, public squares and commercial complexes to preserve Islamic law, the *shari'ah*, and prevent the occurrence of anything that was forbidden.

⁵⁷Jeremy R. Hammond, "Ex-ISI Chief Says Purpose of New Afghan Intelligence Agency Rama Is 'to Destabilize Pakistan'", *Foreign Policy Journal*, -August 12, 2009.

⁵⁸Brzezinski (1997, p. 30).

⁵⁹"Former German Defense Minister Confirms CIA Involvement in 9/11: Alex Jones Interviews Andreas von Bülow", *Prison Planet*. Bülow (2003).

⁶⁰Sousa Lara (2005, p. 635).

⁶¹Wright (2006, pp. 194–197).

⁶²Kissinger (2001, p. 364).

3.6 NATO in Afghanistan to Clear the Way for Business

Saudi Arabia is not exactly a nation-state. It's a patrimonial family State, a set of tribes, regions and religious factions that the monarchy had managed to unite and subjugate, appropriating the oil profits (*ribh*), accumulating wealth (80% of the country's revenue) and releasing the population from paying taxes for the, more often than not, low quality services it received: education, health care and cheap energy.⁶³ The population has never known the budget of the country, which in 2011 had around US\$ 400 billion in reserves.⁶⁴ Everything has always belonged to king Abdullah and the al-Saud family. Using contracts of the King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz Foundation for Development Housing Dedicated to his Parents and the Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Humanitarian City, which counted the bin Ladins amongst its donors, the al-Saud family transferred funds to develop charity institutions for the population.⁶⁵ But social inequality grew, the standard of living of the middle class fell dramatically since 2006, and the poor were still living in tents, in dirty, arid lands with limited electricity. And so the youth started to become more vocal in their criticism of the monarchy for its loyalty to the United States instead of Islam.⁶⁶

In a certain sense, the "*Islamic resurgence*", as Samuel P. Huntington defined it, represented an acceptance of modernity, but at the same time a rejection of western culture, a commitment to the *Qur'an*. For Islam is not only a religion but a "*way of life*",⁶⁷ which is identified with the State itself. In Saudi Arabia and other countries of the Gulf there has never been any separation of powers. Muslims had of course always ventured in trade, and during the Middle Ages their produce was carried directly to the market for the exchange of values,⁶⁸ but the ruling traditions of the *Sunna* and the *Ahadiths* hindered the evolution of their social and cultural structures according to western parameters. According to Oswald Spengler, the *Qur'an* was, by its very nature, unconditionally right and therefore unchangeable and incapable of improvement.⁶⁹ And the *Ulamas* (the interpreters of the *Qur'an* and *Sunna*) of the puritan Wahhabi sect that dominated Saudi Arabia, instructed Muslims to be submissive and obedient, even if imperfect, to attain perfection in Paradise. As its ideological apparatus, Islam was one of the two main factors sustaining and fueling the Saud monarchy, the other being oil. But the practices of the monarchy were contrary to the teachings of Islam, which increasingly began to discredit and weaken it.

The *neocons* David Frum and Richard Perle, the latter the former Assistant of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, wrote that there was no contradiction in explaining why the dominant class in Saudi Arabia supported Islamic extremists.

⁶³House (2012, pp. 25–26, 68–69).

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁶⁷Huntington (1997, pp. 109–112).

⁶⁸Rodinson (1980, p. 33).

⁶⁹Spengler (1991, p. 307).

The Saudi royal family and their supporters had enriched themselves over the past 250 years, but they claimed to stand for the most militant version of Islam, and the price they paid for having extravagant parties with plenty of alcohol and luxurious women in private, was to force them to wear the *abāyah* and the *niqāb* in public, the black dresses covering them from head to toe, including their face.⁷⁰

Three weeks after the attacks on the WTC towers, however, there was still no debate in the United States about the factors that had caused them. The Brazilian Ambassador in Washington, Rubens Barbosa, wrote in a wire to the Brazilian foreign relations office on October 3, 2001, that “although the extreme violence practiced against the United States may have abhorrent, they did not materialize in a vacuum. To the contrary, they were born in a definable, and for a good part defined, historical, geographic and sociocultural context”.

Usamah bin Ladin, head of al-Qa’ida, laid out this context and the reasons for the attacks in his “Letter to America”, published by the British newspaper *Observer* on November 22, 2002. As examples, he cited the suffering of the Palestinian people, driven from their land by Israel with the support of the United States; the intervention in Somalia under the guise of “humanitarian action”; the death of 1.5 million children as a result of the sanctions applied against Iraq by the major western powers since 1990; and the bombing of the people of Afghanistan. Bin Ladin’s letter ended by stating that American fate would be to flee from Afghanistan “to deal with their military defeat, political breakup, ideological downfall, and economic bankruptcy”. And a document published in France produced by Jean Charles Brisard entitled “*Rapport sur l’environnement économique d’Ossama Bin Laden*” confirmed that Usamah bin Ladin had maintained close ties with the Saudi monarchy until July 2001.⁷¹

The attacks against the WTC and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, were not only a heinous crime against innocent and defenseless civilians. They represented an act of war. And war is a political instrument. That is, it’s the continuation of politics by other means, as the Prussian general Carl von Clausewitz famously put it,⁷² even if the traditional international understanding of war didn’t provide for the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, since they weren’t committed by another State, as happened when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941. Instead, they had been committed by terrorists. Nevertheless the attacks would serve as pretext so President George W. Bush could declare an endless war, or the war of good against evil, according to his Manichean *Weltanschauung*.

The *war on terror* was not only dissymmetric, as was the case of the Gulf War, but also asymmetric. The differences between the warring parties were not only quantitative, but also qualitative in nature regarding the means, the styles and the values employed by the enemy.⁷³ Nevertheless the United States accused Usamah bin Ladin, the leader of al-Qa’ida, a diffuse, multi-ethnic, decentralized international organization without hierarchy, which the CIA itself had helped create in the

⁷⁰Frum and Perle (2004, p. 115).

⁷¹Brisard and Dasquié (2001, p. 15, 270–323).

⁷²Clausewitz (1998, p. 674).

⁷³For this subject, see Moniz Bandeira (2006, pp. 635–665).

80s, and demanded his extradition from the Taliban. Most Afghans, however, had always maintained an unwritten code of honor—the *Pashtunwali*—based on two fundamental principles: revenge (*Badal*) and hospitality.⁷⁴ And since the Taliban would not comply with the *ultimatum*, for they would not betray their code of honor, the United States and Great Britain began bombing Afghanistan after October 8, 2001, and invaded the country. They did so not only to enable the construction of oil and gas pipelines, but also because of its geopolitical and strategic importance, since it shared borders with the eastern republics of the extinct Soviet Union, China, Iran and Pakistan.

When the western powers, gathered under the banner of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF—NATO), attacked and occupied Afghanistan with all their military might and their most sophisticated technology, their objective was to end Taliban rule in the country, which this group had conquered in 1996 with the support of ISI from Pakistan. This would enable the American company UNOCAL (Union Oil Company of California) to build a gas pipeline from Uzbekistan through Afghanistan to the sea, in Pakistan, in addition to two oil pipelines: one through Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Indian Ocean, and the other, the Central Asia Oil Pipeline Project (CAOPP), stretching 1050 miles from Chardzou, in Turkmenistan. This would prevent Azerbaijani oil from passing through Russia. And this objective was clear.

German president Horst Köhler made no attempts to hide it. In May 2010, he frankly stated in an interview to the press that the *Bundeswehr* (the German armed forces) would continue to maintain troops in Afghanistan, together with its allies, due to commercial interests. According to him, a country of Germany's size, focused on foreign trade and, as such, also dependent on foreign trade, would need to maintain trade lanes open and prevent regional instability, and all this should be debated, which wasn't being done very well.⁷⁵

The scandal was such that Horst Köhler was forced to resign the Presidency. It was now clear that the 5350 soldiers of the *Bundeswehr* were in Afghanistan not to combat terrorism, but to protect the large export sector and other German economic interests. And general Harald Kujat, former inspector general of the *Bundeswehr* (*Bundeswehr-Generalinspekteur*), declared to the daily *Mitteldeutsche Zeitung* that Germany was in Afghanistan in solidarity with the United States, but that the mission had failed, since the Taliban would return to power as soon as the ISAF forces withdrew.⁷⁶ The war was lost.

⁷⁴Yousaf and Adkin (2001, p. 34).

⁷⁵Sebastian Fischer and Veit Medick, "Bundeswehr in Afghanistan. Köhler entfacht neue Kriegsdebatte", *Der Spiegel*, May 27, 2010.

⁷⁶"Bundeswehr am Hindukusch. Ex-General erklärt Afghanistan-Einsatz für gescheitert", *Der Spiegel*, 7/10/2011. "Ten Years in Afghanistan German General Says NATO Mission Has 'Failed'", *Der Spiegel*, 7/10/2011.

Chapter 4

From Bush's *Freedom Agenda* to the Color Revolutions

4.1 George W. Bush's "Freedom Agenda" and the Regime Change Policy in the Caucasus, the Middle East and Africa: The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)

President George W. Bush wrote in his memoirs that after the September 11 attacks he outlined a strategy to protect the United States. It consisted in not making any distinction between the terrorists and the nations that gave them shelter; fighting the enemy overseas before they could attack; confronting threats before they could materialize; and advancing "*liberty and hope*" as an alternative to the enemy's ideology of repression and fear.¹ This strategy, known as the Bush Doctrine, was drawn up before the terrorist attacks, not after. It was developed together with the "*freedom agenda*", which President George W. Bush wanted to use to support "inexperienced democratic governments" in Palestine, Lebanon, Georgia and Ukraine, for example, and encourage dissidents and democratic reform in the "repressive regimes" of Iran, Syria, North Korea and Venezuela.² In this "*freedom agenda*", *regime change* would be promoted with George W. Bush playing the part of "*universal soldier*", leading a team of neo-conservative superheroes (*neocons*), taking on the task of shaping the behavior of all nations according to the interests and convenience of the Empire.³

In 2002, the State Department led by Secretary of State Colin Powell launched the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). Its apparent purpose was to assist the

¹Bush (2010, pp. 396–397).

²Ibid., p. 397.

³"*It is empire. I mean, by this term, a situation in which a single state shapes the behaviour of others, whether directly or indirectly, partially or completely, by means that can range from the outright use of force through intimidation, dependency, inducements, and even inspiration.*" Gaddis (1997, p. 27).

opponents of those regimes that didn't respect freedom and human rights in the Middle East and North Africa, using diplomatic power and foreign aid to "*help citizens better their own lives and build their own nations*".⁴ The rationale was "*to promote democracy in the Arab world*". According to Condoleezza Rice, National Security Advisor of President George W. Bush, the "*MEPI is transformational diplomacy in action*".⁵ The program funded American NGOs, but MEPI had also started distributing grants directly to NGOs in Egypt in order to support "*political activists and human rights groups*." The State Department, meanwhile, established one regional office in the United Arab Emirates and another in Tunisia.⁶

MEPI was one of the instruments of Bush's "*freedom agenda*" to promote what he judged to be "*democracy*"—tightly linked to "*free markets*" in his mind—as a national security priority in the Middle East, the Caucasus and other regions. Bush believed that more political freedom could dispel Islamic forces and fundamentalist indoctrination;⁷ that a democratic Middle East would be less vulnerable to extremism. And promoting democracy consisted in training activists "*in strategic nonviolent action or other kinds of grassroots mobilization that proved decisive in the struggle*"⁸ in countries such as those of the Caucasus, where the "color revolutions" took place. Most Islamic groups, however, which were in fact the most powerful opposition movements, were excluded from the MEPI.⁹

The ostensible objective was to subvert the regimes in the Middle East and North Africa through the engagement of its citizens in the political process and the recruitment of student leaders between 20 and 24 years of age for 5–6 week programs in academic institutions of the United States. Here, they could broaden

⁴"*The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) is a program designed to promote political, economic, and educational development in the Middle East. This report provides an overview of the MEPI program, its perception in the Middle East, and its role in the debate over U.S. efforts to promote democracy in the Arab world. For FY2006, the Bush Administration has requested \$120 million for MEPI. For FY2005, Congress appropriated \$75 million for MEPI, half of the President's original request. MEPI has received an estimated \$294 million in funding since its creation in FY2002. This report will be updated as developments unfold.*" Jeremy M. Sharp, *The Middle East Partnership Initiative: An Overview*, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division Congressional Research Service Report RS21457, July 20, 2005, WikiLeaks Document Release, February 2, 2009.

⁵U.S. Department of State, Archive, Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), available on: <http://2002-2009-mepi.state.gov/>

⁶Jeremy M. Sharp, *The Middle East Partnership Initiative: An Overview*, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division Congressional Research Service Report RS21457, July 20, 2005, WikiLeaks Document Release, February 2, 2009.

⁷Jeremy M. Sharp, "U.S. Democracy Promotion Policy in the Middle East: The Islamist Dilemma", Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, updated June 15, 2006, Department of The Navy—Naval Historical Center, The Library of Congress.

⁸Stephen Zunes, "Credit the Egyptian People for the Egyptian Revolution", *Huffington Post*, January 27, 2011.

⁹Jeremy M. Sharp, *The Middle East Partnership Initiative: An Overview*, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division Congressional Research Service Report RS21457, July 20, 2005, WikiLeaks Document Release, February 2, 2009.

their understanding of civil society and the democratic process, including how to apply them in their respective countries.¹⁰ The targeted countries included Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, West Bank/Gaza and Yemen. And just as god said "*et ait faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*",¹¹ the United States wanted to shape the countries of the Middle East and North Africa in its own image and likeness.

The United States advanced its economic, political and military goals in the countries of the Caucasus even further through its "*freedom agenda*" and *war on terror*. This increased tensions because the *policy-makers* in Washington failed to respect the legitimate interests of the Russian Federation in Eurasia, threatening its geostrategic security, territorial integrity and social cohesion, and making its western borders vulnerable through the expansion of NATO. The Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov warned Secretary of State Colin Powell that Washington should understand that Russia's concerns regarding the direct involvement of American troops in Georgia's territory were legitimate, and that disregarding them could complicate the situation in the region.¹² In fact, the United States had established NATO's Partnership for Peace Program (NATO-PfP) for the former Soviet republics, conducting joint military exercises in the region since 1997. All Central Asian countries joined NATO's North American Co-operation Council (NATC). And in 1999, the United States integrated Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova into a military structure (GUUAM) that sought to create a real alternative to the Commonwealth of Independent States led by Russia. An initial step to include these countries in NATO.

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the military presence of the United States in Central Asia became even greater. Washington managed to obtain authorization from Uzbekistan for the installation of an air base in Khanabad and another—Ganci Air Base—at the International Airport of Manas, near Bishkek, then capital of Kyrgyzstan, for the passage of American troops *en route* to Afghanistan. The stated mission of these troops was to fight terrorism, but in fact they were there to ensure an environment that would make the construction of pipelines by the Union Oil Company of California (Unocal) possible, carrying the oil from Uzbekistan to the Indian Ocean without crossing Russian land. Under the pretext of the *war on terror*, George W. Bush's administration also accomplished other feats: it negotiated the use of the Shymkent and Lugovoy air bases in Kazakhstan and Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan; it set up military contingents in Ashgabat in Turkmenistan and gained access to all its air bases, including Nebit-Dag near the

¹⁰Stephen Zunes, "Credit the Egyptian People for the Egyptian Revolution", *Huffington Post*, January 27, 2011.

¹¹"Then God said: Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness", *Genesis 1 Latin: Biblia Sacra Vulgata*, v. 27.

¹²"Ivanov: Russia Opposed to US Troops in Georgia", *Voice of America*, 27/2/2002.

border with Iran; and it built Stronghold Freedom, the most important American military base in Central Asia, in Karshi-Khanabad in Uzbekistan.

4.2 The Subversive Role of the NED, USAID, CIA and of NGOs such as Freedom House

Washington believed the transport of oil and gas over Russian territory made western markets vulnerable. As long as Russia appeared to be the main rival of the US, therefore, problems should be avoided by commanding oil reserves and their transport routes. This became the fundamental geopolitical goal and it had to be ensured by controlling the countries that used to belong to the Soviet Union through the installation of pro-western regimes. And the United States employed more than military assistance to win them over. They deployed their “*export of democracy*” policy through the NED, CIA and such civil entities as Freedom House, USAID, the Open Society Institute (renamed Open Society Foundations [OSF] in 2011), created by megainvestor George Soros, and other non-governmental organizations. They served as front to promote *regime change* policies without a coup. The method resembled Operation Ajax, which the CIA and MI6 had used to fund civil demonstrations in Teheran to overthrow the government of Mohammed Mosaddeq (1953), who had nationalized the British oil companies, and hand over power to Shah Reza Pahlavi. “Few foreign interventions in the Middle East have been as ignoble as the coup of 1953, and few Middle Eastern leaders have less deserved our hostility than Mossadegh,” wrote the British journalist Christopher de Bellaigue, researcher of St. Anthony’s College of Oxford University.¹³

In contrast to USAID, George Soros’ Open Society Foundations didn’t need to be diplomatic, nor did their policy have to be identical to that of the United States. They needed only be compatible with it, noted Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott.¹⁴ And so the Open Society Foundations, NED and USAID funded certain movements and media outlets, encouraging the condemnation of real or perceived election fraud and using activists, many of them on the payroll, to lure the opposition to the streets in anti-government protests. To Washington, non-governmental organizations were nothing less than the “*American invisible sector*” of influence, stressed John Peck.¹⁵

¹³Bellaigue (2012, p. 273).

¹⁴Peck (2010, p. 203).

¹⁵Ibid., p. 196.

4.3 The “Color Revolutions” in Serbia, Georgia and the Ukraine

The United States had already dispatched 200 military advisors to Georgia, which was of vital geo-economic and strategic importance, mainly because of the 1099 mile-long Baku-Tbilis-Ceyhan pipeline, which was meant to transport the oil from the Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli (GCA) field in the Caspian Sea and the natural-gas condensate from Shah Deniz, located 45 miles to the southeast of Baku, through Azerbaijan to the Mediterranean, bypassing Russia and Iran. The Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli (GCA) field stretched for 80 miles along the coast of Azerbaijan, contained 5.4 billion recoverable barrels, represented a total investment of US\$ 120 billion, and was operated by a consortium formed by British Petroleum (37.43%), Chevron/Texaco (11.27%) and many other oil companies.¹⁶

After the Clinton administration left office, the Pentagon’s leadership began drafting policies to use Georgia as a *key player* in the *neo-containment* policy. The goal was to prevent Russia from dominating the Caucasus region once again. A few weeks after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, President Eduard Shevardnadze, re-elected in 2000 with 82% of the vote, visited Washington, where he pledged his solidarity to President George W. Bush in the war against terror. He also requested economic and military aid from the United States and signed a strategic partnership with NATO, in addition to authorizing the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. But his government was weakened over the course of 2 years, especially because of the economic and financial situation of his country. Georgian foreign debt had ballooned to US\$ 1.75 billion and Shevardnadze had no means of paying it, despite having received around US\$ 1 billion from the US in 10 years.¹⁷

Shevardnadze’s popularity had already deteriorated from 2002 to 2003, and Georgia appeared even more unstable because of a conflict with Moscow, which accused it of not fighting the terrorist sheltered in the Pankisi Gorge, and because of Abkhazia, the region between the Black Sea and the mountains of the Caucasus that had seceded from Georgia in 1992 and whose independence had been recognized by Russia. The Russians also maintained military bases in three problematic regions of Georgia: Gudauta, in Abkhazia; Batumi, in Ajaria; and Akhalkalaki, in Javakheti. In 2003, Shevardnadze was politically weak and isolated, and although his party—For a New Georgia—won the elections on November 2, 2002, accusations of fraud inflamed voters in continuous street protests. Other leaders now emerged: Mikheil Saakashvili, Zurab Zhvania and Nino Burjanadze, former allies of the government who had crossed over to the opposition.

¹⁶Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan-Pipeline and Others: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baku%E2%80%93Tbilisi%E2%80%93Ceyhan_pipeline#/media/File:Baku_pipelines.svg. Accessed 13.03.2015.

¹⁷Seth Mydans, “Georgian Leader Agrees to Resign, Ending Standoff”, *The New York Times*, November 24, 2003.

The Rose Revolution (November 22–23, 2003) was planned and coordinated from Washington through the ambassador Richard Miles,¹⁸ probably because it feared that the instability in Georgia would once again pull it into Russia's orbit, of which economy it still depended. Eduard Shevardnadze had no alternative but to resign on November 23, 2003, under pressure from the American Secretary of State, Colin Powell, of the Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan, and of the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin.¹⁹ The leader of the United National Movement, Mikheil Saakashvili, took over the government and immediately decided to shutdown Russia's military base, and Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense, signed a US\$ 15 million contract with the Cubic Corporation (Amex: CUB) to provide defense equipment and training to Georgia's forces.²⁰

With the rise to power of the attorney Mikheil Saakashvili, who had attended Columbia Law School and the George Washington University Law School in the 90s, the Bush administration set into motion the Georgia Train and Equip Program (GTEP) between 2002 and 2004, and, after 2005, the Georgia Security and Stability Operations Program (Georgia SSOP), dispatching advisors of the U.S. Special Operation Forces (*Green Berets*) and U.S. Marine Corps, among others, for the training of Georgia's military contingents. These contingents participated in operations in Kosovo and, afterwards, in the wars of Afghanistan and Iraq. Later, in the midst of the tensions with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, separatist regions that wanted to join Russia, President Mikheil Saakashvili requested that Georgia be allowed to join NATO, encouraged by the United States. Georgia was an ally of the United States in the oil pipeline question in what Stephen Jones coined the *cold peace*, and if the revolt was crushed, the consequences for the *marines* stationed there would be unpredictable.²¹

On November 24, 2003, the *Wall Street Journal* attributed the protests against the Shevardnadze regime to the activities of a large number of “*non-governmental organizations (. . .) supported by American and other Western foundations*”, including Freedom House, the National Endowment for Democracy, the International Republican Institute, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, USAID, the Council of Europe and the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

¹⁸The ambassador Richard Miles had played an important role in the toppling of Serbian President Slobodan Milošević when he headed the diplomatic mission of the United States in Belgrade, between 1996 and 1999. Afterwards, he was sent as ambassador to Minsk, in Belarus, where he set up the coup against President Alexander Lukashenko. He had already operated in Azerbaijan and Bulgaria.

¹⁹“The South Caucasus: A Chronological Summary of Key Events Since Independence 1991–2004”, prepared by Richard Giragosian—Abt Associates, Inc.—Bethesda, Maryland, The American Research Institute of the South Caucasus (ARISC) <http://www.ii.umich.edu/UMICH/asp/Home/Academic%20Opportunities/Initiatives/Conferences/South%20Caucasus%20conf,%202004.pdf>. Accessed on 20.10.2014. Seth Mydans, “Georgian Leader Agrees to Resign, Ending Standoff”, *The New York Times*, November 24, 2003.

²⁰Scahill (2007, p. 171).

²¹Jones (2009, p. 317).

George Soros’ Open Society Institute alone invested more than US\$ 42 million in the 3 months preceding the so-called Rose Revolution.²² According to the *Wall Street Journal*, these non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had generated a class of young, “*English-speaking intellectuals hungry for pro-Western reforms*”, They led the coup against the Shevardnadze government and propelled Mikheil Saakashvili to power. The same organizations that had funded OTPOR in Yugoslavia, now supported the KMARA opposition group in Georgia, whose activists were paid by George Soros’ Open Society Institute²³ and trained in the Center for Applied Non Violent Actions and Strategies (CANVAS), headquartered in Belgrade.

Shortly after Georgia, a similar color revolution occurred in Ukraine, which was dubbed the Orange Revolution by the media. It toppled the government of Leonid Kuchma (1994–2005) amid accusations of corruption and electoral fraud, and fueled by the low standard of living of an important part of the popular movement. There were strong and deep-seated reasons for popular discontent in Ukraine, but just as in Georgia, the movement was triggered by activists, militants of the organization PORA (It’s time) and of other American and European NGOs, including Vidrodzhenya (Revival), once again sponsored by George Soros, Freedom House, the Poland-America-Ukraine Cooperation Initiative, USAID, and the National Endowment for Democracy, which sustained the campaign of the opposition candidate, Viktor Yushchenko. “Intervening in foreign elections, under the guise of an impartial interest in helping civil society, has become the run-up to the postmodern *coup d’état*. The CIA-sponsored third world uprising of cold war days adapted to post-Soviet conditions”, wrote the journalist Jonathan Steele in London’s *The Guardian*.²⁴

David Anable, former president of the International Center for Journalists and Professor at Boston University, classified Georgia as the second of three “dominoes”—Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine—to fall in “*nonviolent revolutions*”, topping *Soviet-style* leaders, authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes. And the media played an important part with the technical and financial support of the West.²⁵

The United States spent a total of US\$ 350 million since 1991 in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics, funding the media in the implementation of psychological warfare operations. Meanwhile, the costs of invading Iraq had

²²Ibid., pp. 317–334. Richard Carlson, “Georgia on His Mind—George Soros’s Potemkin Revolution”, *The Weekly Standard*, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, May 24, 2004.

²³Natalia Antelava, “How to stage a revolution Slobodan Djindjic watched Georgia’s ‘rose revolution’ from his home in Serbia”, *BBC News*, December 4, 2003.

²⁴Jonathan Steele, “Ukraine’s postmodern coup d’état. Yushchenko got the US nod, and money flooded in to his supporters”, *The Guardian*, November 26, 2004.

²⁵David Anable, “The role of Georgia’s media—and Western Aid—in the Rose Revolution”, Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press Politics and Public Policy, Working Paper Series, Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government, 2006. See for a map: The ‘Color Revolutions’. http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c5/Color_Revolutions_Map.png. Accessed 14.03.2015.

reached US\$ 200 billion in less than 3 years, noted David Anable.²⁶ He argued that if the West, the media and society could produce non-violent movements and democratic reforms without the need for expensive military interventions, then this seemed to be a good investment and more convenient for George W. Bush's objective of spreading democracy, especially if the country had a genuine geopolitical significance, as was the case of the three dominoes cited.²⁷ And the same lesson on how to overthrow governments by not necessarily violent means that young OTPOR activists had applied in Serbia, were now being taught to the activists of KMARA (Enough) in Georgia and PORA (It's time) in Ukraine.²⁸

It is therefore no secret that the Pentagon invested millions to encourage "color revolutions" in the region of the defunct USSR to surround Russia. They did this through United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC), the State Department and various non-governmental organizations, including Freedom House, whose mission it is to "*support democratic change, monitor freedom, and advocate for democracy and human rights around the world*", and the National Endowment for Democracy, which is also dedicated to the "*growth and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world*". Ukraine was turned into a geostrategic issue not because of Moscow, but because of the United States, which according to the journalist Jonathan Steele refused to abandon its Cold War practice of encircling Russia and pulling all former Soviet republics to its side.²⁹ Located between Russia and the new NATO members Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania, Ukraine really gained an enormous geostrategic significance to the United States.

Washington believed that after the fall of Leonid Kuchma, the rise of Viktor Yushchenko, the candidate of the opposition party Our Ukraine (*Nasha Ukrayina*), could shape the geopolitical orientation of the country, enabling more integration with the Euro-Atlantic institutions, the establishment of a real democracy with the rule of law, and a genuine free-market economy.³⁰ And so, soon after taking office (2005–2010), Viktor Yushchenko received the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award from the John Kennedy Library Fund for this role in the Orange Revolution. His Prime Minister was the billionaire Yulia Tymoshenko, known in Ukraine as the "gas princess" because of the fortune she had previously amassed through shady business deals with Pavlos Lazarenko, Minister of Energy, and the Russian

²⁶Ibid., p. 27.

²⁷Ibid., p. 24. Eileen M. O'Connor and David Hoffman, "Media in Iraq: The Fallacy of Psy-Ops", *International Herald Tribune*, December 16, 2005.

²⁸George Soros' Open Society Institute (OSI) sent two leaders of the Liberty Institute, an NGO, to meet with the leaders of OTPOR in Serbia. When they returned, the OTPOR activists trained more than 1000 Georgian students in "revolutionary techniques using good humor and peaceful subversion".

²⁹Jonathan Steele, "Ukraine's postmodern coup d'état. Yushchenko got the US nod, and money flooded in to his supporters", *The Guardian*, November 26, 2004.

³⁰Steven Woehrel, "Ukraine's Political Crisis and U.S. Policy Issues", *CRS Report for Congress*, Order Code RL32691, February 1, 2005.

company Gazprom. And the first and foremost project of President Yushchenko, which he announced in Kiev, was to build a new pipeline linking the Caspian Sea via Ukraine to Poland, which would reduce the dependence of the country on supplies from Russia.³¹

Shadi Hamid, Director of Research at the Brookings Doha Center and member of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy of the Brookings Institution, wrote that electoral fraud was the trigger in the two “color revolutions”—Rose in Georgia and Orange in Ukraine—and that the media played a fundamental role in denouncing it. But behind the media, the agencies of the United States were pulling strings. Where in Serbia the radio served as the main instrument of subversion; in Georgia it was television.

The station Rustavi—2, the TV channel with the largest audience founded by Erosi Kitsmarishvili, became the voice of opposition in Georgia. This TV station received US\$ 9925, a considerable amount at the time, from the Eurasia Foundation, an entity founded with support of USAID. And it was maintained with the support of the NGO Internews,³² another non-profit organization sustained by USAID and based in California, which trained and advised its journalists.³³ The information spread by Rustavi—2 was provided in part by western governments and NGOs, and according to the former ambassador of the United States in Georgia, Richard Miles, the TV network almost went “*over the top in trying to promote Shevardnadze’s overthrow*”.³⁴ The cable TV network Channel 5 and the digital newspaper *Pravda Ukraine* (*Ukrainskaya Pravda*) were decisive outlets for inciting the Orange Revolution.³⁵ *Pravda Ukraine* was operated directly from Washington, D.C. and almost entirely funded by the United States. It had been founded by Olena Prytul and Georgiy R. Gongadze, who was living in exile in the United States with this entire family in 2001.

About a year after the Orange Revolution, Kyrgyzstan followed the example of Georgia and Ukraine with the Tulip Revolution. Before the 2005 elections, the ambassador of Great Britain James Lyall Sharp declared that his government would donate US\$ 92,000 to NGOs so as to “*ensure free and fair elections*” in the country. At the same time, Western governments vented their doubts about the electoral

³¹ William F. Engdahl, “Revolution, geopolitics and pipelines”, *Asia Times*, June 30, 2005.

³² USAID founded the Afghan Media Development Project (AMDEP) implemented by Internews, with a chain of four centers in Afghanistan: Anaar Multimedia Centers, in Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad and Kandahar. Internews operates in over 70 countries, subsidizing the opposition media with *regime change* as its main objective, and it has trained more than 80,000 journalists. Its annual budget was US\$ 10 million.

³³ Shade Hamid, “The Struggle for Middle East Democracy”, *Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, Brookings Institution, April 26, 2011. David Anable, “The role of Georgia’s media—and Western Aid—in the Rose Revolution”, Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press Politics and Public Policy, Working Paper Series, Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government, 2006, p. 9.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁵ Shade Hamid, “The Struggle for Middle East Democracy”, *Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, Brookings Institution, April 26, 2011.

process that was about to occur.³⁶ Tensions flared when the party of President Askar Akayev (1990–2005) won the parliamentary elections of March 15, 2005, with 59% of the vote, and suspicions of fraud were raised. Opposition forces led by Kurmanbek Bakiyev revolted on March 24th and occupied the seat of government in Bishkek, forcing President Askar Akayev to flee to Kazakhstan. What had happened was in fact a *coup d'état*, but there were no apparent reasons for the United States to wish a regime change in Kyrgyzstan. President Askar Akayev had authorized the installation of Manas Air Base, where the troops of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) passed *en route* to Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. And his successor, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, threatened to expel them if the United States refused to pay more for stationing their troops in his country.

There is no doubt, however, that Givi Targamadze, a former member of the Liberty Institute and member of the Georgian Parliamentary Committee on Defense and Security, guided the opposition leaders in Kyrgyzstan in the use of non-violent techniques and advised them during the so-called Tulip Revolution, spearheaded by such NGOs as the Coalition for Democracy, Civil Society, Kel-Kel and Birge, under the political influence of the financial elite. And George Soros' Open Society Institute allocated resources to the movement in Kyrgyzstan through the intermediation of the NGO Civil Society Against Corruption, whose leader, Tolekan Ismailova, expedited the translation of professor Gene Sharp's revolutionary manual *From Dictatorship to Democracy*,³⁷ which had been used in Serbia, Ukraine, Georgia and other countries.³⁸

³⁶ Ajay Patnaik, "Regime Change and US Geopolitical strategy in Central Asia", *Eurasia Critic*, May 2008.

³⁷ Gene Sharp is professor of the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth and director of the Albert Einstein Institution in Boston. After the Cold War, with the support of Colonel Robert Helvey, the Albert Einstein Institution held the *Conference on Non Violent Sanctions* at the Center for International Affairs of Harvard University. 185 specialists from 16 countries participated, among which the Israeli psychologist Reuven Gal, author of various works, such as *Service Without Guns*. The translation and distribution professor Gene Sharp's book *From Dictatorship to Democracy* was sponsored by entities in the United States and Europe.

³⁸ "Political defiance has a long and surprisingly impressive record, from the 1905 Russian Revolution to the 1986 people-power movement in the Philippines. More recently, it was the *modus operandi* in the colour revolutions witnessed in the early 2000s: Serbia's Bulldozer Revolution (2000), Georgia's Rose Revolution (2003), Ukraine's Orange Revolution (2004), Lebanon's Cedar Revolution (2005) and Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution (2005). These methods, and Sharp's writings, also inspired the youth uprisings in Tunisia (Sidi Bouzid Revolt) and Egypt (25 January Revolution) in early 2011 that swept aside the aging autocrats who had stifled change in those societies for so many years. Though it cannot be denied that CPV (Collective Political Violence) is a force for systemic change, these exemplars demonstrate that there are other nonviolent—and morally preferable—mechanisms for systemic feedback and self-adjustment." James W. Moore, "The Functions of Insurgent Violence: A Systems Perspective", *Canadian Army Journal*, 14/2/2012, p. 115.

4.4 Plan to Invade and Fund the Opposition in Syria

Professor Sharp's lessons were also applied in Lebanon, which was occupied by Syrian armed forces since 1976 because of the war that waged there from 1975 to 1990 and resulted in the death of more than 200,000 people. After former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri (1992–1998 and 2000–2004) was assassinated with a bomb on February 14, 2005, the west assigned blame to the Syrian secret service (but some sources say the Israeli Mossad was also involved).³⁹ A string of popular, although not quite spontaneous, demonstrations then broke out in Beirut and other Lebanese cities to force the retreat of Syrian troops (14,000 soldiers) from the country, the formation of a new government and an investigation into the death Rafik Hariri.

Syrian President [Bashar al-Assad](#) withdrew his troops a few months later, on April 27, 2005, heeding UNSC Resolution 1559, submitted by France. Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs Paula J. Dobriansky referred to the demonstrations in Lebanon as the Cedar Revolution,⁴⁰ likening them to the color revolutions that had occurred in Georgia (Rose Revolution) and Ukraine (Orange Revolution). And in his memoirs, President George W. Bush pointed out that “*the Cedar Revolution marked one of the most important successes of the freedom agenda*”.⁴¹ It happened in a country with multiple religions and a Muslim majority through “*strong diplomatic pressure and no American military involvement*”.⁴²

The truth of the matter is that American NGOs like Freedom House were not the only ones to aid and use activists, in secret, to instigate demonstrations against Syria. The conservative daily *New York Post* learned and reported that the CIA and European intelligence services (certainly the Bundesnachrichtendienst and the Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure) had been silently “*giving money and logistical support*” to the organizers of the anti-Syria protests in order to foster the movement and pressure President Bashar al-Assad to completely withdraw his troops from Lebanon.⁴³ Everything points to the involvement of United States Ambassador Jeffrey Feltman in the coordination, and sources in Washington told

³⁹“Significantly, one of Hariri’s consultants, Mustafa al-Naser, told Iranian state news agency IRNA on Monday that ‘the assassination of Hariri is the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad’s job, aimed at creating political tension in Lebanon.’” Pepe Escobar, “The Roving Eye—How the West won Libya”, *Asia Times*, October 22, 2011. “‘Israeli intelligence is standing behind this crime,’ claimed German criminologist Juergen Cain Kuelbel. In his book *Hariri’s Assassination: Hiding Evidence in Lebanon* he wrote: ‘Syria is innocent and has nothing to do with that crime or the other assassinations.’ Kuelbel discovered that the jamming system used to disable the Hariri convoy’s electronic shield was manufactured by Netline Technologies Ltd of Tel Aviv, an Israeli company co-developed with the Israel Defense Forces and Israeli law enforcement agencies, and sold through European outlets.” Trish Schuh, “The Salvador Option in Beirut”, *CounterPunch*, February 8, 2007.

⁴⁰The cedar (*Cedrus libani*) is Lebanon’s national symbol and takes up the center of its flag.

⁴¹Bush (2010), pp. 411–412.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 412.

⁴³Niles Latham, “Give us Liberty! Protesters Slam Syria in Massive Beirut Rally”, *New York Post*, March 8, 2005.

the *New York Post* that the program was not unlike the “previous CIA support of pro-democracy movements” in Georgia and Ukraine, where impressively large and peaceful demonstrations had taken place. And as can be deduced from the classified cables from the United States Embassy in Damascus, published by WikiLeaks, the funding of the opposition in Syria had already started in 2005 in order to topple the regime of Bashar al-Assad, among other things, so as to prevent him from tightening relations with Russia, especially with respect to naval cooperation.⁴⁴

These cables reveal that the State Department was funding opposition in Syria at the rate of US\$ 6 million at least since 2005. The money was used to support the operations of the satellite TV channel Barada River, which was linked to the Movement for Justice and Development, a network of Syrian exiles based in London, and to fund other activities in the country, such as courses in Damascus. The dollars flowed from the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), through the group Democracy Council, based in Los Angeles. State Department spokesman Edgar Vasquez stated in the *Washington Post* that MEPI had allocated US\$ 7.5 million to the program in Syria since 2005. But a cable from the United States Embassy in Damascus revealed a much higher figure—around US\$ 12 million—between 2005 and 2010.

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad, the relations of the United States with Syria had become tense. President George W. Bush turned to the government of President Bashar al-Assad, leader of the nationalist and pan-Arab Ba’ath Party, to demand greater cooperation in the guarding of the Iraqi border to prevent the infiltration of foreign *Jihadists*.⁴⁵ By order of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, the Pentagon drew up a contingency plan to invade Syria after the toppling of Saddam Hussein.⁴⁶ But with the United States engaged in two wars—Afghanistan and Iraq—George W. Bush decided against the plan advocated by the Rumsfeld aides Douglas Feith and William Luti. Bush felt it was dangerous to engage in a third war while having to deal with his re-election bid in 2004. And so he cut off the debate about the possibility of extending the *war on terror* to Syria.⁴⁷

On November 20, 2003, however, with the *green light* of President George W. Bush, the American Congress approved the Syria Accountability Act (P.L. 108–175), which authorized the government to impose sanctions on Syria,

⁴⁴Craig Whitlock, “U.S. secretly backed Syrian opposition groups, cables released by WikiLeaks show”, *The Washington Post*, April 18, 2011. “USA finanzieren offenbar syrische Opposition”, *Focus Nachrichten*, 18/4/2011. “U.S. secretly backed Syrian opposition groups, WikiLeaks reveals—\$6 million for Syrian exiles to help”, *Daily Mail*, April 18, 2011.

⁴⁵Alfred B. Prados and Jeremy M. Sharp, *Syria: Political Conditions and Relations with the United States after the Iraq War*, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, Congressional Research Service Report RL32727, February 28, 2005.

⁴⁶Julian Borger, Michael White, Ewen MacCaskill e Nicholas Watt, “Bush vetoes Syria war plan”, *The Guardian*, April 15, 2003.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

including a prohibition on the export of “*dual-use technology*”, restrictions on business and freezing of the country’s assets in the United States.⁴⁸ Some members of Congress also advocated the funding of groups to promote political reforms, at the same time that they “*condemned human rights violations against reformists in Syria*”.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, in November 2003, the Syrian-American businessman Farid al-Ghadry, tied to the corporation EG&G Intertech Inc., a Pentagon contractor, founded the Reform Party of Syria in the United States, where he lived. The new party took on the slogan “*New Syria*”, held a meeting behind closed doors in Washington and created a clandestine radio: Radio Free Syria.

⁴⁸Julian Borger, “Bush signals backing for Syria sanctions”, *The Guardian*, October 8, 2003.

⁴⁹Alfred B. Prados and Jeremy M. Sharp, *Syria: Political Conditions and Relations with the United States after the Iraq War*, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, Congressional Research Service Report RL32727, February 28, 2005.

Chapter 5

The “Cold Revolutionary War” and the NATO Expansion Towards the East

5.1 Gene Sharp’s Subversion Strategy

To a significant extent, professor Gene Sharp’s strategy lay at the heart of the *regime change* policy deployed by President George W. Bush, in accordance with the Project for the New American Century (PNAC). This strategy consisted in promoting *political defiance*, a term used by Colonel Robert Helvey, a specialist of the Joint Military Attaché School (JMAS) operated by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), to describe how to overthrow a government and gain control of its institutions by planning operations and mobilizing the population against the sources of power in countries that were hostile to Western interests and values. The objective of President George W. Bush’s “*freedom agenda*” was precisely what the Directorate of Army Doctrine (DAD) of Canada’s Department of Defense defined as subversion, i.e., the attempt to undermine the stability and economic, political and military strength of a State without resorting to the use of an insurrection, but by provoking violent measures from the state, which could then be denounced as an “*overreaction by the authorities and thus discrediting the government*.”¹ Propaganda—added this DAD document—was “*a key element of subversion*” and included the publication of harmful information about the security forces, in addition to spreading true or false rumors to undermine the credibility and trust in government.²

¹National Defense—Defense Nationale—Land Force—“Counter-Insurgency Operations”—(English)—Published on the authority of the Chief of the Land Staff—Directorate of Army Doctrine, Department of National Defense, a Kingston: Army Publishing Office, 2008—OPI: DAD 2008-12-13-B-GL-323-004/FP-003, p. 2-15. Accessed <http://lfds.army.mil.ca>. S. also: https://wikileaks.org/wiki/Canadian_Counter-insurgency_Operations_manual,_13_Dec_2008, accessed 16 Dec 2016.

²Ibid., pp. 2–15.

5.2 The “Cold Revolutionary War” with Protests, Strikes, Boycotts, Marches, Car Parades, Processions, etc.

This strategy involved what Colonel David Galula identified as a “*cold revolutionary war*”, i.e., insurgency activities that remained within the law most of the time, without resorting to violence.³ And so, in less than 2 years, the “color revolutions” toppled the governments of three Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (*Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv*), the supranational organization founded on December 8, 1991, which, on the initiative of President Boris Yeltsin, integrated most republics of the defunct Soviet Union into Russia’s space: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

As professor Gene Sharp explained, the non-violent struggle is more complex and fought through various means by the population and by the institutions of society, including on psychological, social, economic and political fronts. Protests, strikes, non-cooperation, defiance, boycotts, marches, car parades and processions are some of these means, for governments can only survive if they can count on the cooperation, submission and obedience of the population and society’s institutions.⁴ Professor Sharp emphasized that most momentum of the struggle should emanate from within the country, but “*financial and communications support can also be provided directly to the democratic forces*” from the outside, in addition to international assistance, mobilizing global public opinion against the dictatorship on humanitarian, moral and religious grounds, accompanied by diplomatic and economic sanctions, investment bans, weapon embargoes, and the expulsion from various international organizations.⁵

Professor Sharp’s strategy was no new contribution to the art of subversion. The CIA had for many years applied similar tactics and methods to enable coups in several countries, mainly in Latin America. But his *From Dictatorship to Democracy* was translated into more than 24 languages, distributed across the Caucasus by Freedom House, the Open Society Institute, the International Republican Institute (IRI), the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the CIA, where it served as a manual for the “color revolutions”, including in Azerbaijan, where four groups—YOKH! (No!), YENI FIKIR (New Thinking), MAGAM (It’s time) and the Orange Movement of Azerbaijan—established ties with PORA, KMARA and OTPOR and employed the same non-violent methods advocated by professor Gene Sharp and applied in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine.⁶

³Galula (2010, p. 43).

⁴Sharp (2011, pp. 124–135).

⁵Ibid., p. 11, 12, 78–79.

⁶Elkhan Nuriyev, “Elections in Azerbaijan. Political Infighting and Strategic Interests of Great Powers”, SWP Comments 2005—C 58, December 2005. Valerie J. Bunce e Sharon L. Wolchik, “Azerbaijan’s 2005 Parliamentary Elections: A Failed Attempt at Transition”, Cornell University—George Washington University, Paper prepared for CDDRL Workshop on External Influences on Democratic Transitions, Stanford University, October 25–26, 2007.

After the victory of President Ilham Aliyev's New Azerbaijan Party (YAP) in the parliamentary elections of November 6, 2005, the NGO Human Rights Watch, funded by George Soros' Open Society Foundation and other entities, stated that they were held in a climate of intimidation. Thousands of opponents marched peacefully through the streets of Baku, protesting against the supposedly fraudulent results. Ali Kerimli, president of the Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan and co-founder of the Political Block of Opposition Parties, signed a message to President George W. Bush stating: "*Don't lose a friendly Muslim country.*"⁷ Just as they had already done after the 2003 elections, the protesters tried to push for a "color revolution", but failed. The *Leitmotiv* was the same as in the Rose and Orange revolutions: electoral fraud. Ali Kerimli himself wrote in the *Washington Post* that, "*nearly two years later, on the eve of the 2005 parliamentary elections, Azeri democrats inspired by the support Western nations had given to the Rose and Orange democratic revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine decided to again challenge Aliyev's authoritarian regime*".⁸

5.3 Mercenaries to Protect Oil Fields and Pipelines in the Caspian Sea

The United States, however, had no desire for instability in Azerbaijan, especially because of its interest in the pipeline connecting the production fields of Baku, through Georgia, with the deep-water port in Ceyhan, which could receive tankers with a capacity exceeding 300,000 tons. Azerbaijan's vulnerability would certainly have implications on a vast region, because its position as a vitally important energy corridor between the Caucasus and Central Asia made it a *pivotal country*, as Zbigniew Brzezinski had already come to realize during the Jimmy Carter administration (1977–1981).⁹ But instead of sending American active duty soldiers to Azerbaijan, the Pentagon dispatched "*civilian contractors*", mercenaries from Blackwater and other private military companies, with the mission to protect the oil and gas fields in that region of the Caspian Sea, which historically had been dominated by Russia and Iran.¹⁰

⁷Christopher John Chivers, "Crowd Protests Fraud in Azerbaijan Vote", *The New York Times*, November 10, 2005.

⁸Ali Karimli, "In Azerbaijan, voices for democracy strive to be heard", *The Washington Post*, April 2, 2010.

⁹Brzezinski (1997, pp. 121, 128–129).

¹⁰Scahill (2007, p. 172).

5.4 Russia’s Recovery

The Soviet Union, however, had not been defeated militarily by the United States in the Cold War. Russia, as its legal successor, inherited all its military might. Vladimir Putin took office as Russia’s president on May 7, 2000, and ever since, he has worked to recover his country from the financial debacle of 1997. Russia’s economy benefited to a significant extent from the rising energy and raw-material prices. It grew by an average of 7% a year and became the 7th largest world economy with a gross domestic product of US\$ 2.3 trillion (2011 est.),¹¹ according to the purchasing power parity method, US\$ 385 billion in reserves and a stabilization fund of more than US\$ 170 billion.

Washington had not heeded the fact that Russia had inherited the huge military firepower of the Soviet Union and that strategic parity had not come to an end, despite the disintegration of the socialist bloc. Russia had 1.2 million soldiers in its armed forces, a total of 14,000 nuclear warheads, of which 5,192 operational. The United States, meanwhile, had 1.3 million active service members, 5,400 Warheads, of which 4,075 operational, in addition to 3,575 strategic and 500 non-strategic warheads and an additional inventory of 1,260 inactive warheads.¹² In total, Russia had 62,500 nuclear weapons and the United States 33,500.¹³ Neither the United States nor Russia have done much to reduce their nuclear stockpiles from the Cold War, which remained unnecessarily high for the security needs of both great powers.

Meanwhile, President George W. Bush, as President Bill Clinton before him, continued to provoke and humiliate Russia. Soon after taking office in 2001, he withdrew the United States from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), which had been signed in 1972 with the Soviet Union, in order to implement the anti-missile defense system, and he endeavored not only to establish missile bases in Poland and the Czech Republic, but also to lead NATO to the doorsteps of Russia, through Ukraine and Georgia. He also refused to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (1996) and modifications to the SALT 2 agreement on the limitation and reduction of strategic armaments. And he ordered the invasion of Iraq, an unilateral initiative that disregarded the UN Security Council. President George W. Bush shook all the foundations of the international order and, consequently, of the peace that had been made possible by the end of the Cold War.

¹¹ CIA Fact Book, accessed <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/br.html>

¹² Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Western Military Balance and Defense Efforts, A Comparative Summary of Military Expenditures; Manpower; Land, Air, Naval, and Nuclear Forces, Anthony H. Cordesman and Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy with the Assistance of Jennifer K. Moravitz, CSIS January, 2002. Robert S. Norris e Hans M. Kristensen, “U.S. nuclear forces, 2008”, *Nuclear Notebook—Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, May/June 2008, Vol. 64, No. 2, pp. 54–57, 62. Department of Defence—Active Duty Military Personnel by Rank Grade—August 2007, accessed <http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/MILITARY/rg0708.pdf>

¹³ Ibid.

He didn't manage to change the overall balance of power, however, which had been the objective of installing the anti-missile defense systems in Poland and the Czech Republic in the first place. As Mackinder himself stressed, Russia was a *player state* and not a peripheral state.¹⁴ It was placed firmly within the *pivotal area* of Eurasia and had conditions to use its influence and money, to hinder or even suspend the much-needed supply of energy (oil and gas) to the European Union, and to undermine the interests of the United States in the Middle East and other regions, selling weapons to Syria, Iran, etc., in addition to exercising its veto power in the UN Security Council. Russia could hurt the West more than the other way around, because the West needed Russia more than it needed the West. And now, economically and financially recovered, Russia stepped once again into the *Great Game*, the struggle for power in Central Asia.

5.5 Putin's Reaction to the NATO Expansion Towards the East

At the start of 2007, then president of Russia Vladimir Putin warned that "the United States has overstepped its borders in every way",¹⁵ which was "very dangerous". He left no doubts about his opposition to the expansion of NATO, "a political-military organization that strengthens its presence at our borders" and accused the United States of plunging the world into an "abyss of permanent conflicts", with disdain for the basic principles of international law.¹⁶ "A mistake," he added.¹⁷ And the hard military strike in August of 2008 against Georgian forces, which had invaded the separatist region of South Ossetia, served as a serious warning that this region, the Caucasus, the margins of the Black Sea, fell in the Russian sphere of influence. It would not allow greater penetration of the United States and of the western powers.

President Putin was no longer willing to acquiesce to the United States' increasing presence in Central Asia and the Caucasus. And by intervening in Georgia to

¹⁴Halford J. Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History", *Geographical Journal*, Royal Geographical Society, London, April 1904, vol. XXIII, pp. 421–444.

¹⁵"Today we are witnessing an almost uncontained hyper use of force—military force—in international relations, force that is plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts. (...) We are seeing a greater and greater disdain for the basic principles of international law. And independent legal norms are, as a matter of fact, coming increasingly closer to one state's legal system. One state and, of course, first and foremost the United States, has overstepped its national borders in every way. This is visible in the economic, political, cultural and educational policies it imposes on other nations." Speech Delivered by Russia's President Vladimir Putin at the 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy Peace through Dialog, February 10, 2007, Munich, Germany (full transcript).

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷*La Nación*, Buenos Aires, 11/2/2007.

defend the independence of South Ossetia, Russia retaliated against the support that the United States and the European Union had given to the independence of Kosovo, using NATO (Operation Allied Force) to bomb Yugoslavia in 1999, ignoring Resolution 1244 of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) of 1999, which provided for a compromise that would maintain the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Yugoslavia (current Serbia) and, in Annex 2, determined that a potential sovereign government in Kosovo should result from a political agreement. President Putin showed what could happen if Poland and the Czech Republic permitted George W. Bush to establish his missile bases on their territories. Russia rebuffed the United States and the western powers.

In May 2005, President George W. Bush visited Tbilisi, capital of Georgia, which he wanted to transform into a *beacon of democracy*, given that the control of the South Caucasus and Central Asia was seen as indispensable to the success of the war in Afghanistan. The United States had already secured the establishment of two bases in Central Asia—Karshi-Khanabad Air Base in south Uzbekistan, not far from Tajikistan, and Manas Air Base, located in the north of Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan. The strategic objective was not only to support the operations of the war on terror in Afghanistan, but also to command oil and gas reserves and pipelines through the region and curb Russian influence. According to Stephen J. Blank, Central Asia specialist at the U.S. Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute, “*the fundamental objective of the U.S. government is to prevent any neo-imperial revival in Eurasia*”.¹⁸ As such, the United States positioned its military power in the *heartland* of Central Asia and the South Caucasus, especially in Georgia and Azerbaijan, whose airspace had become essential for the transport of heavy weaponry and NATO troops bound for Afghanistan, the first battle ground of what President George W. Bush called the war on terror. Within this logistics scheme, the bases in Georgia would serve as a *backup* for the bases in Turkey, while Azerbaijan would function as a support area for potential military actions of the United States against Iran. When the Turkish parliament didn’t authorize U.S. troops to open a second front in north east Iraq from its territory in the strikes to remove Saddam Hussein, the importance of establishing such bases in the vicinity of the Middle East became clear.

Despite American efforts, however, Germany and other European States understood that it was too soon to admit both Georgia and Ukraine into NATO, arguing that the situation of both countries was still unstable. The truth is that Germany and other European States did not want to provoke Russia and create a serious crisis. One with substantial economic consequences in case Gazprom¹⁹ decided to retaliate by cutting the supply of gas on which these countries greatly depended.²⁰ But

¹⁸“Q&A: U.S. Military Bases in Central Asia”, *The New York Times*, July 26, 2005.

¹⁹Gazprom is the Russia’s largest energy company, controlled by the State, but with shares being held by the German companies E.ON and BASF—Wintershall.

²⁰Gazprom provides 60% of the natural gas consumed in Austria, 35% in Germany and 20% in France. It also supplies gas to other countries, such as Ukraine, Estonia, Lithuania and Finland. In 2006, Gazprom cut the supply to Ukraine because of a dispute surrounding a price increase, which affected the countries of the European Union.

the Western powers left the door open to Georgia and Ukraine for a potential future admission as members of NATO. And if this would come to pass, then the United States and the western powers would have gained an enormous geo-strategic advantage, surrounding Russia with a powerful military structure by arming the militaries of Ukraine and Georgia and establishing NATO bases at its borders.

5.6 The Invasion of South Ossetia

Of all the former Soviet republics, Georgia had aligned itself most closely with the United States after the so-called Rose Revolution of November 2003, and various and complex factors contributed to the outbreak of armed conflict with Russia. The invasion of South Ossetia was planned by Mikheil Saakashvili's government and green lighted by President George W. Bush, according to the testimony to the Georgian Parliament of Erosi Kitsmarishvili, former Georgian envoy to Moscow.²¹ Indeed, the events in Georgia and Ukraine were a result of George W. Bush's foreign policy of promoting "*freedom and democracy*" in Central Asia, the Middle East and in other regions of the world. According to the guidelines of the Project for a New American Century (PNAC), this implied challenging "the regimes hostile to our values" and preserving and extending "an international order *friendly* to our security, our prosperity and our principles".²²

This possibility directly threatened the vital interests of Russia and made the intervention in Georgia, in defense of South Ossetia, predictable. The Kremlin signaled that it would react. The Russian Air Force flew warplanes into Georgia's airspace and over South Ossetia a few hours before the visit of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Tbilisi and the beginning (July 15th) of the military exercise *Immediate Response* in 2008, where 1000 American soldiers would train the forces of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Ukraine in the immediate vicinity of the Vaziani military base. Russia's Minister of Foreign Relations, Sergey Lavrov, denounced that there were reports of "ethnic cleansing" in South Ossetia, which would develop into a serious humanitarian crisis, and that Tbilisi's actions represented a "real threat to peace and security", which could bring it to "the brink of a new armed conflict with unpredictable consequences".²³

²¹Olesya Vartanyan and Ellen Barry, "Former Georgian envoy to Moscow puts blame for war on his own country", *International Herald Tribune*, 26/11/2008.

²²For more details, see Moniz Bandeira (2006, p. 571).

²³"Russian tanks enter South Ossetia", *BBC News*, July 9, 2008. "Lavrov looks beyond army pull-out", *BBC News*, October 8, 2008. Jim Nichol, "Russia-Georgia Conflict in South Ossetia: Context and Implications for U.S. Interests", Congressional Research Service (CRS)—Report for Congress, Order Code RL34618, September 22, 2008. See a map of South Ossetia in: CIA via University of Texas at Austin. Perry-Castaneda Library, Map. http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/cia14/georgia_sm_2014.gif. Accessed 31.08.2015.

President Mikheil Saakashvili knew and stated that Georgia didn't have the capabilities to challenge Russia directly, but that he could use political and diplomatic means to prevent its intervention. And so he embarked in the adventure, seeking to regain control of South Ossetia. He certainly imagined that Russia would not react militarily, expecting potential assistance from the United States and other NATO members, with whom he had signed the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) to receive assistance for a future admission as member-state.

The Russian intervention in Georgia on August 8, 2008, to defend the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, another separatist region, revealed that the transport of oil and gas through the pipelines that crossed Georgia was just as vulnerable as in the Persian Gulf. Russian troops conquered the city of Gori, where Joseph Stalin was born, and the Kodori gorge, occupied by Georgia since 2006, destroying weapon deposits and military bases. The pipelines were not attacked, although they were closed by the companies themselves out of safety and precaution. But the construction projects for new pipelines or the expansion of the BTC became apparently unfeasible as a result of the region's instability, which unsettled the companies that had wanted to invest there.

The Bush administration warned that the agreements with Russia were at risk, but the truth was that the United States could do nothing against Russia, apart from taking symbolic measures and sending humanitarian aid to Georgia. “Economic sanctions are unthinkable because the Russians have more leverage over us than vice versa,” said Clifford Gaddy of the Brookings Institute to the German magazine *Der Spiegel*.²⁴ He also didn't see any prospect for the proposed legal and political sanctions, such as kicking Moscow out of the G-8 or hindering its entry into the World Trade Organization. This, he said, “would be ineffectual at best, and counterproductive at worst.”

The United States government's hands were tied. It needed Russian cooperation to resolve several international problems, such as the issue of Iran's nuclear program, and, above all, to ensure the supply of energy to Western Europe. And in the end Russia recognized the independence of both separatist regions: Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in the vicinity of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, which had the capacity to transport 1.2 million barrels per day to the West. For the first time since the disappearance of the Soviet Union, Russia had confronted the United States and the European Union with a geopolitical reality through decisive military intervention.

President Vladimir Putin never left any doubts that he would not tolerate the expansion of NATO's war machine to Russia's borders, threatening its strategic position, nor would he acquiesce to the installation of missile shields in Poland and the Czech Republic, as President George W. Bush wanted, and neither would he accept the independence of Kosovo, as was the plan of Martti Ahtisaari, former

²⁴Gregor Peter Schmitz, “Hands Tied in Washington. Russia's Strategy Paralyzes US Government”, *Der Spiegel*, 8/15/2008.

President of Finland and UN envoy, a plan that provided for the recognition of a partial sovereignty of the region under international supervision.

Russia, perceiving the implicit threat of the United States' military actions, gave a show of force. It restored its fleet in the Atlantic and Mediterranean and got about expanding the port of Tartus in Syria, the naval base for its Black Sea fleet, in addition to deploying an anti-aircraft defense system with S-300PMU-2 Favorit ballistic missiles, capable of reaching 125 miles. At the same time, it reactivated the patrol flights of its nuclear bombers, which had been suspended since 1992.

In order to boast its defensive capabilities, President Dmitry Medvedev ordered the Russian armed forces to execute strategic maneuvers, under the name "Caucasus 2009", in ten southern provinces—North Ossetia, Ingushetia, Dagestan, Karachay-Cherkessia and Chechnya. These military exercises counted with the participation of the Russian brigades stationed in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and were commanded by general Nikolai Makarov, Chief of the General Staff of Russia's armed forces. Russia also announced it would increase its military budget to 23 trillion rubles (US\$ 782 billion) and started restoring its historical influence in the region, challenging the objectives of the United States and the European Union, although interests sometimes aligned, as was the case of the fight against terrorism.

Chapter 6

The Xinjiang Issue and Washington's China Strategy

6.1 The Xinjiang Issue

Like Russia, China had shown its solidarity with the United States after the attacks of September 11, 2001, and supported the *war on terror* declared by then President George W. Bush. The CIA and the Pentagon, however, who had already supported a series of covert operations by militant Islamic networks linked to Usamah Bin Ladin in Central Asia, the Balkans and the Caucasus, were now also fostering separatists movements in Xinjiang, the autonomous region in the northwest of the People's Republic of China.¹ This was an area spanning 1 million square miles, three times the size of France, and inhabited by 8.5 million to 10 million Uighurs,² a people of Turkish origin (45%),³ the Hui (a group similar to the Han, ethnically Chinese,⁴ but followers of Islam),⁵ Mongols, Tadjiks and other ethnic groups.⁶ The separatists wanted Xinjiang do secede and call it East Turkestan.⁷ But the region is rich in mineral resources, particularly oil, natural gas and uranium, and of critical geo-strategic

¹"Sibel Edmonds on Mike Malloy", partial transcript from an interview Sibel gave to Brad Friedman, guest-hosting the *Mike Malloy Show* ([audio](#)), July 31, 2009.

²There are also Uyghurs in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as in Turkey itself.

³Edward Wong, "China Warns of Executions as Riots Ebb", *The New York Times*, July 9, 2009. Holly Fletcher e Jayshree Bajoria, "The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)", Council on Foreign Relations, July 31, 2008. Shirley A. Kan, "U.S.-China Counterterrorism Cooperation: Issues for U.S. Policy", July 15, 2010, Congressional Research Service 7-5700 www.crs.gov RL33001. The Uyghurs speak Uyghur, a language similar to Turkish.

⁴Conboy and Morrison (2011, pp. 4–5 e 101–102).

⁵It is estimated that China harbored 20 million Muslims in 2008.

⁶On this region, see also Graham E. Fuller and S. Frederick Starr, *The Xinjiang Problem*, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced Studies, the Johns Hopkins University, pp. 4–8.

⁷Starr (2004, pp. 28–29).

importance to China as its bridgehead into Central Asia. The Silk Road passes through it, connecting China with the Mediterranean since the Roman Era, especially during the Han Dynasty from the first century BC until the fourteenth century AD.⁸

6.2 Strategy to Break Up China Through Covert Operations

The CIA's operations sought to do the same to China as they had done to the Soviet Union during the war in Afghanistan. Fight their enemy "*via proxies*", i.e., through third parties such as terrorist organizations and countries⁹ like Turkey, a "*puppet-state*" that nourished pan-Turkish and pan-Islamic ideas.

6.3 Training of Islamic Uyghurs in Afghanistan

Sponsored by the CIA, the ETIM (acronym for the East Turkestan Islamic Movement)¹⁰ was established by Uyghur Islamic fundamentalists in 1990, when separatist uprisings erupted in Xinjiang. Militant Uyghurs were already preparing for guerrilla warfare in the camps of Afghanistan in 2001, the same camps where the CIA and ISI, the secret service in Pakistan, had previously trained the *mujahidin* to fight the Soviet troops.

6.4 The Role of Turkey and the Connection with Terrorism

In an interview with London's *Sunday Times*, and in her memoirs—*Classified Woman: A Memoir*—Sibel Edmonds revealed that a "*criminal Turkish network*" continued its global activities under the nose of its protector, the United States,

⁸*Die Seidenstrasse* (Silk Road), so called in the nineteenth century by the German geographer Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen (1833–1905). See a figure of the Silk Road in: <http://www.mitchellteachers.org/ChinaTour/SilkRoadProject/pdf/physicalmapofasiaroutes.pdf>. Accessed: 02.05.2015.

⁹"Bombshell: Bin Laden Worked for US till 9/11", Information Clearing House, July 31, 2009, *Daily Kos*, "Former FBI translator Sibel Edmonds dropped a bombshell on the Mike Malloy radio show, guest-hosted by Brad Friedman" (audio, partial transcript).

¹⁰The ETIM belonged to a chain of terrorist groups in Central Asia, including the Central Asian Uyghur Hizballah (Kazakhstan), the East Turkistan Liberation Organization (ETLO), the Eastern Turkistan International Committee, the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (Afghanistan), the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Resistance Movement (Turkey), the Eastern Turkistan Youth League (Switzerland), the Turkistan Party (Pakistan) and the United Committee of Uyghurs' Organizations (Central Asia).

without loosening its direct and indirect ties with al-Qa'ida before or after the 9/11 attacks.¹¹ This criminal network was made up of “*Respectable*” Turkish companies established in Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and other republics of the former Soviet Union. Many of these non-profit organizations, construction companies, tourism agencies, Islamic schools and mosques, were receiving millions of dollars from the United States to establish and operate agencies in Central Asia, Turkey and the Balkans. Their real purpose was drug trafficking (mainly heroin), the illegal arms trade and money laundering.¹² According to Edmonds, Turkey's link with international terrorism (including al-Qa'ida) was known to all; it was no secret to the FBI and CIA that the United States used Turkish, Pakistani and Saudi operatives in Central Asia. The people there spoke the same language and had the same cultural heritage.¹³ This was the case of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

Between 1990 and 2001, the ETIM, whose Uyghur *jihadists* had received “*training and funding*” from al-Qa'ida,¹⁴ committed more than 200 acts of terrorism, blowing up buses and markets and killing officials of the Chinese Government. The Uyghur *Mujahidin* also fought against American forces during Operation Enduring Freedom, after the terrorist attacks of September 11.¹⁵ Several were captured and flown to Guantanamo Bay. Their leader and founder, Hahsan Mahsum, known as Abu-Muhammad al-Turkestani, was killed in 2003 by Pakistani troops. In 2004, Anwar Yusuf Turani created and proclaimed himself leader-in-exile of the government of East Turkestan,¹⁶ based in Washington,¹⁷ so as to declare war on China.

6.5 Washington's Double Standard vis-à-vis Xinjiang

Not only did Washington not officially recognize the government of East Turkestan headed by Yusuf Turani, but the United States Congress also included the ETIM on its list of terrorist organizations in August 2002. At the time, the administration of

¹¹Edmonds (2012, pp. 97–98).

¹²Ibid., p. 97.

¹³Ibid., p. 250. “Sibel Edmonds on Mike Malloy”, partial transcript from an interview Sibel gave to Brad Friedman, guest-hosting the Mike Malloy Show (audio), July 31, 2009.

¹⁴Holly Fletcher and Jayshree Bajoria, “The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)”, Council on Foreign Relations, July 31, 2008.

¹⁵When the United States invaded Afghanistan, they captured 22 Uyghurs who were imprisoned in the concentration camp in Guantanamo (Cuba). Five were subsequently released and sent to Albania, but not returned to China. Holly Fletcher e Jayshree Bajoria, “The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)”, Council on Foreign Relations, July 31, 2008.

¹⁶Reed and Rashke (2010, pp. 33–35). Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed, “Whistleblower: Al-Qaeda Chief Was US Asset—Did State Department Block Sunday Times Exposé of Pentagon Terrorist Ties?”, The Huffington Post, 20/5/2013. Pepe Escobar, “9–11 And The Smoking Gun”, Part 1, Part 2, Asia Times, April 8, 2004.

¹⁷Reed e Rashke (2010, pp. 33–35).

President George W. Bush needed China's cooperation on issues of strategic importance because of the war in Afghanistan. But China's Ministry of Security identified several other terrorist organizations linked to the ETIM, such as the East Turkestan Liberation Organization (ETLO), the East Turkestan Information Center (ETIC), and the World Uyghur Youth Congress (WUYC), based in Munich and presided by Rebiya Kadeer,¹⁸ who also was president of the Uyghur American Association, which was headquartered in the United States. In 2007, Beijing's troops destroyed the training camps maintained by the ETIM in Xinjiang.¹⁹

Rebiya Kadeer was accused of organizing the uprising that flared up in the first days of July 2009,²⁰ when 140–200 people were killed and over 800 injured in the city of Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang. Both her organizations—the World Uyghur Youth Congress (WUYC) and Uyghur American Association—were receiving funds from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED),²¹ which was also funding a chain of governmental and non-governmental organizations to train groups in “*political warfare*”, i.e., rebellions, in the Balkans and in the countries of the Caucasus.²² In 2011, the National Endowment for Democracy donated approximately US\$ 788,390 to the International Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Foundation and other separatists entities, including the World Uyghur Congress, which received US\$ 195,000 “*to enhance the ability of Uyghur prodemocracy groups and leaders to implement effective human rights and democracy campaigns*”, to organize conferences and “*training workshops for pro-democracy Uyghur youth, as well as young and mid-career professional*”, and to use the “*new media and social networking technology for advocacy and outreach, Internet security, and innovative tactics in promoting and defending human rights*”.²³

Meanwhile, the Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan used a press interview to openly declare his support to the uprising that occurred in 2009 in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang. He suggested that the violence used by Beijing was akin to “genocide” and that the matter should be brought before the UNSC.²⁴ Through an editorial published in the *China Daily* and other outlets, the Chinese government warned that these “irresponsible and baseless” remarks, equivalent to

¹⁸“China seeks int’l support in counter-terrorism”, *People’s Daily Online*, December 16, 2003.

¹⁹Elizabeth Van Wie Davis, “Uyghur Muslim Ethnic Separatism in Xinjiang, China”, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, January 2008.

²⁰“CIA and riot in Xinjiang”, *China Daily Forum*. Tania Branigan and Jonathan Watts, “Muslim Uighurs riot as ethnic tensions rise in western China”, *The Guardian*, July 5, 2009.

²¹Erik Eckholm, “China Points to Another Leader in Exile”, *The New York Times*, July 7, 2009.

²²Tania Branigan and Jonathan Watts, “Muslim Uighurs riot as ethnic tensions rise in western China”, *The Guardian*, July 5, 2009.

²³National Endowment for Democracy—2011 Annual Report—China (Xinjiang/East Turkistan), <http://www.ned.org/publications/annual-reports/2011--annual-report/asia/china-xinjiang/east-turkistan>

²⁴“The Uighurs, Central Asia and Turkey. Troubles across Turkestan”, *The Economist*, July 16, 2009.

an interference in China's internal affairs, should be retracted. Beijing further stressed that, of the 184 dead in the repression of the Urumqi uprising, 137 were Han (ethnically Chinese), and that there was no doubt that the riots were prepared outside of China by separatist Uyghurs who wanted to stir animosity against the Han Chinese in the hopes of advancing a conspiracy for the secession of Xinjiang.²⁵ Erdogan understood the message and backedpedaled. On a visit to Xinjiang on April 8, 2012, he stated that he would not allow his people to engage in anti-Chinese secessionist activities.²⁶ Duplicity and hypocrisy were also hallmarks of his personality.

The United States avoided confrontation, amongst other things because of its intimate and profound economic interdependence with China, but it was never able to hide that the goal of its support to the ethnic-Islamic separatist movement in Xinjiang, which was organized from abroad in Washington and Munich, was to produce instability in Xinjiang, Tibet and Inner Mongolia.²⁷ The World Uyghur Congress had been created in Munich by Erkin Alptekin, an Uyghur exile and ex-director of Radio Liberty (maintained by the CIA). He had also founded the Allied Committee of the Peoples of East Turkistan, Tibet and Inner Mongolia at Columbia University in New York in 1994.²⁸ The strategy was to unify the ethnic movements for the secession of Xinjiang, Tibet and Inner Mongolia, disintegrating China from its peripheral regions. This strategy was endorsed by the Dalai Lama, who, in a message to the conference in New York, wrote: "*Geography, history and currently Chinese occupation is connecting our three peoples. I remain optimistic that the true aspirations of the peoples of East Turkestan, Inner Mongolia and Tibet will be fulfilled in a not too distant future.*"²⁹

Some circles in the United States and Europe pointed to the separatist tendencies of ethnic minorities in these regions as China's greatest vulnerability; others believed that this threat was overstated.³⁰ But they thought the confluence of certain factors could create the conditions for the realization of separatists hopes, in the sense that Xinjiang, Tibet and Inner Mongolia could well achieve some form of independent political status. The premise was that the disintegration of China wasn't unthinkable if small local resentments could accumulate and transform into a greater conflict.³¹ And Washington never gave up on such efforts under the

²⁵"Don't twist facts", China.org.cn

²⁶Julia Famularo, "Erdogan Visits Xinjiang", *The Diplomat*, April 14, 2012.

²⁷Elizabeth Van Wie Davis, "Uyghur Muslim Ethnic Separatism in Xinjiang, China", Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, January 2008.

²⁸Canada Tibet Committee, "The Allied Committee of Eastern Turkestan, Inner Mongolia and Tibet meets in New York", *World Tibet Network News*, October 18, 1994.

²⁹B. Raman, "Us & Terrorism in Xinjiang", South Asia Analysis Group, Paper No. 499, 24/7/2002.

³⁰June Teufel Dreyer, "China's Vulnerability to Minority Separatism", *Asian Affairs*, Summer 2005, pp. 80–84.

³¹Ibid.

guise of promoting “*human rights and the rule of law in China, including in the ethnic minority regions of Tibet and Xinjiang*”.³²

Beijing had already accused the United States of “*double standards*” regarding its approach to the Uyghur question.³³ On the one hand, Congress classified the ETIM as a terrorist group, but on the other, it continued to surreptitiously support the secession movement in Xinjiang. In 2012, however, the State Department once again meddled in China's internal affairs and clearly demonstrated its support to the secessionist movements by criticizing the “*severe official repression of the freedoms of speech, religion, association, and harsh restrictions on the movement of ethnic Uighurs in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and of ethnic Tibetans in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and other Tibetan areas*”.³⁴ And between the end of June and the beginning of July 2013, new uprisings broke out in Urumqi. China's president, Xi Jinping, ordered harsh security measures against the separatists, and the government in Beijing blamed terrorist leaders trained in Syria by an organization affiliated to al-Qa'ida, the *al-Nusra Front*, which was involved in the war against the government of President Bashar al-Assad.³⁵

The autonomous region of Xinjiang was taking on an ever greater geopolitical and strategic significance for China. Not only because of its huge oil and gas reservoirs (proven reserves of approximately 3 billion tons of oil and 1.3 trillion cubic meters of natural gas, but with estimates reaching 20 and 40 billion tons of oil and 12.4 trillion cubic meters of natural gas),³⁶ but also because it served as the point of entry for other energy resources from the surrounding countries in Central Asia, such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. This was one of the factors behind the ethnic tensions that erupted over the course of the 1990s and the beginning of twenty-first Century, with China investing US\$ 15 billion in the region's infrastructure and development until 2001, including petrochemical plants and gas transports to Shanghai. The China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) project sought to transform Xinjiang into the country's largest oil and gas production base until 2020.³⁷

³²Susan V. Lawrence, “U.S.-China Relations: Policy Issues”, June 14, 2013, Congressional Research Service, 7-5700, www.crs.gov—R41108.

³³Shirley A. Kan, “U.S.-China Counterterrorism Cooperation: Issues for U.S. Policy”, July 15, 2010, Congressional Research Service, 7-5700, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RL33001.pdf>. Accessed 11.10.2014.

³⁴U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012: China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau)*, April 19, 2012. See also: The Strategic Location of Xinjiang. In: <http://www.wsws.org/en/media/photos/legacy/2009jul/j09-xinj-340.jpg>. Accessed 16.03.2015.

³⁵Philip Iglauer, “Beijing blames Syrians for Xinjiang carnage”, *The Korea Herald*, 3/7/2013, Asia News Network.

³⁶“Situation Report—Xinjiang Oil Industry Development”, Center for Energy and Global Development, Report produced by Chen Shi China Research Group and with the assistance of the government of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. “Xinjiang to build largest oil, gas base over 10 years”, *People's Daily Online*, August 16, 2010.

³⁷“Xinjiang to build largest oil, gas base over 10 years”, *People's Daily Online*, August 16, 2010.

6.6 Port of Gwadar on the Arabian Sea

The strategic importance of Xinjiang, where large oil fields with estimated reserves of 100 million tons were discovered in the 2000s, became even more pronounced after China's agreement with Pakistan in 2013 to assume total commercial-operational control of the port of Gwadar. Through its group Overseas Ports Holding Company Limited, China was now set to open a commercial corridor until the warm waters of the Arabian Sea and the Strait of Hormuz,³⁸ the choke point between Iran and Oman through which 35% of the crude oil was transported by sea to the West.

President Asif Ali Zardari considered giving a status similar to that of Hong Kong to the port city of Gwadar, in the province of Balochistan, which also harbored ethnic tensions, declaring it a “*special economic zone*” for a certain time, with a specific incentive regime and exemption from the Value Added Tax (VAT), capital gains, etc., in order to facilitate its rapid development as a business center. China planned initial investments of US\$ 750 million, in addition to allotting approximately US\$ 12 billion to multiple projects for the construction of railways, roads, an international airport and a refinery with the capacity to process 60,000 barrels of crude oil per day.

Iran's borders lie at only 75 miles from Gwadar. In February 2013, it announced that it would also construct an oil refinery there, at a cost of US\$ 4 billion, with a capacity to process 400,000 barrels of oil per day, in addition to a pipeline for transporting the crude. The main market would certainly be China, whose oil came mostly (60%) from the countries of the Persian Gulf. This oil took between 2 and 3 months to navigate the Indian Ocean—a distance of approx. 10,000 miles—until the port of Shanghai. A pipeline from Xinjiang to Gwadar would reduce this distance to only 1600 miles. These initiatives pointed to the formation of a geopolitical axis, a valuable card for China to play in the *Great Game* in Central Asia and the Middle East, associating itself economically with Pakistan and Iran, a country which China offered 60 million euros to rebuild the port of Chabahar, 43 miles from Gwadar,³⁹ and where, in 2005, it planned to invest more than US\$ 100 billion in the energy sector within 25 years.⁴⁰

Connecting Gwadar with the city of Kashgar in Xinjiang, on the border with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, would side-step the Strait of Malacca for Chinese oil shipments. China would overcome its dependence on maritime communication

³⁸Starr (2004).

³⁹Michael Smolander, “The Preeminence of Pakistan’s Gwadar Port”, *International Policy Digest*, May 27, 2013. Amitav Ranjan, “As China offers funds to Iran, India set to fast-track Chabahar pact”, *Indian Express*, New Delhi, July 1, 2013. See: The port of Gwadar in the Arabian Sea. <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/9/9a/Gwadar.jpg>. Accessed 16.03.2015.

⁴⁰Jephraim Gundzik, “The ties that bind China, Russia and Iran”, *Asia Times*, June 4, 2005.

ways, which the United States saw as its critical vulnerability, one it could exploit in the case of a potential war over Taiwan.⁴¹ Until such time, around 60–80% of Chinese oil imports from North Africa and the Middle East would be shipped by sea and pass through the Strait of Malacca, controlled by the United States.

6.7 China's Maritime Lines of Communication

At the same time that it ventured into the deep waters of the Arabian Sea, gaining control of commercial operations in Gwadar, where it was also expected to establish a naval base, China increased its investments from the Hainan Island in the South Sea and the coastline of Malacca (500 miles) down to the Indian Ocean. It expanded the ports of Chittagong (Bangladesh); Sittwe, Coco, Hianggyi, Khaukphyu, Mergui and Zadetkyi Kyun (Myanmar); Laem Chabang (Thailand); and Sihanoukville (Cambodia). It advanced in Sri Lanka, the Maldives, the port of Gwadar (Pakistan), and the islands of the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf.⁴²

To India—and to the United States—these actions seemed to be another Chinese step in the unfolding of the so-called *String of Pearls* strategy, which consisted in deploying a network of commercial and military installations ranging from its own territory to the Port Sudan. This network included the Sri Lankan port of Hambantota, which China started controlling through Colombo International Container Terminals Ltd, (ISTC), a joint venture between China Merchants Holdings (International) Co., Ltd (CMHI), a blue chip traded on the Hong Kong stock exchange, and the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA). Other similar projects were deployed in Myanmar and Bangladesh.⁴³ The purpose of this strategy, besides encircling India, was to project China's strategic power overseas and protect its energy supply lines.

⁴¹Lawrence Spinetta, “‘The Malacca Dilemma’ Countering China’s ‘String Of Pearls’ with Land-Based Airpower”, a thesis presented to the Faculty of the School of Advanced Air And Space Studies for Completion of Graduation Requirements, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, June 2006. See also the figure: China’s sea routes and bases: http://www.verkehrsrundschau.de/fm/3576/grafik1_stuetzpunkte_der_pe.jpg. Accessed 16.03.2015, also: <http://www.china-briefing.com/news/2009/03/18/china%E2%80%99s-string-of-pearls-strategy.html>. Accessed 16.03.2015.

⁴²Christopher J. Pehrson, “String of Pearls: meeting the challenge of china’s rising power across the Asian littoral”, Strategic Studies Institute (SSI), U.S. Army War College, July 2006.

⁴³“China’s String of Pearls Strategy”, *China Briefing*, March 18, 2009. <http://www.china-briefing.com/news/2009/03/18/china%E2%80%99s-string-of-pearls-strategy.html>. Accessed 12.10.2014.

6.8 Resources of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to the Uyghur Separatists

Beijing's plan to link the port of Gwadar to Xinjiang, advancing on the Arabian Sea and thus overcoming the strategic dependence on the Strait of Malacca, however, was probably the fact that led the NGOs—funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the CIA, the Turkish MIT (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı*), the Mossad and MI6—to promote instability in the region, inciting separatist threats and revolts like those in Urumqi (2009), so as to contain China's expansion toward the Arabian Sea and the oil resources that fueled the industrial powers of the West. According to the scholars Graham E. Fuller and S. Frederick Starr of the Johns Hopkins University, it would be unrealistic to think that the United States wouldn't be inclined to play the “*Uyghur card*” as a way of exerting pressure on China in the event of any future crisis or confrontation.⁴⁴

6.9 The CIA's Secret War in Tibet Since the 1950s

The possibility of breaking up China has been an integral part of American strategy ever since the beginning of the Cold War, in the second half of the 1940s. The US Congress considered that Tibet, as a territory occupied by China, had the right to self-determination. It gave its full backing to the Tibetan Government in exile—the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)—, established at Dharamshala (India) by the Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso) when he fled from Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, after the uprising of March 1959 led by his brother Gyalo Thondup.⁴⁵ This revolt was an escalation of several rebellions that began in the regions of Kham and Amdo, in 1956. It had been prepared from the United States, where the CIA started training 250–300 “*Tibetan freedom fighters*” from 1956 to 1957 in Camp Hale (Colorado), under the supervision of the officer Bruce Walker. They were subsequently transported in Curtiss C-46 Commando planes of the Intermountain Aviation and Intermountain Airways (a CIA airline) and USAF and parachuted above the mountains of Aspen, where a secret base for the operations in China had been established.⁴⁶ Training camps were also set up in Jampaling, Paljorling and Tashi

⁴⁴Graham E. Fuller e S. Frederick Starr, *The Xinjiang Problem*, Central Asia—Caucasus Institute, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced Studies, The Johns Hopkins University. http://www.silkroadstudies.org/docs/publications/OLD/xinjiang_final.pdf

⁴⁵“Gyalo Thondup: Interview Excerpts”, *Asia News/The Wall Street Journal*, February 20, 2009.

⁴⁶Andreas Lorenz, “CIA-Ausbilder in Tibet: Dilemma auf dem Dach der Welt”, *Der Spiegel*, 9/6/2012. Jamyang Norbu, “Remembering Tibet's Freedom Fighters”, *TheHuffingtonPost.com*, October 20, 2010. Scott N. Miller, “Celebrating freedom at Camp Hale”, *Vail Daily*, September 10, 2010. Tim McGirk, “Angry Spirit”, Dalai Lama Sur Envoyé Spécial—Part 3 of 3, April 6, 2012.

Gaang, near Pokhara, in Nepal. Between 1949 and 1951, the CIA increased the number of operatives engaged in covert actions tenfold, and the budget for such activities reached 20 times the figure set aside for the coup against the government of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddegh in 1953.⁴⁷

Operation ST-Circus, the code name for the sedition of 1959, organized by the CIA and headed by Gyalpo Thondup, brother of the Dalai Lama, was an utter and complete fiasco. Beijing crushed the uprising with an iron fist, resulting in thousands of deaths. But this secret war employing covert actions counted not only on the collaboration of Tibetans from the region of Kham, but also on agents from Nepal and India's intelligence service. The remaining combatants dispersed over 15 camps in Tibet, India and Nepal. And after 1960, the Dokham Chushi Gangdruk (the Chushi Gangdruk Volunteer Defense Force), an army formed in 1958 by Tibetans armed and trained by the CIA, continued the guerrilla warfare campaign. By the mid-1960s, it had nearly 2000 combatants of the Khampa ethnicity (originating from the Kham region), spread out over different bases, one of which was established in Mustang, Nepal.⁴⁸

In the fiscal year of 1964, the CIA's Tibet budget provided for expenses of US\$ 500,000 for the guerrillas based in Nepal; US\$ 400,000 for the covert training of guerrillas in the Colorado base; US\$ 225,000 for the equipment, transportation, installation and expenses of the training operative; US\$ 185,000 designated for the clandestine transportation to India of the Tibetans trained in Colorado; US\$ 125,000 for miscellaneous expenses, equipment and supplies of the reconnaissance teams, the storage of provisions, airborne refueling, the development of traineeships for the network of agents in Tibet, and agent salaries; US\$ 45,000 for the educational program of 20 selected young Tibetans; US\$ 75,000 for maintaining the Tibet Houses in New York, Geneva and other cities (not declassified); and US\$180,000 to subsidize the Dalai Lama.⁴⁹ The total cost of the CIA's Tibet program in 1964 was budgeted at US\$ 1,735,000.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Knaus (2012, p. 98). John Kenneth Knaus was the CIA agent who headed the operation between 1958 and 1965.

⁴⁸Tibet [China]: Information on Chushi Gangdruk [Gangdrug], United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Resource Information Center, January 22, 2003. CHN03002.NYC. <http://www.uscis.gov/tools/asylum-resources/ric-query-tibet-china-22-january-2003>. Accessed 13.10.2014. Richard M Bennett, "Tibet, the 'great game' and the CIA", Global Research, *Asia Times*, March 25, 2008.

⁴⁹337. Memorandum for the Special Group/1/Washington, January 9, 1964/1/Source: Department of State, INR Historical Files, Special Group Files, S.G. 112, February 20, 1964. Secret; Eyes Only. The source text bears no drafting information. Memoranda for the record by Peter Jessup of February 14 and 24 state that the paper was considered at a Special Group meeting on February 13 and approved by the Special Group on February 20. [Central Intelligence Agency, DCI (McCone) Files, Job 80-B01285A, Box 1, 303 Committee Meetings (1964)]. SUBJECT Review of Tibetan Operations 1. Summary—The CIA Tibetan Activity consists of political action, propaganda, and paramilitary activity. The purpose of the program at this stage is to keep the political concept of an autonomous Tibet alive within Tibet and among foreign nations, principally India, and to build a capability for resistance against possible political developments inside Communist China. Accessed <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v30/d337>

⁵⁰Ibid.

The Journalist Aldo Pereira, who visited Tibet around 2008 for the Brazilian daily *Folha de São Paulo*, stressed that the dollar in 1964 (when the Dalai Lama received US \$180,000, the equivalent of more or less US\$ 15,000 per month), “had a much greater purchasing power than today (2008)” and that “the American government continues to channel funds to the Tibetan cause through other institutions, such as the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (part of the State Department), and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which officially isn’t an agency of the American government, but which received US\$ 80 million from the United States Treasury in the fiscal year of 2009”.⁵¹ As the Dalai Lama himself confirmed, the United States Congress “*at least supports Tibetan human rights*”, despite wanting to maintain good relations with China.⁵² Support to human rights has always meant backing the separatist movement, using the Dalai Lama for the psychological warfare (*psy-ops*) against China. In 1989, the year in which the Beijing government crushed the potential uprising in Tiananmen Square, he received the Nobel Peace Prize.

6.10 The Dalai Lama's Allowance from the CIA

There is no doubt that the Dalai Lama was receiving an allowance from the CIA since the beginning of the 1950s, and perhaps even earlier. Until 1975, he hid the role of the CIA in the revolt of 1959, when he had maintained contact with its agents in Tibet.⁵³ But 50 years after the outbreak of the insurgence in the Tibetan capital Lhasa, the Dalai Lama granted an interview to the journalist Claudia Dreifus of the *New York Times*. And even though he had always declared himself against violence, he praised the Tibetan guerrillas as “*very dedicated people*” who wanted to sacrifice their own lives for their nation and that they found ways to receive “*help from the CIA*”, whose motivation “*was entirely political*”.⁵⁴ He also added that, “*today, the help and support we receive from the United States is truly out of sympathy and human compassion*.”⁵⁵ But the CIA program for Tibet had been political in nature from the very beginning, a “*propaganda and paramilitary activity*”, i.e., a violent activity, training Tibetan guerrillas for its secret war against China.⁵⁶

⁵¹Pereira (2009, p. 52).

⁵²Claudia Dreifus, “The Dalai Lama”, *The New York Times*, November 28, 1993.

⁵³Norm Dixon, “The Dalai Lama’s hidden past”, *RevLeft*, November 6, 2005.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

⁵⁵*Ibid.*

⁵⁶337.Memorandum for the Special Group/1/ Washington, January 9, 1964/1/Source: Department of State, INR Historical Files, Special Group Files, S.G. 112, February 20, 1964. Secret; Eyes Only. The source text bears no drafting information. Memoranda for the record by Peter Jessup of February 14 and 24 state that the paper was considered at a Special Group meeting on February 13 and approved by the Special Group on February 20. [Central Intelligence Agency, DCI (McCone) Files, Job 80-B01285A, Box 1, 303 Committee Meetings (1964)]. Subject—Review of Tibetan Operations. Foreign Relations of the United States—1964–1968—Volume

The secret war lasted virtually until 1971–1972, when professor Henry Kissinger in his capacity as National Security Advisor convinced then President Richard Nixon that the United States should seek rapprochement to China because it was “*central to the establishment of international order and transcended America’s reservations about China’s radical governance*”.⁵⁷ And also, Washington had lost faith.

It had failed in its efforts to promote the secession of Tibet and Beijing was pressuring Nepal to close the training camps in Mustang. And so, in July 1974, the Dalai Lama sent a message from his exile in Dharmasala urging the guerrillas, commanded by the CIA and trained by the Kampa Gyato Wangdu, commander of the base, to surrender themselves and hand over their weapons to the soldiers of the army of Nepal, who answered to the government of King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev (1972–2001).⁵⁸ Wangdu and some others attempted to escape, but 20 miles from the border with India they ran into barrage of fire from Nepalese soldiers. Almost all of them perished, including Wangdu, and the guerrilla ended.

But the psychological war (*psy-ops*) using the figure of the Dalai Lama continued. And the more fame and prestige he had, Aldo Pereira noted, “the greater the inflow of financial resources from a growing number of supposedly non profitable organizations, in addition to the donations from rich and generous supporters (income tax deductible contributions)” to sustain the campaign.⁵⁹

XXX—China. Department of State, Washington, DC, http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/history/vol_XXX/337_343.html. Andreas Lorenz, “CIA-Ausbilder in Tibet: Dilemma auf dem Dach der Welt”, *Der Spiegel*, 9/6/2012.

⁵⁷Kissinger (2011, p. 447).

⁵⁸King Birendra, 55 years-old and considered to be the reincarnation of the god Vishnu, Queen Aishwarya, Prince Nirajan and 12 other members of the royal family were assassinated on June 1, 2001, by prince Dipendra, heir to the crown, in Narayanhity palace in Kathmandu. There is great controversy around this massacre. Some testimonies state that prince Dipendra, who is said to have tried to commit suicide and who was in a coma until June 4th, died before his father and other family members. Prince Gyanendra, brother of King Birendra, was the one who actually took over the throne. Everything points to a *cover-up*.

⁵⁹Pereira (2009, pp. 52–53).

Chapter 7

The Invasion of Iraq: Open and Latent Purposes

7.1 The Invasion of Iraq Targeting Large Oil Reserves at the Lowest Cost

The *Great Game* the United States was playing in the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia would be hard to reproduce in Iraq, which Washington had been planning to invade since before Operation Desert Storm (1991) on the pretext of the intervention in Kuwait.¹ Saddam Hussein had already crushed a Shia and Kurdish revolt funded and organized by the CIA, which resulted in the death of thousands of people. In 1997, Paul Wolfowitz, future Deputy Secretary of Defense under President George W. Bush, and Zalmay Kalilzad,² consultant of the company UNOCAL and one of the authors of the PNAC, wrote an article published by the magazine the *Weekly Standard*, entitled “Overthrow Him”. They recommended the substantial use of military power to destroy and “*delegitimize Saddam and his regime*”; to prosecute him as “*a war criminal on the basis of his crimes against Iraq’s Kurds and Shi’as*” as well as against the people of Kuwait; to make clear that the contracts signed by his government were not “*legally valid and that the United States will never permit Saddam to sell the oil that companies in France and elsewhere are already panting after*”.³ The article concluded by warning that companies who wished to exploit the enormous oil riches should align themselves with a “*government of free Iraq*”. In other words, a government that the United States would install after the fall of Saddam Hussein.⁴

¹Pillar (2011, pp. 16–17).

²Zalmay Kalilzad was born in Pakistan of the Pashtun ethnicity, and naturalized as an American citizen. He was United States Ambassador in Kabul between 2003 and 2005.

³Paul Wolfowitz and Zalmay M. Khalilzad, “Overthrow Him”, *The Weekly Standard*, Dec. 1, 1997, Vol. 3, No. 12.

⁴*Ibid.*

In his capacity as CEO of Halliburton, Dick Cheney had already emphasized in 1999 that “the Middle East with two thirds of the world’s oil and the lowest cost, is still where the prize ultimately lies”⁵ for the major oil companies. The costs of producing oil in Iraq were among the lowest in the world. And it was estimated that Iraq alone held reserves of 100 billion barrels of oil, the largest in the Middle East with Saudi Arabia and Iran.⁶

A German geologist who had explored the region of Mosul and its surroundings in Iraq before the First World War noted that the Middle East harbored the “*largest undeveloped resources*” of oil in the world and foresaw that “*the power that controls the oil lands of Persia and Mesopotamia will control the source of supply of the majority liquid fuel of the future*”.⁷ He stressed that its control should be absolute and that no foreign interest should be allowed to get a foothold.⁸ But after confronting Germany in the First World War, Great Britain sought to conquer these reserves and resolved the question of Mosul with France in the oil agreement signed in San Remo on April 24/25, 1920.⁹

The location of the Persian and Mesopotamian oil fields, which could be shipped by sea to India and the colonies in the Far East, made them vital to the imperial interests of Great Britain.¹⁰ Captain Thomas E. Lawrence, officer of the British Military Intelligence (MI5) and better known as Lawrence of Arabia, rightly wrote that English soldiers who were sailing up the Tigris, the river that lays the contours of Mesopotamia with the Euphrates, were to be cast into the fire by the thousands “*for the worst of deaths, not to win the war but that the corn and rice and oil of Mesopotamia might be ours*”.¹¹

7.2 No Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq

A few months after the inauguration of President George W. Bush and long before the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center (WTC), vice-president Dick Cheney received Archie Dunham, CEO of the oil giant ConocoPhillips, two executives of the US Oil and Gas Association (USOGA), Falah Aljibury, a consultant for the Amerada Hess Oil and Goldman Sachs, and Pamela Quanrud of the National

⁵Full text of Dick Cheney’s speech at the Institute of Petroleum Autumn lunch, 1999. Published by the London Institute of Petroleum on 6/8/2004.

⁶Pillar (2011, p. 21).

⁷Barr (2011, p. 66).

⁸Ibid., p. 66. On October 23 1912, the Deutsche Bank Group had negotiated a deal with the African Eastern Concessions Ltd to acquire the oil exploitation rights in Mesopotamia, with a investment of 80,000 pounds sterling on behalf of Türkische Petroleum Gesellschaft. Hoffmann (1927, p. 70).

⁹Ibid., pp. 85–95.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 59.

¹¹Lawrence (1962, p. 23).

Security Council. The objective: discuss the issue of oil not only in the Caucasus, but in Iraq, whose invasion was already in the books before the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.¹²

Documents from March 2001, which the US Department of Commerce was forced to declassify in mid-2003 as a result of a suit filed by the Sierra Club (an environmentalist organization) and Judicial Watch, confirmed that the Task Force headed by vice-president Dick Cheney had developed two maps plotting the oil fields, pipelines, refineries and terminals, and two maps detailing the projects and the companies that wanted to manage these resources in Iraq.¹³ “The attempts of the Bush administration to associate the government of Iraq with the attacks of September 11” were then intensified, recalled former Brazilian ambassador Rubens Barbosa, as were the charges related to the development of weapons of mass destruction.¹⁴

Iraq didn’t threaten the United States or any other country of the West. Instead, it threatened American and British oil companies. Saddam Hussein had signed contracts with the large Russian company Lukoil, was in negotiations with Total from France, and had begun to replace the dollar by the euro as the currency for oil transactions. His removal would make room for the entry of American and British firms, such as Chevron, ExxonMobil, Shell and British Petroleum, in addition to other corporations, which would then take it upon themselves to restore the infrastructure damaged by 10 years of sanctions and war.¹⁵

“*The invasion of Iraq began with a lie in March 2003,*” wrote the journalist Clóvis Rossi in the Brazilian daily *Folha de São Paulo*.¹⁶ And the American government lied with pomp and circumstance. Armed with satellite images, transcripts of phone conversations and other intelligence, Secretary of State Colin Powell appeared before the UN Security Council and presented what he labeled as “*solid*” evidence that Iraq had not complied with the UN resolutions for its disarmament¹⁷: “*My colleagues, every statement I make today is backed up by sources, solid sources. These are not assertions. What we’re giving you are facts and conclusions based on solid intelligence.*”¹⁸

Many years later, Colin Powell confessed to Kofi Annan, former secretary general of the UN, that he himself was not convinced by the “evidence” he had

¹²Greg Palast, “Secret U.S. Plans for Iraq’s Oil”, BBC News World Edition, March 17, 2005. Kolko, 2006, pp. 140–142. Joy Gordon, “Cool war: Economic sanctions as a weapon of mass destruction”, Harper’s Magazine, February 2003, pp. 43–49.

¹³H. Josef Hebert, “Group: Cheney Task Force Eyed on Iraq Oil”, Associated Press, July 18, 2003.

¹⁴Barbosa (2011, pp. 82–83).

¹⁵Klein (2007, pp. 312–313).

¹⁶Clóvis Rossi, “A maior diferença talvez seja o poder de esculhambação”, *Folha de S. Paulo*, 31/8/2010.

¹⁷“Powell presents US case to Security Council of Iraq’s failure to disarm”, United Nations News Service, February 5, 2003.

¹⁸*Ibid.* Bamford (2004, pp. 372–373).

submitted to the Security Council to justify the aggression against Iraq.¹⁹ But through a massive disinformation campaign to tie Saddam Hussein to the September 11 attacks and instill the fear for weapons of mass destruction, the invasion of Iraq was sold to the public through a complicit media, noted Naomi Klein, recalling that Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, had confessed that this question was one with which “*everyone could agree*”.²⁰ And so the people were deceived into supporting a war that had been planned long ago.

In fact, Paul Wolfowitz said on May 28, 2003 that, for “*bureaucratic reasons*”,²¹ the issue of weapons of mass destruction had been selected to justify the invasion of Iraq, since it was the only issue on which all—inside and outside of the United States—could agree. Later, however, Paul Wolfowitz himself confessed in front of Asian delegates in a security summit in Singapore that oil had been the main reason for the war in Iraq. When asked why North Korea hadn’t also been attacked, he explained: “*Let’s look at it simply. The most important difference between North Korea and Iraq is that economically we just had no choice in Iraq. The country swims on a sea of oil*”.²² Oil had always been of geopolitical importance as the fundamental resource of the world economy, and Dick Cheney acknowledged that “*the Gulf War (1990-1991) was a reflection of that reality*”.²³

7.3 The Lie Behind the Illegal Nature of the Invasion

Saddam’s weapons of mass destruction, however, proved to be no more than “propaganda” from the George W. Bush Administration,²⁴ i.e., the “propagandistic reason”²⁵ to attack Iraq. “*In the end, it was the power of lies, not logic, that was the deciding factor*”, observed James Bamford.²⁶ The strike against Saddam Hussein’s regime was part of the ongoing war on terror. Its goal was to impose on all countries of all continents, including the “*Islamic world*”, as Bush stressed in front of

¹⁹Rick Gladstone, “Powell Was More Skeptical about Iraq than Previously Thought, Annan Says”, *The New York Times*, August 30, 2012.

²⁰Ibid., p. 327. Bamford (2004, pp. 376–377).

²¹Blix (2005), p. 266).

²²Sophie Mühlmann, “Washington fürchtet dennoch weitere Eskalation Im Fall Nordkorea setzt Wolfowitz auf die Anrainer”, *Die Welt*, 2/6/2003. George Wright, “Wolfowitz: Iraq War Was About Oil”, *The Guardian*, June 4, 2003.

²³Full text of Dick Cheney’s speech at the Institute of Petroleum Autumn Lunch, 1999. Published by the London Institute of Petroleum.

²⁴“The War in Iraq”, *The New York Times*, August 31, 2010.

²⁵Before attacking Poland and starting the Second World War, Hitler explained to the High Command of the German Wehrmacht, on August 22, 1939, that he would provide “a propagandistic reason” for the initiative, adding that: “It doesn’t matter if it is plausible or not. Nobody will later ask the victor whether he told the truth or not.” Fest (1974, pp. 594–595, 1979, p. 82).

²⁶Bamford (2004, p. 377).

graduating West Point cadets, what he called “*free and open societies*”. That is, docile regimes that were favorable to the economic and political interests of the United States, in Syria, in Iran and in all the countries of the Persian Gulf, including Saudi Arabia.

“It was subsequently proven that all these suspicions were false and that their objective was to legitimize military action against Saddam Hussein”, wrote the Ambassador Rubens Barbosa in his memoirs, stating that “the decision to attack Iraq had been taken before the September 11 attacks” and that he had known this and informed the Brazilian government a year in advance, as it had been mentioned in a meeting at the Pentagon.²⁷ George Tenet, then CIA director, also confirmed in his memoirs that “the focus on Iraq by senior Bush officials predated the Administration”.²⁸

In 2005, the BBC show *Newsnight* revealed that the Bush administration had actually drawn up plans for the war and the oil in Iraq before 9/11, which sparked a political battle between the *neocons* and the oil companies.²⁹ According to the prosecutor and Middle East specialist Kirk H. Sowell, based in Washington, DC, President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair discussed what to do with the Iraqi oil assets before the invasion of 2003.³⁰ British oil companies in London were pressuring the Blair government so it would allow them access to the oil in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein. Companies in the United States and Europe—including the Royal Dutch/Shell Group and ChevronTexaco—had already drawn up projects to enter the country. After the invasion, geologists from the multinational companies carried out surveys and estimated that the relatively unexplored territories, the deserts in the West and Southeast of the country, could contain additional reserves of 45 to 100 billion barrels (bbls) of recoverable oil,³¹ in addition to 14 giants and super-giant oil fields, each containing 1 billion barrels in reserves.³²

Oil was Iraq’s most important economic asset. It answered for 90% of government revenues and 58% of the country’s GDP. Here lay the third largest reserve of the Middle East, second only to Saudi Arabia and Iran. In 2010, the minister of Energy Hussain Al-Shahristani estimated reservoirs containing 143.1 billion barrels, and the discovery of new fields could elevate this figure to 200 billion,³³ with a

²⁷Fest (1974, pp. 82–83, 86, 1979, p. 82).

²⁸Tenet (2007, pp. 302–303).

²⁹Greg Palast, “Secret U.S. Plans for Iraq’s Oil”, *BBC News World Edition*, March 17, 2005.

³⁰“Was the Iraq War About Oil?“, *Musings On Iraq*, Iraq News, Politics, Economics, Society, April 20, 2011.

³¹Energy Information Administration, *Official Energy Statistics from the U.S. Government, Iraq*.

³²“Kurdistan’s Huge Oil Reserves Lend Credibility to Iraqi Claims of 115 Billion Barrels”, *The Oil Drum*, January 10, 2012.

³³Kadhim Ajrash and Nayla Razzouk, “Iraq Lifts Oil Reserves Estimate to 143 Billion Barrels, Overtakes Iran”, Bloomberg, October 4, 2010. “Iraq increases oil reserves by 24%”, BBC News, Business, October 4, 2010. Energy Informations Administration 2009. Country Analysis Briefs. Iraq. June http://www.iaccidatabase.com/PDF_files/Iraq%20Energy%20Data%20S5794/Iraq%20Energy%20Data-Statistic%20and%20Analysis-Oil%20and%20Gas_Electricity.pdf. Accessed 28.10.2014.

production capacity exceeding 2.7 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2010 and an additional 1.5 million barrels per day within 3 or 4 years, and an additional 2 million barrels per day (bpd), for a total of 6 million bpd, according to the government's strategic plan (2008–2017).

Controlling the oil reserves in Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa was crucial for the United States. Its imports had reached US\$ 327 billion in 2007 and estimates were that it could reach US\$ 400 billion by 2008, which represented an increase of 300% in relation to 2002. The US oil bill represented 35% to 40% of its entire trade deficit in 2006, a much higher percentage than in 2002, when it was only 25%.³⁴ In 2007, the U.S. trade deficit was US\$ 708.5 billion,³⁵ although it was approximately US\$ 50 billion lower than in the previous year, 2006, thanks to the devaluation of the dollar and the consequent increase in exports. The trend, however, was for it to increase more and more. Not without reason, President George W. Bush warned in his State of Union address of 2006 that the United States needed cheap energy resources to maintain its production competitive, and that there was a serious problem: *"America is addicted to oil, which is often imported from unstable parts of the world."*³⁶

On June 19, 2008, *the New York Times* published an article entitled *"Deals With Iraq are Set to bring Oil Giants Back"*, which revealed that the occupation of Iraq had actually targeted the capture of its oil fields. Based on information from officials of the ministry responsible for the oil in Iraq and from an American diplomat, who remained anonymous, the journalist Andrew Kramer wrote in the article that *"Exxon Mobil, Shell, Total and BP (. . .) along with Chevron and a number of smaller oil companies, are in talks with Iraq's Oil Ministry for no-bid contracts to service Iraq's largest fields"*.³⁷

Contrary to the expectations of the oil corporations in the United States and Europe, however, Hussein Shahristani, Oil Minister under the government of Prime minister Nouri al-Maliki, only started reactivating the oil industry in 2007. His first initiative in August 2007 was to resume the joint venture contract closed in 1997 by the government of Saddam Hussein with the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), valued at US\$ 3 billion, for the exploitation of the Ahdab field in the province of Wasit, to the

³⁴"The Global Energy Market: Comprehensive Strategies to Meet Geopolitical and Financial Risks—The G8, Energy Security, and Global Climate Issues", *Baker Institute Policy Report*, Published by the James A. Baker Institute for Public Policy of Rice University, Number 37, July 2008.

³⁵U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, "U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services, Exhibit 1", March 11, 2008. *News Release: U.S. International Transactions*. Bureau of Economic Analysis—International Economic Accounts—U.S. International Transactions: First Quarter 2008 Current Account U.S. Department of Commerce.

³⁶President Bush Delivers State of the Union Address United States Capitol Washington, DC. Office of the Press Secretary, January 31, 2006.

³⁷Andrew E. Kramer, "Deals With Iraq Are Set to Bring Oil Giants Back", *The New York Times*, June 19, 2008.

southeast of Baghdad.³⁸ Several companies in the United States and Europe, such as Exxon and Shell, had invested heavily in the oil exploration of the central region. But oil production only reached pre-Saddam levels 8 years after the invasion, about 2.7 million barrels per day, which was still 20% less than in 1979.³⁹ This production was siphoned through the Basrah terminal and the Turkey pipeline. In 2009, Iraq exported almost 1.8 million barrels per day, including to China, its third largest oil customer (12.1%) after the United States (24.3%) and India (16.7%).

But Iraq had not yet recovered from the war and remained quite dilapidated and unstable. The future of its prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, was uncertain. His government was weak, inefficient, corrupt, and depended on the backing of the Shiite cleric Sayyid Muqtada al-Sadr, the commander of the Jaish al-Mahdi (JAM) militia, the main force of resistance and opposition to the presence of the United States. And by the end of his administration, President George W. Bush was a *lame duck*, having lost all credibility and confidence.

7.4 The Failure of the Regime Change and Nation-Building Policy

Between 1900 and 2003, when President George W. Bush ordered the invasion of Iraq, the United States had carried out at least 14 military interventions in other countries to change a government (*regime change*) or rebuild a nation (*nation-building*). Most resulted in wars and produced more bitterness than liberation.⁴⁰ But what the United States actually wanted, was to defend its own commercial interests, seeking access to markets and/or natural resources. Political scientists Mixin Pei and Sara Casper concluded in a 2003 study for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace that most American attempts at “*nation-building*” were tragic and that the objective of replacing or supporting regimes in other countries was not to build a democracy, but to defend its own security and economic interest.⁴¹ According to Mixin Pei and Sara Casper, President George W. Bush’s declared purpose of establishing a democracy in Iraq would result in a “*tragedy for the Iraq people and a travesty of American democratic ideals*”.⁴²

³⁸Erica Goode and Riyadh Mohammed, “Iraq Signs Oil Deal With China Worth Up to \$3 Billion”, *The New York Times*, August 28, 2008. Timothy Williams, “China Oil Deal Is New Source of Strife Among Iraqis”, *The New York Times*, September 5, 2009.

³⁹Clifford Krauss, “After the Revolution, Hurdles in Reviving the Oil Sector”, *The New York Times*, August 23, 2011.

⁴⁰Kinzer (2006, p. 1, 321–322).

⁴¹Mixin Pei and Sara Casper, “Lessons from the Past: The American Record on Nation Building”, *Policy Brief*, May 24, 2003, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

⁴²*Ibid.*

In fact, the 9-year occupation of Iraq by the United States didn't create any democracy in this country divided by Islamic sects, ethnic groups and tribes and with conditions nothing like the West. Democratic institutions could not be created where they had never existed by force of arms. In 2006, al-Qa'ida militants tried to monopolize power within the Sunni community, proclaiming the Islamic State of Iraq. The sectarian conflict between Shia, Sunni and Kurds intensified with successive and bloody terrorist attacks, tormenting towns from the heartland until Baghdad. They were carried out by Sunni and al-Qa'ida militants with the financial support and suicide bombers from Saudi Arabia and other States of the Persian Gulf.⁴³ *"If the Sunni and Shia could not live on the same street, they could hardly share a common identity"*, noted the journalist Patrick Cockburn, correspondent in Iraq of the British newspaper *The Independent*.⁴⁴

7.5 American Loss of Credibility

A high-ranking officer of the Pentagon said to the renowned American journalist Seymour Hersh that the experience in Iraq had been *deeply flawed* and had that it had affected Iran's calculations. He added that *"we built this big monster with Iraq, and there was nothing there. This is son of Iraq"*.⁴⁵ The United States lost its credibility and 9 years after attacking and invading Iraq, with approximately 4486 American soldiers dead, 33,184 seriously injured and between 106,000 and 115,000 Iraqis killed,⁴⁶ President Barack Obama had to withdraw US troops until December 31, 2011, leaving around 470,000 people living in 382 refugee camps in unsafe areas that had neither jobs nor basic services, according to the data of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).⁴⁷ Some 1 million Iraqis had been driven from their homes, spread out over various regions, and thousands were living in miserable conditions, unable to return to their places of origin because of the insecurity, the destruction of their homes and the lack of basic services.⁴⁸

The war in Iraq had also created between 900,000 and 1 million or more widows, according to information from the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Women

⁴³Ibid., p. 167, 180.

⁴⁴Patrick Cockburn 2008. *Riding the Tiger*. Muqtada al-Sadr and the American Dilemma in Iraq, April 8. <http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/174916>, Accessed 28.10.2014.

⁴⁵Seymour M. Hersh (2006). Last Stand. The military's problem with the President's Iran policy. *The New Yorker*, July 10. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/07/10/last-stand-2>. Accessed 28.10.2014.

⁴⁶*Iraq Body Count*, accessed <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/>

⁴⁷2012 UNHCR country operations profile—Iraq, accessed <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486426.html>

⁴⁸Ibid.

in Iraq,⁴⁹ and approximately 3 million orphans. It is estimated that 1.5 million Iraqis died during the 9 years of occupation. UN records indicate that, until 2011, more than 3 million Iraqis had been driven from their homes: 1,343,568 outside and 1,683,579 inside their own country.⁵⁰ Despite the millions of dollars paid to Pentagon contractors, key sectors of the Iraqi infrastructure, such as power plants, sewage, telephone and health systems, had not been repaired 4 years after. Or, if they had been repaired, it was done so precariously that they didn't work in 2007.⁵¹ The cities lacked basic sanitation. One million Iraqis were living on the edge of starvation according to the UN Food Program, although 90% of the population received some food every month. Former CIA director George Tenet himself acknowledged that the invasion of Iraq would have produced the same “*disastrous results*” even if weapons of mass destruction had been found.⁵²

Rightly so, the Brazilian journalist Clóvis Rossi wrote that “*this data is really terrible, but it is as not simple as to say that Iraq, between one lie and the other, is better off today than before*”. For the Iraq that had been invaded had just come out of two wars (against Iran, between 1980 and 1988, and against a coalition after invading Kuwait, in 1991) and 12 years of sanctions imposed by the UN.⁵³ Violence in the country never really ended. But the problem of Iraq had turned the strategic equation of the Middle East even more convoluted. The fall of Saddam Hussein and the establishment of a real democracy in the country would, under any conditions, have resulted in a victory for the Shia, who had close ties with Iran, which was disputing control of the region with Saudi Arabia, the source of Wahhabi-Salafi fundamentalism.

Matthew Alexander, an American serviceman and veteran of the wars in Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq, acknowledged the American policy of favoring the Shia and eradicating the Ba'ath Party, driving the Iraqi Sunni into the hands of al-Qa'ida.⁵⁴ The Sunni came to realize that they would never return to power through elections, nor would they share in the future oil revenues, since the reserves were concentrated in the regions dominated by the Shia and the Kurds. Violence seemed to be the only path.⁵⁵

⁴⁹According to the UN estimates, 100 women were being widowed each day when the sectarian violence hit its apex. The Ministry of Social Affairs reports that it pays benefits to 86,000 widows, most of which lost their husbands during the war. Andrew E. Kramer, “After Nearly 9 Years of War, Too Many Widows”, *The New York Times*, November 24, 2011.

⁵⁰Guilherme Russo, “Guerra interna desloca 3 milhões de iraquianos”, *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 3/6/2012.

⁵¹Hearing before the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, One Hundred Tenth Congress, First Session June 19, 2007, p. 84.

⁵²Tenet (2007, p. 493).

⁵³Clóvis Rossi, “A maior diferença talvez seja o poder de esculhambação”, *Folha de S. Paulo*, 31/8/2010.

⁵⁴Alexander (2011, p. 156).

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 156.

Meanwhile tensions were rising between the autonomous region of Kurdistan, with its huge oil reserves, and Baghdad, threatening the unity of the country that had been artificially created by Great Britain in Mesopotamia in 1920, when 75% of the population lived in tribes,⁵⁶ following the destruction of the old order of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War.⁵⁷ Kurdistan borders Iran to the east, Turkey to the north, and Syria to the West, with the remainder of Iraq to its south. The government in Baghdad, however, insisted on maintaining control of the oil reserves that existed there and refused to recognize the contracts signed by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) with foreign companies, threatening to put them on an international black list. The two governments were locked in a fierce competition to attract foreign investment.⁵⁸ About 40% of Iraqi oil, i.e., about 45 billion barrels, could be found in the fields of Kurdistan. It began exporting 90,000 to 100,000 barrels of crude oil per day since the beginning of 2011, and could increase this volume to 175,000 barrels until the end of that year. Gulf Keystone Petroleum estimated that the region of Kurdistan in Iraq could harbor 45 billion barrels of oil in reserves, almost as much as the 53 billion barrels produced by the North Sea at the end of 2010.⁵⁹

7.6 The Collapse of Lehmann Brothers and the Financial Crisis

In 2010 the United States maintained 726.5 million barrels of crude in its Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), the equivalent to 75 days of imports. It could meet consumption demands 13 days after authorization by the President, releasing a maximum average of 4.4 Mb/d. The impacts could be significant before this oil reached the market, however.⁶⁰ Since 2005, domestic production had been growing every year, i.e., it had increased 24% according to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), reaching 9.2 Mb/d by the end of 2011, while consumption dropped by 9% to 18.8 Mb/d in the same period.⁶¹ But in order to maintain the position of global superpower it had conquered more than a century ago, the United States

⁵⁶Fromkin (1989, p. 450).

⁵⁷With the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, the Middle East was divided, creating new countries that handed over as mandates for the administration by Great Britain (Palestine and Iraq) and France (Syria and Lebanon), which also took over the German colonies in Africa.

⁵⁸Joel Wing, "Iraq's Kurds Push for More Oil Production, While Bickering with Baghdad over Exports", *E Kurd.net*, 21/3/2012.

⁵⁹Euan Mearns, "The Oil Drum—The Oil Potential of Iraqi Kurdistan", *Geology/Exploration*, January 11, 2012.

⁶⁰Michael Ratner and Neelesh Nerurkar, "Middle East and North Africa Unrest: Implications for Oil and Natural Gas Markets", Congressional Research Service, March 10, 2011.

⁶¹Robert Longley, "Should Obama Take Credit for US Oil Production Hike? Trend Began Under George W. Bush", *About.Com US Government Info*, April 13, 2012.

increasingly depended on reliable sources of energy, especially oil. And its imports, mainly from the Persian Gulf, tended to grow significantly in coming decades.

The expectation was that global oil demand would jump from 82 million bpd in 2004 to 111 million bpd in 2025, which would represent an increase of 35%. The Energy Information Administration (EIA), according to its Annual Energy Outlook, foresaw an even greater increase in oil demand in the United States and the emerging countries of Asia—particularly China—and, consequently, price increases until around 2030. The volume of oil imported by the United States, however, fell from 60% in 2005 to 47% in 2010, perhaps due to the rise in prices with the devaluation of the dollar and the financial crisis triggered in 2007 and aggravated in 2008 with the collapse of Lehmann Brothers and other credit institutions, throwing the world economy into a harsh depression. In 2008, the price of a barrel of crude oil, adjusted to inflation for 2007, reached a new record of US\$ 143. Demand fell by 0.2% and in 2009 it was expected to drop another 0.4%.⁶²

The Middle East was therefore acquiring greater geopolitical and strategic relevance for the United States, whose economy depended, one way or another, both on oil supplies as its price. In this regard, national security meant energy security, the central focus of US military and foreign policy.

The objective of the American bases in the Persian Gulf has always been to protect the sources of crude oil, ensure the safety of Israel and fight off possible threats to its economic and strategic interests. In addition to Camp Arfjan in Kuwait, the United States had other military installations, such as Buehring, Virginia, Kuwait Naval Base, Ali Al Salem Air Base and Udairi Range, a training camp on the border with Iraq. Other important bases in the Persian Gulf, which gradually became the epicenter of the operations of what professor Andrew J. Bacevich considered to be *World War IV*,⁶³ were located in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.⁶⁴ And the tensions with Iran further served as a pretext for the militarization of the Middle East.

⁶²*World Oil Crisis: Driving forces, Impact and Effects*. World.Crisis net. Accessed <http://world-crisis.net/oil-crisis.html>. “The Impact of the Global Financial Crisis on the World Oil Market and Its Implications for the GCC Countries”, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Limited E/ESCWA/Edgd/2009/Wp.1—March 14, 2009. See: Price of Oil (1990–2008) in: <http://world-crisis.net/oil-crisis.html>. Accessed 23.03.2015.

⁶³Bacevich (2005, p. 183). See also: Hydrocarbons—Exports from North Africa and the Middle East. US-State Department, in: Michael Ratner and Neelesh Nerurkar 2011. In: <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R41683.pdf>. Accessed 05.05.2015.

⁶⁴Nick Turse, “Pentagon digs in deeper”, *Asia Times*, November 20, 2010. See also: Military Spending of the USA. In: http://armscontrolcenter.org/policy/securityspending/articles/us_vs_world.gif, Accessed 23.03.2015.

7.7 The Privatization of Military Services

The militarization of the region occurred not only for geopolitical reasons, but also to serve the interests of the war industry, selling armaments to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Qatar, Israel and other countries.⁶⁵ The weapon supplies to these countries reflected not only geopolitical reasons, but also the interests and the pressures exerted by the military-industrial complex to sustain its profits and commissions. After the end of the 1990s, this militarization was accompanied by the privatization/outsourcing of military and security services, in addition to other public functions, with the rate of these privatizations doubling every year in the United States.⁶⁶ In addition to mercenaries, the private labor force of the federal government could have reached a total of 2 million people and, if the private sector workers doing government jobs through federal “*grants and contracts*” were to be included, this figure could be as high as 12 to 13 million.⁶⁷

President George W. Bush further intensified this outsourcing process, i.e. the privatization of military and intelligence services, which became a very lucrative business, a war business driven by the development of electronics, information technology and new weapon and warfare technologies.⁶⁸ After the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the rise of “*private military companies like Blackwater has been nothing less than meteoric*”, wrote CNN’s executive producer Susan Simons.⁶⁹ The contracts of the U.S. Department of Defense, whose budget had increased by 90% since 2000, with the military companies grew to a monumental scale, jumping from US\$ 106 billion in 2000 to US\$ 297 billion in 2006.⁷⁰

According to its *Chief Executive Officer* (CEO) David Lesar, Halliburton hired 50,000 mercenaries in 2003, the equivalent to 100 battalions for the occupation of Iraq.⁷¹ Halliburton’s shares in the stock market rose from US\$ 10 to US\$ 40 between the invasion of Iraq and 2006, and according to *Forbes*, David Lesar received approx. US\$ 30 million in compensation.⁷² One single company, Kellogg Brown & Root, a Halliburton subsidiary, hired as early as December 2001, became responsible for most of the physical infrastructure, maintenance and often even the security of American bases in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Balkans and other parts of the world.⁷³ In 2007, it had already received US\$

⁶⁵Tirman (1997, p. 281, 282).

⁶⁶Murphy (2007, pp. 116–117).

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 116–117.

⁶⁸Uessler (2006, pp. 108–109).

⁶⁹Simons (2009, p. 4) and Scahill (2007, p. XXVII).

⁷⁰David Rose, “The People vs. the Profiteers”, *Vanity Fair*, November 2007.

⁷¹Chetterjee (2009, p. 214).

⁷²David Rose, “The People vs. the Profiteers”, *Vanity Fair*, November 2007.

⁷³Murphy (2007, p. 61).

25 billion from the Department of Defense and it continued to receive more than US\$ 400 million each month.⁷⁴ But fraud and abuse involving millions of taxpayer dollars committed by Halliburton/KBR started coming to light a few months after the invasion of Iraq in 2003.⁷⁵

The contracts with Blackwater, which operated in many countries with other military corporations, also quickly exceeded the US\$ 1 billion mark in 2004.⁷⁶ In that same year, the British American Security Information Council (BASIC) published a study revealing that 68 military companies were operating in Iraq alone, with different contracts and different tasks.⁷⁷

Although these mercenaries⁷⁸ were making a lot of money—between US\$ 300 and US\$ 600 per day, sometimes even US\$ 900 of US taxpayer money—⁷⁹ they were not subject to the same rules as regular soldiers, including military courts. They possessed immunities in the country where they operated, and the companies that employed them were not supervised and didn't have to answer for their activities. The mercenaries of DynCorp, a military company headquartered in Virginia and a contractor of the Pentagon, were involved in the trafficking of women and children in Bosnia-Herzegovina,⁸⁰ and in forced prostitution, murders and embezzlements in Iraq, appropriating more than US\$ 2.5 billion destined for a reconstruction whose actual costs the United States government was unable to determine.⁸¹

Cost reduction was the main argument in favor of privatization.⁸² But Paul Warren Singer, director of the Bookings Project on U.S. Policy towards the Islamic world, rightly observed that the privatization of military forces as an instrument of

⁷⁴David Rose, "The People vs. the Profiteers", *Vanity Fair*, November 2007.

⁷⁵Chetterjee (2009, pp. 216–217).

⁷⁶Venter (2008, p. 554).

⁷⁷Uessler (2006, p. 31).

⁷⁸One of the key characteristics that distinguish the mercenaries of the military companies from the freelancer soldiers of the 1960s–1970s is that they are organized in a corporate structure, directed by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Venter (2008, p. 574).

⁷⁹Scahill (2007, pp. XIX–XX).

⁸⁰Chesterman and Lehnardt (2007, p.104).

⁸¹"This 24th Quarterly Report from the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction analyzes the latest events in Iraq as the U.S. relief and reconstruction effort continues to transform itself into a more traditional foreign assistance mission. The most notable event from the past quarter was the December round of bidding for new oil service contracts. Iraq's Ministry of Oil accepted bids on seven oil fields, including one from a Russo-Norwegian consortium for the largest field. But, to succeed, the winning bidders must overcome Iraq's aging infrastructure, rampant corruption, and fragile security. This quarter, SIGIR published what was certainly one of its most significant audits to date: the follow-up review of the Department of State's oversight of DynCorp International's police-training contract. This audit identified more than \$2.5 billion in taxpayer funds that are vulnerable to waste and fraud because of weak contract oversight. SIGIR's finding is particularly salient given that management of the police training program will be transitioned to the Department of State in 2011." Quarterly Report from the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Sigir.mil*. 2010-01-30.

⁸²Chetterjee (2009, p. 219).

foreign policy was not so much being pursued to bring down costs, but to transfer the affairs of state to private corporations, where they would remain outside of public oversight, enabling Washington to ignore and evade responsibilities.⁸³ This was a blow to democracy.

⁸³Singer (2003, pp. 213–215).

Chapter 8

The Military Occupation of the Middle East and the Crash of 2008

8.1 The Middle East Occupied by the United States

According to information provided to Al Jazeera by Central Command (USCENTCOM) on April 30, 2012, the United States had 125,000 soldiers stationed near Iran; 90,000 in Afghanistan or its surroundings for Operation Enduring Freedom; another 20,000 soldiers garrisoned in other locations in the Near East; and around 15,000 to 20,000 on board war ships.¹ These figures certainly didn't include the forces of the Special Operations Command (SOCOM), which carried out joint clandestine operations with the Army's Green Berets and Rangers, the Navy SEALs, Air Force Command and the Marine Corps Special Operations teams. The 2011 Report of the Department of Defense omitted its espionage bases as well as its facilities in war zones or sensitive locations.

8.2 The Oil Potential of North Africa and the Role of SOCAFRICA and AFRICOM

Analysts predicted in 2010 that Africa, which was providing 20% of US oil imports, would increase its oil output in 20 years by more than 2 million barrels and its natural gas reserves by 15 trillion cubic feet. The International Energy Agency calculated that by 2035 more than 20% of total global oil production would come from sources in Africa. To exploit this potential, however, US\$ 2.1 trillion would have to be invested in the oil & gas infrastructure in Africa between 2010 and 2035.

¹Ben Piven, "Map: US bases encircle Iran. Dozens of US and allied forces' military installations dot the region, from Oman, UAE and Kuwait to Turkey and Israel", Al Jazeera, May 1, 2012.

An average of US\$ 8 billion per year.² But first the oil companies would demand that African governments establish a safe environment, especially with respect to tax rates.

This is why the administration of President George W. Bush activated the U.S. Special Operations Command Africa (SOCAFRICA) on October 1, 2008, stationed with the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) at Kelley Barracks, another US base in Stuttgart, Germany. SOCAFRICA took over responsibility from Special Operations Command and Control Element-Horn of Africa. Its goal was to subordinate Africa to the United States and remove competition, especially from China, which was offering better prices, funding options, infrastructure and development projects. The Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) was entrusted with the operations in east Africa so as to promote security and stability, prevent conflicts and protect the interests of the United States. SOCAFRICA acted as a *watchdog*. And the theater of the *war on terror* extended over those countries in Africa that had oil, uranium, gold, copper, diamonds, coltan (columbite-tantalite) and other strategic minerals.

8.3 The American Atomic Arsenal in Europe

According to statistics from the Department of Defense, there were around 725 US military bases spread over 38 countries in 2003, and about 100,000 soldiers in all of Europe.³ In 2012, the United States still maintained more than 750 military installations overseas, and of its 1.4 million active-duty soldiers, approximately 350,000 were stationed in at least 130 foreign countries. All or nearly all the countries that had previously been signatories of the Warsaw Pact led by the Soviet Union, joined NATO, opening up their territories for the expansion of military bases and sending troops to the interventions and occupations of other countries under the leadership of the United States, always on the pretext of a humanitarian or peacekeeping mission. And since 2004, the AWAC (Airborne Warning and Control System) spy planes managed by NATO were patrolling the countries of the Baltic Sea along the borders of Russia. Some of the US military installations in Europe date back to the Cold War, but many are located near potential areas of conflict in the Middle East, especially the oil exporting countries.⁴

²“Global oil companies seek growth in East Africa”, Frontier Market Intelligence, Trade Invest, Africa, November 3, 2011. See also: The theater of war and oil and gas in the Middle East. In: Eric Waddell, The Battle for Oil, Global Research, 2003, in: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-world-wide-network-of-us-military-bases/5564>. Accessed 23.03.2015.

³Ibid., p. 154. Department of Defense, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jun2003/basestructure2003.pdf>, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/empire/tables/2005/1231militarypersonnel.pdf>

⁴Ben Piven, “Map: US bases encircle Iran. Dozens of US and allied forces’ military installations dot the region, from Oman, UAE and Kuwait to Turkey and Israel”, Al Jazeera, May 1, 2012.

From 1940 to 1996, the United States spent almost US\$ 5.5 trillion (in constant 1996 dollars) on its nuclear program.⁵ During the Cold War it stationed nuclear weapons in 27 foreign countries and territories, including Japan, Germany, Greenland and Turkey. The Socialist block and the Soviet Union imploded between 1989 and 1991. Communist parties virtually disappeared from Europe. But in 2006 the United States still possessed an arsenal of 9960 intact warheads, 5735 of which were considered active and operational. During the Cold War, the US stationed no less than 7000 nuclear weapons in Europe. According to the 2005 report of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), an institution based in Washington, the plan was to maintain 200 nuclear bombs in Europe, but one of the last acts of Bill Clinton as president was to sign the Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-74 in November 2000, authorizing the Department of Defense to stock 480 warheads in Europe, most of them in three bases in Germany, two of which fully operational (Büchel and Ramstein), with 20 nuclear warheads and dozens of military facilities.⁶ And the US also planned to build the infrastructure for the Ballistic Missile Defense program in the Czech Republic and Poland, an initiative opposed by the people of both countries.⁷

With its arsenal of 150 nuclear weapons, Germany continued to be the most nuclear country in Europe. Great Britain held 110 nuclear missiles in Lakenheath air base (Suffolk); Turkey had 90 bombs in Incirlik air base, with projection over the Middle East; Italy had 90; and Belgium and Holland had 20 each.⁸ What could be the purpose of keeping 480 nuclear warheads in Europe after the end of the Cold War? Fighting terrorism? President George W. Bush didn't reduce this level of armament, and all President Barack Obama did was replace antiquated and obsolete nuclear bombs of the free fall variety by other, more sophisticated precision guided systems that could be transported by modern B61 planes at a cost of US\$ 6 billion.⁹

According to the *Department of Defense's 2010 Base Structure Report*, the Pentagon still maintained a total of 4999 military installations in 50 American states, seven territories and another 38 foreign countries. Most installations overseas, which included army, navy, air force, Marine Corps, and Washington Headquarters Services (WHS) bases, were located in Japan (115), South Korea (86) and, especially, in Germany (218),¹⁰ which harbored 53,766 soldiers because it had the

⁵Schwartz (1998, p. 3).

⁶Hans M. Kristensen, "U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Europe—A Review of Post-Cold War Policy, Force Levels, and War Planning", Natural Resources Defence Council, February 2005, p. 6. "Hundreds of US Nukes Still in Europe", *Deutsche Welle*.

⁷Heller and Lammerant (2009, pp. 117–118).

⁸Hans M. Kristensen, "U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Europe—A Review of Post-Cold War Policy, Force Levels, and War Planning", Natural Resources Defence Council, February 2005, p. 9.

⁹Markus Becker, "US Nuclear Weapons Upgrades Experts Report Massive Cost Increase", *Spiegel Online*, 16/5/2012.

¹⁰Department of Defense, *Base Structure Report—FY 2010 Base line*. See also: Military presence of the US worldwide. In: http://combatingglobalization.com/articles/combating_globalization4.html. Accessed 24.03.2015.

advantage of being a country close to the Middle East and Central Asia with a stable democracy and life conditions that provided more comfort and convenience to US troops.

These bases could be found mostly in Heidelberg (four barracks and an air base), Schwetzingen (two barracks), Mannheim, Stuttgart, Wiesbaden, Hanau, Kaiserslautern (KMC: Ramstein etc.), and Spangdahlem, in addition to other bases in Bavaria, including Würzburg, Grafenwöhr and the Ansbach Army Heli Pad (Ansbach AHP), to which Katterbach and Bismarck Kaserne belonged. According to some estimates, America had more than 1000 military bases around the world. Some calculated 1077, others 1088, others still 1160 or even 1180. The number could actually be higher, but nobody was sure of the total figure.¹¹ And the network of military bases was so vast that perhaps not even the Pentagon knew its exact size.

8.4 Economic Necessity and Militarism

No US government had managed to reduce military expenses since President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953–1961) denounced the influence of the military-industrial complex. Such cuts would affect the economies of various American states, especially those in the sunbelt (Texas, Missouri, Florida, Maryland and Virginia), where the weapons industries with capital intensive technologies operated. Many regions in the United States benefited from the production, transport, operation and maintenance of the nuclear forces. According to William J. Weida of the Brookings Institute, California started to depend more than any other state on the military expenditures of the Pentagon after 1980. Most was spent on the programs for the B-1 and B-2 bombers, the Trident I and II missiles, the MX missiles, the Strategic Defense Initiative Project and the Military Strategic and Tactical Relay Satellites (MILSTAR).¹²

In 1986, the Pentagon Contractors in California were receiving 20% of the Department of Defense's budget, while New York, Texas and Massachusetts appropriated 21%.¹³ The immense costs the United States incurs with weapons production are not as much the result of security considerations, but of uncontrollable economic dynamics.

The *Imperium Americanum* has always relied on wars to maintain its economy operational, to avoid the collapse of the war industry and its production chain, and to prevent an increase in the number of unemployed and the bankruptcy of many American states, which depended on the production of weapons for revenues. Since the United States had dropped its nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in

¹¹Nick Turse, "America's Empire of Bases 2.0", *The Nation*, 10/1/2011.

¹²Weida (1998, p. 524).

¹³Ibid., p. 524, n. 10.

1945, killing around 199,000 people,¹⁴ it had produced around 70,000 nuclear weapons of 72 much more powerful types. At the end of the Cold War in 1991, the US had an active arsenal in the order of 23,000 nuclear artifacts of 26 main types. It never completely ceased to produce them.¹⁵ A study by the Brookings Institute in Washington estimated that the costs involving nuclear weapons from the Second World War until 2007 hovered around US\$ 7.2 trillion, and that total military spending in the same half-century period accrued to US\$ 22.8 trillion.¹⁶ According to the *Annual Report of Implementation of the Moscow Treaty*, the United States maintained 2871 strategic nuclear warheads in operating conditions, i.e., ready for launch, in addition to 2500 (active and inactive) warheads in reserve and another 4200 set aside for dismantling by December 31, 2007. Its total stock including all categories amounted to 9400 nuclear weapons.¹⁷

From 1940 to 1996, the United States spent at least US\$ 5.5 trillion on its nuclear arms program, not counting the costs of producing conventional weapons. And this value didn't include the estimated US\$ 320 billion related to the annual storage and removal costs of more than 5 decades worth of accumulated radioactive and toxic waste, nor the US\$ 20 billion for the dismantling of nuclear weapon systems and the removal of surplus nuclear material. If all these elements would be accounted for, then the total cost of the US nuclear weapons program would exceed the US\$ 5.8 trillion mark by 1996.¹⁸

The war industry in the United States has always survived from the orders it receives from the State. Hence the vast military budget of the United States, which represented 40% of the world total, or around US\$ 1.63 trillion. The US spent more on defense than the next 15 military budgets combined, including China (8.2%), Russia (4.1%), France and the United Kingdom (both 3.6%).¹⁹ These data reveal its ambition of maintaining *full-spectrum dominance*.²⁰

No administration could really convert this war industry for civilian purposes without profound political implications. Such a policy shift would increase the

¹⁴Atomic Archive, The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, accessed http://www.atomicarchive.com/Docs/MED/med_chp10.shtml

¹⁵U.S. Nuclear Weapon Enduring Stockpile, accessed <http://nuclearweaponarchive.org/Usa/Weapons/Wpngall.html>

¹⁶Stephen I. Schwartz, "The Costs of U.S. Nuclear Weapons", James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies—Monterey Institute for International Studies, October 1, 2008.

¹⁷U.S. Department of State, 2008 Annual Report on Implementation of the Moscow Treaty—Bureau of Verification, Compliance, and Implementation (VCI), Washington, DC, May 13, 2008. FAS Strategic Security Blog. Comments and analyses of important national and international security issues, accessed <http://www.fas.org/blog/sfp/2009/02/sort.php>. Robert McNamara, "Apocalypse Soon", *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2005.

¹⁸Schwartz (1998, p. 3).

¹⁹Recent trends in military expenditure, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), accessed <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/resultoutput/trends>

²⁰Murphy (2007, p. 65). See also: Compared military expenditures of the US, China, Russia, France and Great Britain (2011). Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). SIPRI data base 2013. In: <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/recent-trends>. Accessed 02.11.2014.

unemployment rate and shatter the economies of the various regions (Texas, Missouri, Florida, Maryland and Virginia) harboring industries that specialize in capital intensive weapon technologies. These industries are interested in trying out these weapons in real wars so the Pentagon can deplete its arsenals, promote its armaments and then sell them to other countries and place new orders, generating juicy commissions and dividends. Under such conditions, which involve kickbacks, bribes and commission payments to those who facilitate the orders and contributions to the electoral campaign of the political parties, the enormous economic and political weight of the military-industrial complex never ceased to exercise a strong influence on the US Congress and on all of the media, especially the television networks.

8.5 Foreign Resources Funded American Wars

The unmatched military might of the United States was facing harsh economic limits, however. Fiscal irresponsibility, rampant public spending, high budget deficits, a permanent trade balance deficit, a high foreign debt, the corruption inherent to the collusion between the war industry and the Pentagon as represented by the military-industrial complex, the recession—similar factors to those that produced the fiscal crisis in Greece that was threatening to expand to other countries in Europe—together amounted to the greatest threat faced by this superpower within an ever more globalized capitalist economy, extending the period of *chaos systémique* started with the war in Iraq.²¹

The conflict with Georgia, signaling a new Cold War, happened when the collapse of the financial system of the United States was deepening, after such major brokers as Merrill Lynch and Lehman Brothers suspended the sale of collaterals in 2007. In July of that same year European banks were recording losses with contracts based on sub-prime mortgages. The financial debacle was triggered by the default on mortgages, spilled over to corporate and credit card loans, among others, and spread to Europe.

The high price of oil and the euro reflected the deep crisis that was hitting the US economy. On March 28, 2006, the Asian Development Bank warned its members that they should prepare for a possible collapse of the dollar, which, although still uncertain, would have serious consequences for the world economy. The financier George Soros stated that the bursting of the bubble was inevitable and had predicted that it would occur in 2007, which was when it actually happened.

In August 2007, David M. Walker, Head of the Government Accountability Office (GAO), a body of the American Congress charged with auditing government spending, warned that the country was standing on a “*burning platform*” of unsustainable policies and practices, chronic shortages of health care resources,

²¹Wicht (2011, p. 13).

immigration problems and external military commitments, which threatened to collapse if measures were not taken promptly.²² He predicted “dramatic” tax hikes, a reduction in government services and a large-scale rejection of US Treasury bonds as a reserve instrument by foreign countries. He pointed to “notable similarities” between the factors that resulted in the collapse of the Roman Empire and the situation of the United States, such as the decline in moral values and political civility, the confidence and overstretch of armed forces abroad, and the fiscal irresponsibility of the American government.²³

Less than a year later, Paul Craig Roberts, Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Treasury in the Ronald Reagan administration (1981–1989), stated in an article published in the *Wall Street Journal* entitled “The collapse of American Power” that the United States, whose national public debt had already reached the US\$ 10 trillion mark in 2008, would not be able to fund its own domestic operations, much less its “unjustifiable” wars, were it not for the kindness of foreigners, who were lending money to the US without the prospect of being paid back. For the country would no longer be able to repay the loans if the dollar ceased to be the international reserve currency.²⁴ President George W. Bush never read nor learnt the lesson of the great German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), according to whom no state should take on debts to sustain its external policy because the inevitable bankruptcy of the State would ultimately “involve many other states that are without debt in the loss; and this would be a public lesion of these other States”.²⁵

One of the factors that contributed to the collapse of the British Empire was contracting debts to sustain its foreign policy and wars. Six years prior to 1939, when the Second World War broke out, Britain was still the sixth richest nation in the world. But far from remaining solvent, it exhausted its reserves in gold and dollars in the war against Germany. And it would have gone bankrupt, unable to continue the war or sustain national life,²⁶ if Prime Minister Winston Churchill hadn’t chosen to sacrifice its existence as independent power by pledging itself to the United States, which provided it with all the resources, destroyers, ammunition, raw materials and industrial equipment. Churchill believed in the “*romantic British myth of Anglo-American cousinhood*,” in the “*special relationship*”, and between

²²Jeremy Grant, “Learn from the fall of Rome, US warned”, *Financial Times*, August 14, 2007. James Quinn, “US Economy on a burning platform”, FinancialPortal.com

²³Ibid.

²⁴Paul Craig Roberts, “The Collapse of American Power”, *CounterPunch*, March 18, 2008.

²⁵“*Es sollen keine Staatsschulden bei anderen Staaten gemacht werden. (...)Machthabenden dazu, welche der menschlichen Natur ingeartet zu sein scheint, verbunden, ist also ein großes Hindernis des ewigen Friedens, welches zu verbieten um desto mehr ein Präliminarartikel desselben sein müßte, weil der endlich doch unvermeidliche Staatsbankerott manche andere Staaten unverschuldet in den Schaden mit verwickeln muß, welches eine öffentliche Läsion der letzteren sein würde. Mithin sind wenigstens andere Staaten berechtigt, sich gegen einen solchen und dessen Anmaßungen zu verbünden.*” Kant (1947, p. 8).

²⁶Barnett (1984, p. 14).

1940 and the end of the Second World War he didn't realize that the main threat to British interests came not from Russia, but from the United States.²⁷ The war material *Lend-lease* program (Public Law 77-11)²⁸—created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933), “*gradually consummated the process Churchill had begun of transforming England into an American satellite warrior-state dependent for its existence on the flow of supplies across the Atlantic*”, noted professor Corelli Barnett, author of *The Collapse of British Power*.²⁹

In the chapter added to the 1930 edition of his work *The Evolution of Modern Capitalism*, the great English economist John A. Hodson stressed that “*one of the most significant effects of the [First World] war was changing the relative position of countries in finance and in world trade, and the transformation of the United States from debtor nation into creditor nation*”.³⁰ “*This advance of America coincides with a decline in the position of Britain as foreign investor*.”³¹ Similarly, one of the effects of the Second World War was to induce the United States, intoxicated by the victory against Germany and Japan, to the “*suicidalness of militarism*”, a term used by Arnold Toynbee to point to the destiny of all empires since antiquity.³² In the first decade of the twenty-first century, therefore, the situation of the US was similar to that of Great Britain at the end of the First World War and at the end of the 1940s. The United States had become an indebted superpower, especially to China, and it could not even fund its domestic activities, let alone the foreign wars that President George W. Bush had unleashed. The United States continued to consume more than it produced. It could only sustain its growth pattern through debt, issuing Treasury bonds without guarantees, attracting the economic surpluses of all countries, starting with China, since the dollar was the fiduciary currency of international reserve. And so it turned from the main creditor nation into the main debtor nation.³³ “*The world's richest, most powerful country, depends on the savings of the world's poorest*”, wrote Bill Bonner and Addison Wiggin.³⁴

By June 2009, the foreign currency reserves of China already amounted to US\$ 2.13 trillion—of which US\$ 763.5 billion were held as American bonds, according to data from the US Department of the Treasury. China had become Washington's

²⁷Ibid., p. 589.

²⁸Loan and lease program, run since 1941, whereby the United States would supply arms to Britain and other allies in the war against the Axis—Germany, Japan and Italy (1939–1945).

²⁹Barnett (1984, p. 589).

³⁰Hobson (1930, pp. 462–463).

³¹Ibid., p. 464.

³²Toynbee (1951, pp. 336–359).

³³Arrighi and Silver (2009, p. 250).

³⁴Bonner and Wiggin (2006, p. 278).

largest creditor, followed by Japan, with US\$ 685.9 billion in bonds.³⁵ In October 2011, the credit-rating agency Standard & Poor's (S&P) dared to downgrade American debt for the first time ever to AA+ as a result of the political risks and the debt's weight in relation to the GDP.³⁶

The United States could only maintain the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, two lost wars, because of the funding by such countries as China and Japan, which continued to buy American Treasury bonds. Joseph E. Stiglitz (Nobel Prize in Economics) estimated that the total cost of these two wars ranged from US\$ 2.7 trillion in strictly budgetary terms to around US\$ 5 trillion in total economic costs. Not without reason, *The Economist* published an article in its edition of March 27, 2008, entitled "Waiting for Armageddon", in which it suggested that the increase in bankrupt corporations could be a sign that something much worse was yet ahead.³⁷

8.6 The Economic and Financial Crash of 2008

It was the collapse of the real estate market in the first half of 2007, however, which set the economic and financial crisis in the United States in motion. Major brokerage firms like Merrill Lynch and Lehman Brothers suspended the sale of securities and, in July of the same year, European banks recorded losses with contracts based on subprime mortgages. The default of mortgage loans in the United States made the financial system grind to a halt, affecting loans to companies, credit cards, and so on. Subsequently, in September 2008, the crisis hit the banking sector with the bankruptcy and dissolution of Lehman Brothers, the fourth largest investment bank of the United States, which had been in business for 158 years. To a significant extent, this crisis was the result of banks and credit agencies exploiting regulatory loopholes in the financial markets that allowed them to grant sub-prime loans above their ability to vouch for them. They then transformed these loans into derivatives and sold them on to their customers, often with resources from trust funds. These banks and financial institutions put low quality assets on the market, renewing the subprime mortgage cycle. Lewis Ranieri, former president of the investment bank Salomon Brothers that pioneered *mortgage-backed securities* on the American market, considered this to be "*madness*".³⁸

³⁵Wayne M. Morrison and Marc Labonte, "China's Holdings of U.S. Securities: Implications for the U.S. Economy", CSR—Report of the Congress, Congressional Research Service, Order Code RL34314, December 6, 2012. Marina Wentzel, "Reservas da China ultrapassam US\$ 2 trilhões", BBC Brasil, July 15, 2009.

³⁶"S&P rebaixa nota da dívida americana para AA+", Folha de S. Paulo, 5/8/2011.

³⁷"Bankruptcies in America—Waiting for Armageddon", *The Economist*, Mar 27, 2008.

³⁸Ibid., p. 20 and 188.

The “*Wallstreet Casino*,” as Bill Bonner and Addison Wiggin described the New York stock exchange, collapsed, discrediting the entire neoliberal economic model. *The Financial Crisis Inquiry Report* of the US Congress Commission that investigated the credit institutions with a “*pivot role*” in the crisis, pointed to the International Group (AGA), Bear Stearns, Citigroup, Countrywide Financial, Fannie Mae, Goldman Sachs, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, Moody’s and Wachovia as the main offenders,³⁹ who speculated on the market with security derivatives based on bad loans. As the chief economist of Moody’s Economy Mark Zandi acknowledged in his testimony before Congress, the financial crisis represented a “*very serious blow to the U.S. economy*” and its “*immediate impact*” was the great recession, the longest, most widespread and severe decline in business since the Great Depression of 1929.⁴⁰ Approximately US\$ 5 trillion vanished from the NASDAQ.⁴¹ And the historian Eric Hobsbawm wisely observed that the crash of 2008 was “*sort of the right-wing equivalent to the fall of the Berlin Wall*” with consequences that would lead the world to “*rediscover that capitalism is not the answer but the question*”.⁴²

In its *Financial Crisis Inquiry Report*, the US Congress Commission underscored that the crises of 2007 and 2008 were not a simple occurrence. They represented a series of crises that disrupted the financial system and ultimately hit the economy. A problem in one area of the financial system led to failures in other areas through interconnections and vulnerabilities that the bankers and rulers had neglected.⁴³ Not without reason, the historian Morris Berman wrote that “*we are witnessing the suicide of a nation that hustled its way into the grave*”.⁴⁴

President George W. Bush presented a multi-billion package of US\$ 700 billion to save the troubled corporations. Where would such a large sum of money come from, a sum that—as everything indicated—would turn out to be significantly larger, when the fiscal deficit of the United States had already reached the US\$ 700 billion mark? Andrew Ross Sorkin pondered that the bailout, the tens of billions of dollars that Washington had loaned to Wall Street, would not put an end to the chaos in the markets. Instead of restoring confidence, it would have an opposite effect with investors. And even after President George W. Bush signed the troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) into law on October 3, 2008, the Dow Jones Average still suffered a loss of more than 30%.⁴⁵ The value of public resources set aside to save such private companies as AIG and Bear Stearns, or such semi-private

³⁹The Financial Crisis Inquiry Report, Final Report of the National Commission on the Causes of the Financial and Economic Crisis in the United States, Pursuant to Public Law 111, 21 January 2011, Washington, Official Government Edition, p. XII.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴¹Berman (2012, p. 53).

⁴²Apud Milnes (2012, p. XXII).

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴⁴Berman (2012, p. 64).

⁴⁵Sorkin (2009, p. 534).

companies as the mortgage lenders Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, reached approximately US\$ 1.1 trillion⁴⁶ and could reach US\$ 1.2 trillion.

The American taxpayer would be stuck with the bill, subsidizing Wall Street. And during 2009, while the unemployment rate in the United States reached almost 10%, the Wall Street banks started making money again with Goldman Sachs announcing a record profit of US\$ 13.4 billion and paying a bonus per employee equivalent to US\$ 498,000.⁴⁷ Citigroup and Bank of America also recovered successfully. When the crisis inevitably hit Europe, however, it forced the European Central Bank to inject “*billions of Euros into overnight lending markets*” in august 2008,⁴⁸ compromising and involving the national States themselves. Iceland, whose banks were running businesses valued three times more than the GDP of the country, was led to a virtual bankruptcy, which spilled over to the United Kingdom, its principal creditor. By the end of 2009, the crisis had manifested in Greece, threatening the stability of the entire Eurozone, since several countries didn’t meet the targets of the Maastricht Treaty for monetary unification, which included controlling the budgetary deficit (up to 3% of GDP) and public debt (up to 60% of GDP).

The situation became even more serious because the destabilization of the Eurozone could cause a systemic crisis as a result of the promiscuity of German, French and even American banks with the National States and other banks through cross-debts. If Greece and/or Portugal would stop paying the banks, the crisis would spread and grow as a snow ball. According to the Bank for International Settlements, the Portuguese banks owed US\$ 86 billion to the Spanish banks, which in turn owed US\$ 238 billion to German institutions, US\$ 200 billion to French banks and around US\$ 200 billion to American banks.

The approximately US\$ 1 trillion granted to Greece by the European Union and the International Monetary Fund was not aimed at helping the country, but at saving the German and French banks and American investors, who had provided more than US\$ 500 billion in short-term loans to finance the daily operations of European banks, especially those of the more fragile nations.

This indebtedness of the States to banks and of banks to other banks revealed that, on one dimension, this crisis was also a direct consequence of the crisis in the United States, despite the influence of national and domestic factors. The global market and the international division of labor had intertwined the capitalist system, resulting in an interdependent whole, and not a simple sum of national economies.

The high price of oil and gold on the global markets and the sharp rise in the value of the Euro reflected the deep crisis that was affecting the US economy. The appreciation of the Euro as a result of the fall of the dollar had also affected countries such as Greece, Ireland and Portugal, however. Without their own currency, these countries could not resort to devaluations to reduce wages, to

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 538.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 545.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 252.

compensate for the loss of competitiveness of their exports, to adjust their finances and to balance the current account of their balance of payments.

The public debt of the United States in 2007 accounted for approximately 60.8% of its GDP. At the end of 2004, the Statistics of the Department of the Treasury indicated that foreigners held 44% of the federal debt in public possession. Approximately 64% of these 44% were held by the central banks of other countries, most of which by the central banks of China and Japan. On June 30, 2008, US foreign debt was about US\$ 13.7 trillion,⁴⁹ the same size of its GDP, calculated at US\$ 13.78 trillion.⁵⁰

Despite the enormous asymmetry, the serious economic and financial situation in Greece and certain other States of the European Union was very similar to that of the United States. What kept an even greater collapse at bay was the fact that the dollar continued to be the international reserve currency. US public debt in May 2010 was around US\$ 12, 9 trillion, of which US\$ 8.41 trillion were held by the public and US\$ 4.49 trillion by foreign governments. This amount (US\$ 12.9 trillion) corresponded to approximately 94% of American GDP, while in the Eurozone this proportion was 84%.

The fiscal problems of the United States had become extremely serious. The government was issuing dollars, without guarantees, to pay for the energy, commodities and manufactured goods it imported, and the countries that were selling, such as Saudi Arabia, China and others, were buying US Treasury bonds with these same dollars without guarantees. In other words, the central banks of other countries were funding the current account deficit of the US balance of payments, which totaled US\$ 731.2 billion in 2007. Since the first mandate of President George W. Bush, the United States took more loans from governments and foreign banks than in all the administrations from 1776 to 2000.

The former president of the Federal Reserve (FED), Alan Greenspan, declared in October 2009 that he was not very concerned with the weakness of the dollar, but with the long-term costs to the United States. These costs were associated with the increasing national debt, whose ratio had become increasingly explosive. A spiral in which the growing interest payments would increase the deficit and the debt, generating new increases, and so on. The deficit in the fiscal year of 2009, which ended on September 30, more than tripled in relation to the previous year, reaching a record sum of US\$ 1.4 trillion.

⁴⁹U.S. Department of Treasury, Treasury International Capital System, U.S. Gross External Debt, <http://www.treas.gov/tic/external-debt.html>

⁵⁰The CIA—World Factbook, accessed <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>

Chapter 9

USA, Afghanistan, Iraq: Economic Constraints and Tragedy

9.1 The Consequences of the Financial Crisis: Unemployment and Concentration of Wealth in the United States

During his 8 years in office, George W. Bush's policies only favored and benefited the wealthiest, who became richer and richer. He reduced taxes without justification. Middle class families were no longer able to pay for the college education of their children, who now needed to enlist in the Armed Forces to receive education benefits. In 2010, approximately 48 million Americans between 17 and 64 were unemployed. The number of homeless people living on the streets of New York and other large and medium-sized cities was growing each year. In 2010, 2.6 million Americans joined the ranks of people living below the poverty line, which increased to about 46.2 million people (the most in 52 years) without enough money to buy food and surviving on food stamps.¹ Lawrence Katz, professor of economics at Harvard, noted: "*this is truly a lost decade*", 8 years of which under the watch of George W. Bush and his war on terror.²

Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve (FED) inflated two major speculative bubbles (the internet and real estate bubble) and continued to deregulate the financial system and the entire economy. The guiding principle was the free market, the battlefield or jungle where capitalists could savagely convert the economic surplus into monetary gains and where only the fittest, the strongest, could survive. The United States and the multilateral organizations controlled by Washington sought to promote the growing integration of the goods, services and capital markets, which were oligopolised at the international level and centered mainly in the industrial powers of the West.

¹Sabrina Tavernise, "Soaring Poverty Casts Spotlight on 'Lost Decade'", *The New York Times*, September 13, 2011.

²Ibid.

The neoliberal policies of globalization, privatization and financialization of all economic ventures were based on the belief that human activities should be governed and resolved by the market,³ as *deus ex machina*. Professor Carol Proner noted that “*something that apparently emerges as an universal awareness movement toward human rights, actually masks the maintenance of market ethics strategies.*”⁴ The rationale of these strategies was capital accumulation through the *bellum omnium contra omnes*,⁵ the war of all against all envisaged by Thomas Hobbes.⁶

Social inequality deepened in the United States with the prevalence of policies inspired by Social Darwinism, in which accumulating capital is a virtue, a way of life, and poverty is God’s punishment. In 2007, a mere 1% of the population (the upper class) concentrated 34.6% of all private wealth in the United States, and approximately 19% (corporate executives, professionals and small business owners) detained the next 50.5%. This meant that only 20% of the people held 85% of the wealth in the country.⁷ The accounts of the United States were in the red. The total costs of the war in Iraq exceeded US\$ 800 billion, US\$ 100 billion more than the financial system’s bailout package. According to the economists Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes, the long-term costs of the war, which include veteran benefits that extend into the distant future, should skyrocket into the stratosphere, ranging from US\$ 1 trillion and US\$ 2 trillion, in the reckoning of the Congressional Budgeting Office, to up to US\$ 4.5 trillion.⁸

9.2 The Financial Costs of the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq

In a way, the conclusions of the report *Costs of War*, drafted by academics participating in the Eisenhower Research Project of Brown University’s Watson Institute for International Studies, confirmed bin Ladin’s predictions. The wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan killed 225,000 people in 10 years, including service men and women, mercenaries (contractors) from private military companies and civilians. In Afghanistan alone, 137,000 civilians were killed. In Pakistan, 35,600 civilians died. Until August 2011, 5998 American soldiers had been killed and 43,184 were declared officially wounded in Afghanistan and in Iraq, and 54,592 requested to be relieved from the theater of the Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom

³Berman (2012, p. 48).

⁴Proner (2002, pp. 180–182).

⁵The War of All Against All.

⁶Hobbes (2002, p. 88).

⁷William Domhoff, “Power in America—Wealth, Income, and Power”, September 2005 (updated September 2010).

⁸Stiglitz and Bilmes (2008, p. 31).

and New Dawn operations for medical reasons. The price tag ranged from US\$ 3.2 trillion to US\$ 4 trillion, including medical assistance and aid to the mutilated.

There were many other costs that could not be quantified, but the wars against terror undertaken by the United States were draining about US\$ 2 trillion per year.⁹ And they were almost entirely funded by loans, with interest payments of US\$ 185 billion that could add another US\$ 1 trillion to the costs by 2020.¹⁰ The only ones to benefit through large profits were the industrial military complex, Halliburton, KBR, DynCorp and their associates. During his first 5 years as vice-president of the United States, Dick Cheney kept benefiting from Halliburton stock options valued at more than US\$ 946,000.¹¹

9.3 The Military Failure of the United States and the Rise of Barack Obama

By 2008, President George W. Bush was no longer mentioning “winning” or “victory” when talking about the war in Iraq, reported the journalist Bob Woodward.¹² Approximately half a million men and women of the US Armed Forces had served in Iraq since the war broke out in 2003. More than 4100 died and another 30,000 were seriously injured. Thousands of Iraqis were killed and in 2008 about 140,000 US soldiers remained in Iraq. President George W. Bush’s expectations had withered away. He had been unable to unite the United States, divided the American people and became a controversial figure. He didn’t eradicate terror where it existed, nor did he bring peace to the world. “*By his own ambitious goal of 2001, Bush had fallen short*”, Bob Woodward wrote.¹³

In the midst of the political and military failure and the deep economic and financial crisis of the United States, which was spreading to all countries, the election to the presidency of Barack Obama, an African American, to succeed president George W. Bush, was yet another symptom of the political decline of those who had always controlled the *Imperium Americanum*. Until then, America had been ruled by a White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant (WASP) elite, a “blond, blue eyed” class which had always controlled the financial system, and which the Brazilian president Lula had blamed for the debacle of the global economy. That elite had suffered a setback, but it had not lost power. President Barack Obama (2009–2013) continued to serve it in certain ways. Even before his inauguration, he

⁹Frum and Perle (2004, p. 123).

¹⁰“American Awakening Gains Traction: Brown Univ Study Pegs Costs of U.S. Wars at US\$ 4 Trillion”, *Costs of War Executive Summary*, Brown University Watson Institute for International Studies, 2011.

¹¹David Rose, “The People vs. the Profiteers”, *Vanity Fair*, November 2007.

¹²Woodward (2008, p. 434).

¹³*Ibid.*

proposed another bailout of US\$ 1.18 trillion for the private banks in 2009, and of US\$ 412 billion in 2010.¹⁴ And his proposed stimulus plan would come close to US \$ 8 trillion.¹⁵

Six months after his inauguration, President Barack Obama visited Egypt. At the University of Cairo, he made an incisive speech seeking reconciliation between the United States and the Islamic world based on mutual interests and mutual respect.¹⁶ He drew attention to the fact that his name was Barack Hussein Obama; and that, despite being a Christian, he had many Muslim ancestors; and that about 7 million Muslim Americans lived in the United States. He stressed that America was not “*at war with Islam*” and that it did not intend to maintain troops or military bases in Afghanistan. He noted that “*we also know that military power alone is not going to solve the problems in Afghanistan and Pakistan*”.¹⁷

President Obama also mentioned the Palestine question as the main source of tensions and condemned the occupation of the West Bank by Israeli settlers: “*The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements.*” And after restating the unbreakable ties between the United States and Israel, he described the situation of Palestinians as “*intolerable*”. Obama said that America would not turn its back to the “*legitimate Palestinian aspirations*” for dignity, opportunity and the construction of their own State.¹⁸

With respect to the promotion of democracy, evoked as *casus belli* in Iraq, which Obama qualified as “*a war choice*” that had caused strong disagreements in the United States and in the world, he made clear that “*no system of government can or should be imposed upon one nation by any other*”.¹⁹ He added that the United States was not pursuing bases in Iraq or laying any claims on its territory or resources, and that it would withdraw all troops in 2012.²⁰

9.4 The Fiasco in Afghanistan and Iraq

Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta declared that the United States would maintain 40,000 soldiers in the Gulf after the withdrawal from Iraq, but their location could not yet be established. President Barack Obama did actually complete the

¹⁴Kimberly Amadeo, “2009 Bailout Could Top \$1.175 Trillion”, *About.com Guide*, January 15, 2009.

¹⁵David Goldman, “The \$8 trillion bailout. Many details of Obama’s rescue plan remain uncertain. But it’s likely to cost at least \$700 billion—and that would push Uncle Sam’s bailouts near to \$8 trillion”, CNN, January 6, 2009.

¹⁶Remarks by the President on a New Beginning, Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, June 4, 2009 Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*

withdrawal of troops from Iraq before December 2011, as part of an agreement—the State of Forces Agreement (SOFA)—negotiated by the Bush administration with prime minister Nouri al-Maliki. This had not been an American decision. Prime minister Nouri Al-Malik had declined to extend the permanence of American troops in Iraq or the immunity of American mercenaries, as President George W. Bush had wanted, because of the unpopularity of the occupation. The presence of foreign troops was inciting ever more opposition.

Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani rejected a proposed agreement with the United States under the argument that this would violate the sovereignty of Iraq. The cleric Muqtada al-Sadr did the same, threatening to resume the war if U.S. troops remained. Prime minister al-Malik tried to appease him by arranging the release of Ali Musa Daqduq, a high-ranking leader of Hizballah who led the training of Iranian Quds (the armed wing of the Islamic Palestine Jihad) and who had abducted and killed five American soldiers in Najaf in 2007. The influence of Muqtada al-Sadr, commander of the Mahdi militia, an expression of the most impoverished Shia, had grown considerably after the fall of Saddam Hussein. Mostly because he opposed the occupation of Iraq.²¹ And when the war ended with what President Barack Obama (2009–2013) called the end of “combat missions”, it ended with “another lie,” observed Clóvis Rossi.²²

For the war and occupation of Iraq would in fact continue, only now under the auspices of the military companies. The US Army Sustainment Command announced the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP 4). A US\$ 571 million contract—with a potential value of US\$ 2.77 billion—with Kellogg Brown & Root Services Inc. (KBR) in Houston to provide transport and postal services to the American forces in Iraq for 1 or 4 years, if all options were exercised. Approximately 5000 mercenaries would remain in Baghdad at the service of the State Department for the protection of the diplomatic staff. Almost 40% of State Department employees who’ve been in contact with these armed mercenaries, however, have declared several times that they adopt unnecessarily threatening, arrogant or belligerent attitudes, including throwing water bottles and other objects against civilians to clear roads.²³ In 1513, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) had already warned that “*le mercenarie e ausiliarie sono inutili e periculose*”, and that if the prince based his state on mercenaries alone, it would be neither stable nor secure, because they are disunited, ambitious, undisciplined and disloyal.²⁴

The mercenaries employed by the Pentagon contractors made up an important part of the military force in the war against the Taliban. In 2010 alone, more mercenaries (contractors) died—430—than regular US soldiers—418—, falling

²¹Cockburn (2008, p. 169, 199–202).

²²Clóvis Rossi, “A maior diferença talvez seja o poder de esculhambação”, *Folha de S. Paulo*, 31/8/2010.

²³Molly Dunigan, “US Control of Contractors in Iraq Is Vital”, Rand Corporation, Objective Analysis, Effective Solutions, February 1, 2012.

²⁴Machiavelli (1986, p. 94).

only slightly short of the NATO total—566.²⁵ In January 2012, 113,491 mercenaries were being employed by Pentagon contractors—compared to 90,000 regular soldiers—, of which 25,287, or 22%, were American citizens, 47% Afghans and 31% of other nationalities, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Defense.²⁶ The United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) has already pointed to the use of mercenaries as a way of violating human rights and frustrating a people's right to self-determination since 1987.²⁷

The mercenaries from KBR, DynCorp International, Blackwater and other companies also ventured into various businesses, corruption and heroin trafficking. They committed acts of sexual violence and several crimes against the civilian population.²⁸ Watan Risk Management, the security division of the Watan Group owned by the brothers Ahmad Rateb Popal and Rashid Popal, former *mujahidin* involved in heroin trafficking and relatives of President Karzai, was hired by the Pentagon to protect the supply routes of ISAF troops and received hundreds of millions of dollars to fulfill its tasks. It paid commissions of at least 10% to the Taliban and to other insurgents.²⁹

The President of the House of Representatives' Oversight Committee, Edolphus Towns (Democrat, NY), sent a letter to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates on

²⁵Rod Nordland, "Risks of Afghan War Shift From Soldiers to Contractors. Even dying is being outsourced here", *The New York Times*, February 11, 2012. Coalition Military Fatalities by Year, accessed <http://icasualties.org/oef/>

²⁶Rod Nordland, "Risks of Afghan War Shift From Soldiers to Contractors. Even dying is being outsourced here", *The New York Times*, February 11, 2012.

²⁷Jennifer K. Elsea, "Private Security Contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan: Legal Issues", January 7, 2010, Congressional Research Service, 7-5700 www.crs.gov-R40991. "Over the last 4 years, reconstruction fraud has run rampant during the engagement of U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. The United States has devoted more than \$50 billion to relief and reconstruction activities in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the inspectors general that are here before us today have reported that millions of these dollars still are unaccounted for. Millions may have been lost to fraud and other misconduct, and these inspectors general have opened hundreds of investigations into fraud, waste and abuse in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan involving illegal kickbacks, bid rigging, embezzlements and fraudulent overbilling. In addition to the fraud, there is well-documented evidence of detainee abuse perpetrated by contractors as well as evidence of unjustified shootings and killings by private security contractors. Private contractors have been used to a greater extent than at any other time in our history. With the exponential use of contractors comes the greater scrutiny of which laws, if any, they are exposed to, and we currently have a situation in which many contractors act with impunity and no accountability because they operate outside of the physical jurisdiction of the United States and, therefore, outside of the jurisdiction of the U.S. Criminal Code." "War Profiteering and Other Contractor Crimes Committed Overseas", Hearing before the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security of the Committee on the Judiciary—House of Representatives, One Hundred Tenth Congress, First Session June 19, 2007, p. 2.

²⁸Idem.

²⁹Aram Roston, "How the US army protects its trucks—by paying the Taliban. Insurance, security or extortion? The US is spending millions of dollars in Afghanistan to ensure its supply convoys get through—and it's the Taliban who profit", *The Guardian*, November 13, 2009. Roston (2010, pp. 87–88). Heidi Vogt, "U.S. blacklists Afghan security firm tied to Karzai", *The Washington Times*, December 9, 2010.

March 3, 2010, in which he expressed his “*deep concern*” with respect to the contract awarded to KBR, accusing it of serious failings in providing electric services, in addition to the “*numerous allegations of waste, fraud, and abuse*”. He considered it “*inconceivable*” that the Department of Defense would grant a new contract to KBR in Iraq.³⁰ But on August 3, 2011, the Department of Defense signed another contract with KBR to execute works in Iraq in support of the State Department under the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP 4), worth US\$ 313 million according to a *cost-plus-fixed-fee* structure, i.e., the government agreed to reimburse the expenses of the company with the addition of a fee of around 3%.³¹ Each contract under LOGCAP 4 had a value of up to US\$ 5 billion, with the Pentagon being authorized to grant up to US\$ 15 billion per year and up to US\$ 150 billion for the total contract period. The companies benefited by LOGCAP 4 were KBR, DynCorp and Fluor.³² A “*free-for-all of fraud and waste*,” no doubt.

In Afghanistan, President Obama tried at first to continue the campaign against the Taliban and al-Qa’ida as a “*war of necessity*” until the goals of the United States were achieved,³³ but the troop surge he promoted only contributed to boost the sectarian killings between Sunni and Shia Muslims.³⁴ And about 1300 of the 2100 NATO soldiers killed until October 2010 were American. Two years into the Obama administration (2009–2010), 1053 American soldiers had fallen, more than in the previous 7 years. And the death toll continued to be high, totaling 2044 by July 2012.³⁵

The Taliban contingent, however, had rapidly quadrupled between 2006 and 2009.³⁶ And the war in Afghanistan continued to expand, penetrating Pakistan from the uninhabited region of the Waziri tribe to the Swat Valley, the lakes region, the Buner district, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where the insurgents from Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) imposed *shari’ah* and 1.5 million people were displaced. They had come to 60 miles from Islamabad, Pakistan’s capital. The United States had started Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001, but now ISAF (the International Security Assistance Force) troops were facing an unsustainable situation.

Because of the actual power relations in the United States, Obama was unable to fundamentally alter the policies of George W. Bush. He didn’t have the conditions to change the economic and social organization of the State—a body sustained and dominated by the deep-seated interests of the military-industrial complex—, to substantially cut funding to the Pentagon in order to reduce the fiscal deficit that was

³⁰“LOGCAP 4: Billions of Dollars Awarded for Army Logistics Support”, *Defense Industry Daily*, Aug 3, 2011.

³¹*Ibid.*

³²*Ibid.*

³³Sanger (2012a, p. 29).

³⁴Cockburn (2008, p. 203).

³⁵Operation Enduring Freedom, Casualties, accessed <http://icasualties.org/OEF/index.aspx>

³⁶Bergen (2011, p. 313).

growing with each passing year. Various war industries would promptly go bankrupt if he attempted this, increasing unemployment and devastating the states where they were established.

Operation Desert Storm (1990) and the trade with the countries of the Persian Gulf, who had bought more than US\$ 10 billion in armaments, had clearly demonstrated that foreign military activities had become imperative for the growth of the US economy.³⁷ Barack Obama had opposed the invasion of Iraq as senator and presidential candidate,³⁸ but as head of state he was powerless to immediately end the wars initiated by his predecessor, even if he wanted to. And the costs were already significantly higher than what the American State could support financially. Wars do not generate money, but they can deplete what has been produced, as Friedrich Engels already taught in 1894 when examining the question of violence as symbolized by the Army and the Navy, which consume huge amounts of resources.³⁹ And the uncontrollable and growing investment in weapons and war operations had indeed significantly contributed to leading the United States Government to the verge of bankruptcy. It was spending around 25% of its GDP on state programs, while only taking in 15% in taxes.⁴⁰

From 2001 to 2010, the United States spent US\$ 444 billion in Afghanistan, including on its development and security.⁴¹ In 2009 alone, President Obama spent US\$ 100 billion with the troop surge in Afghanistan. In 2010, he presented a budget to congress that “some already call the most irresponsible in American history”, according to the Portuguese political scientist Mendo Castro Henriques,⁴² spending US\$ 3.5 trillion and with a federal deficit of US\$ 1.75 trillion, i.e. 50% of the budget. US\$ 688 billion would be allocated to the Pentagon, almost twice the value set aside in 2001, which was around US\$ 316 billion.⁴³ The truth of the matter was that the American government would have to borrow or print half the money it wanted to spend.

This created gridlock in Congress because of the opposition from republicans and some democrats to increasing the level of public debt, which reached 100% of GDP, leading two rating agencies, Weiss and Egan-Jones, to reassess the risk of the United States and demote it from AAA, the grade it had always possessed, to AA+ on July 16, 2011. Moody's maintained the AAA rating, but pointed to a “negative

³⁷Tirman (1997, pp. 171–178).

³⁸Woodward (2010, p. 75).

³⁹“*Die Gewalt, das ist heutzutage die Armee und die Kriegsflotte und beide kosten, wie wir alle zu unsrem Schaden wissen, heidenmäßig viel Geld. Die Gewalt aber kann kein Geld machen, sondern höchstens schon gemachtes wegnehmen (...)*” Engels (1978, p. 154).

⁴⁰Christopher Caldwell, “America’s budget talks are entering their ‘Greek’ phase”, *Financial Times*, July 8, 2011.

⁴¹Rashid (2002a, p. 17).

⁴²Private correspondence with the author.

⁴³Peter Baker, “Panetta’s Pentagon Without the Blank Check”, *The New York Times*, October 23, 2011.

outlook”, predicting that a downgrade could still occur if fiscal discipline were to weaken or if economic growth deteriorated further.

In the three following years, i.e., until 2012, the fiscal deficit was forecasted to actually reach more than US\$ 3 trillion with a GDP at the time, 2009, hovering around US\$ 14 trillion dollars. Congress was reluctant to increase the country’s debt limit, which reached US\$ 14.3 trillion, and default seemed inevitable⁴⁴ because of the impasse between the Republican Party and President Obama.⁴⁵ An agreement was only reached after several months of negotiations between President Obama and members of congress to avoid a default of the United States, which would have lacked the resources to pay for public services. The deal stipulated that up to US\$ 2.4 trillion would be cut in spending in the 10 following years and that the Treasury Department could increase the *debt ceiling*, i.e., the limit of indebtedness, to US\$ 2.1 trillion.⁴⁶ In addition, a Joint Select Committee of 12 members of Congress would be created to reduce the fiscal deficit. The public debt of the United States, which was in the order of US\$ 14.3 trillion, equal to its GDP, would only be allowed to rise to US\$ 16.4 trillion, equivalent to 110% of GDP at the time, and this should apply until 2013, after the presidential elections of 2012.⁴⁷ By September 5, 2012, however, public debt had already exceeded the US\$ 16 trillion mark, reaching the entire volume of US GDP in the fiscal year 2011–2012.⁴⁸

The situation became very complicated because of the severe and protracted global economic and financial crisis. The economies of both the United States and the European Union were on the brink of a recession. According to Bloomberg, the total value the United States government had supplied to save the banks and recover the economy within the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) had reached US\$ 12.8 trillion by September 2010.⁴⁹ The Real Economy Project of the Center for Media and Democracy, dated February 16, 2012, and published on the website [SourceWatch](#), calculated that the maximum at risk bailout granted was US\$ 13.87 trillion.⁵⁰ The historian Morris Berman estimated that the amount of Americans taxpayer money disbursed to the banks to save the financial system had already exceeded US\$ 19 trillion,⁵¹ a much higher figure than the GDP and the public debt

⁴⁴Dan Murphy, “Afghanistan, the Taliban, and the US deficit”, *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 28, 2011.

⁴⁵The agreement between the Republican Party and President Obama was precarious, but it relieved the crisis for the time being and avoided a default. The agreement provided for cut of up to US\$ 2.4 trillion in spending in the next 10 years, with as counterpart an increase in the debt ceiling of US\$ 2.1 trillion. America’s debt problem was only postponed.

⁴⁶Carl Hulse, “House Passes Deal to Avert Debt Crisis”, *The New York Times*, August 1, 2011.

⁴⁷Durval de Noronha Goyos, “Congresso e Executivo americano fecham acordo para elevar teto da dívida que assegura futuro sombrio à economia americana”, manuscript, Author’s archive.

⁴⁸Josh Boak, “National Debt Now \$16 Trillion—A New U.S. Milestone”, *The Fiscal Times*, September 5, 2012.

⁴⁹“The true cost of the bank bailout”, PBS, September 3, 2010.

⁵⁰“The Wall Street Bailout Cost”, *SourceWatch*.

⁵¹Berman (2012).

of the United States, which hit US\$ 15.9 trillion in August 2012.⁵² GDP, however, remained almost stagnant - approximately US\$ 15.29 trillion (2011)⁵³—and would grow by only 1.5% in the second quarter of 2012.⁵⁴

The deficit reduction agreement sought to cut US\$ 350 billion from the Department of Defense's budget, a cut that could involve another US\$ 500 billion⁵⁵ and that would have an impact on the war and reconstruction of Afghanistan. Yet the strategy recommended to President Obama by general Stanley McChrystal on 2009, when he took command of ISAF, provided for a cost of US\$ 889 billion, almost US \$ 1 trillion, to continue the war in the 10 following years.⁵⁶ General McChrystal imagined that with 80,000 soldiers he could carry out a robust counterinsurgency, i.e., *kill/capture*, campaign throughout the country, just as he had done in Iraq to kill or capture Sunni insurgents and the Shia of the Mahdi militia.⁵⁷

After 9 years of fighting, however, defeating the Taliban and al-Qa'ida militants in the mountains of the Hindu Kush seemed increasingly difficult. This mountain range spanned 500 miles from Afghanistan to the north of Pakistan, with a porous border region of 1500 miles between the two countries, inhabited by ethnic *Pash-tun*. This border had been outlined by Great Britain in the Treaty of Rawalpindi (August 8, 1919), when it recognized Afghanistan's independence after its defeat at the hand of the forces of king Amanullah Khan in the third Anglo-Afghan war (May 6, 1919 to August 8, 1919). Now insurgents were operating in Quetta as well as in Kunduz, Baghlan, Badghis province and Faryab, and there were reports that militants of the Islamic Movement in Uzbekistan, of the Union of the Islamic *Jihad* and of the network controlled by *Maulvi* Jalaluddin Haqqani and his son *Sirajuddin*, based in *Waziristan*, were active in the northern provinces of Afghanistan.⁵⁸ The tribes didn't recognize the borders. "*On comprend l'histoire quand on regarde l'espace*", as Hélène Carrère D'Encausse had said.⁵⁹

In an event organized by the Council on Foreign Relations in 2011, general Stanley McChrystal, former commander of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) (2003–2008) and ISAF (2009), acknowledged that the United States had a "*frighteningly simplistic view*" of Afghanistan when the war started and added:

⁵²U.S. Debt Clock Org, <http://www.usdebtclock.org>

⁵³CIA Fact Book, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>; U.S. Debt Clock Org, <http://www.usdebtclock.org>

⁵⁴Trading of economics, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/united-states/gdp-growth>

⁵⁵Binyamin Appelbaum, "Spending Cuts Seen as Step, Not as Cure", *The New York Times*, August 2, 2011. Jennifer Steinhauer, "Debt Bill Is Signed, Ending a Fractious Battle", *The New York Times*, August 2, 2011.

⁵⁶Woodward (2010, p. 251).

⁵⁷Sanger (2012a, p. 31). Gareth Porter, "How McChrystal and Petraeus Built an Indiscriminate 'Killing Machine'", *Dandelion Salad*, September 27, 2011.

⁵⁸Van Linschoten and Kuehn (2012, p. 310).

⁵⁹Carrère D'encausse (1978, p. 9).

“We didn’t know enough and we still don’t know enough.”⁶⁰ Most Americans, him included, emphasized general McChrystal, had a “very superficial” understanding of the situation and of the history of Afghanistan in the last 50 years.⁶¹

Professor Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May from Harvard University noted that understanding history may help and define the desired future. By looking back, the past realities suggest the limitations about certain future possibilities.⁶² “What succeeded in the past might succeed in the future. What failed then might fail now.”⁶³ But the great German philosopher Georg W. F. Hegel (1770–1831) had already remarked in the nineteenth century that, in an ideal world, rulers, statesmen and people should indeed learn from history, but experience and history had taught us that peoples and governments never learn anything from history, nor do they behave according to its lessons.⁶⁴ The truth of the matter was that no power had ever managed to really dominate Afghanistan, where geography represented a military and strategic factor of significant importance.

In the *Art of War*, a work attributed to Sun Tzu (722–481 B.C.), this famous Chinese military strategist of antiquity explained that knowing the topography and “configuration of the terrain” was an essential component for the success of an army in a war.⁶⁵ This was one of the decisive factors in the defeat of all armies that invaded and tried to occupy Afghanistan, a landlocked country made up for 85% by the mountains of the Hindu Kush, north of Kabul, and whose population was composed of various ethnic groups with tribal structures, with about 2 million people, mostly Pashtuns and Baluch, still living as nomads in 1979.⁶⁶ The Pakistani brigadier Mohammad Yousaf, former head of ISI and former commander in chief of the *mujahidin* in the war against the Soviet Union, considered military history to be the greatest teacher of both military and political leaders; it has few lessons to teach and they were repeated several times, but the problem was learning them.⁶⁷

In 1839, Britain invaded Afghanistan, but didn’t stay more than 3 years. In 1842, about 16,500 British soldiers and 12,000 dependents were attacked from all sides as they retreated from Kabul after an agreement with Muhasmmad Akbar Khan (1816–1845), a Pashtun tribal leader. Only one survived of the column made up of British and Hindu men, Dr. W. Brydon, who arrived in Jalalabad on January

⁶⁰Declan Walsh, “US had ‘frighteningly simplistic’ view of Afghanistan, says McChrystal”, *The Guardian*, October 7, 2011.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Neustadt and May (1986, p. 236).

⁶³Ibid., p. 237.

⁶⁴“Man verweist Regenten, Staatsmänner, Völker vornehmlich an die Belehrung durch die Erfahrung der Geschichte. Was die Erfahrung aber und die Geschichte lehren, ist dies, daß Völker und Regierungen niemals etwas aus der Geschichte gelernt und nach Lehren, die aus derselben zu ziehen gewesen wären, gehandelt haben.” Hegel (1994, p. 19).

⁶⁵Sun Tzu and Sun Pin (2003, pp. 17–18, 70–72).

⁶⁶Vogelsang (2002, pp. 13–15).

⁶⁷Yousaf and Adkin (2001, p. 232).

13, 1842.⁶⁸ In addition to the high death toll, the war cost Great Britain a total of £ 15 million.⁶⁹ The British invaded Afghanistan again, and this time the war lasted from 1878 to 1880, when they were defeated at the Battle of Maiwand by the forces of Ayub Khan. It was only after another war in 1919 that London finally recognized the independence of Afghanistan.

In the twentieth century, 546,255 or 750,000 soldiers of the Soviet Union lost their lives during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan between 1979 and 1989. 33,478 were injured, 311 were considered missing, and the financial costs in just 4 years, from 1985 to 1989, exceeded 12.5 billion rubles, exhausting the Soviet Union economically.⁷⁰ Soviet soldiers were skinned, castrated, had their eyes gouged out and would rather die than suffer at the hands of their enemies.

The Afghan *mujahidin* had many advantages over the Soviet soldiers, as they had had over the British soldiers before. They were accustomed to the land and climate, such as the extensive deserts and rocky terrain of southwest Afghanistan, called the *Dasht-i-Margo* (Desert of death). Brigadier Mohammad Yousaf had already stressed that a harsh country had given rise to a hard people and that the Afghan *mujahidin* were fighting for their faith, their freedom and their family, giving them a significant edge in terms of morale.⁷¹ Hundreds of thousands of Afghans—over 1.5 million—perished in the fight against the Soviet troops; five million had to seek asylum in Pakistan or in refugee camps in Afghanistan; and more than seven million were displaced from their homes.⁷²

When the Soviet Union withdrew its troops in 1989, the country had been reduced to rubble after 10 years of war. Grain and fruit crops had been replaced by the lucrative poppy seed for the production of opium and heroin.⁷³ When his troops were being pulled out of Afghanistan, Eduard Shevardnadze, the Soviet Minister of Foreign Relations at the time, declared in Kabul that “we should recognize that we were leaving the country in a deplorable state, in the literal sense of the word: its towns and villages had been destroyed, its capital was starving, its economy virtually paralyzed and hundreds of thousands of people had perished”.⁷⁴

The situation Afghanistan found itself in 2011, more than 20 years after the withdrawal of Soviet troops and 10 years since the invasion by the United States, was even more disastrous. In January 2012, the war between ISAF troops, the Taliban and other opposition groups had left 1.8 million people dead, more than 447,547 internally displaced and more than 2.6 million refugees, according to

⁶⁸Vogelsang (2002, pp. 251–252).

⁶⁹Fraser (2006, p. 545) and Scott (2010b, p. 224).

⁷⁰Volkogonov (1999, pp. 462–464) and Vogelsang (2002, p. 321).

⁷¹Yousaf and Adkin (2001, pp. 34–35).

⁷²Anonimous (Michael Scheuer) (2004, p. 27).

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Volkogonov (1999, pp. 462–464) and Vogelsang (2002, p. 464).

estimates from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).⁷⁵ The United States also kept more than 3000 prisoners in Bagram Air Base, in the province of Parwān in the mountains of the Hindu Kush.

After 10 years of war, the United States and NATO hadn't achieved any of its strategic objectives. The Taliban and al-Qa'ida had not been defeated, the country had not been rebuilt and the region hadn't been stabilized.⁷⁶ Afghanistan was still an insecure, politically unstable and volatile place, with serious economic and social problems. About 20% of households in rural areas were living in chronic insecurity, especially with respect to food, and 18% were facing regular food shortages. Between 20% and 40% of Afghans needed food supplies on several levels and assistance during different periods of the year.⁷⁷

Food insecurity was very acute in the Herat, Ghor, Khost, Jawzjan, Faryab, Samangan, Balkh and Bamiyan provinces, where there were food shortages. Poverty levels were particularly high in the Northeast, especially in areas without irrigation, where 65% of the families had no food security.⁷⁸ Poor nutrition was a serious problem in Afghanistan. Close to 40% of children under the age of 3 was moderately or severely malnourished and more than 50% in this age range had growth deficiencies.⁷⁹ The US\$ 19 billion earmarked for aid and reconstruction hardly reached the majority of Afghans, who suffered through the summer heat without cooling and the intense winter cold without heating, since the electrical grid had deteriorated even further after the American invasion.⁸⁰ The Pentagon and the State Department had set aside US\$ 400 million for the Afghanistan Infrastructure Fund for seven projects to rebuild the electrical grid, power plants and other works by mid-2013. In mid-2012, however, five of the seven projects had not even started and would not be completed until the end of the NATO mission in 2014. The [Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction](#) began an investigation into the fate of this American taxpayers' money.⁸¹

The U.S. Geological Survey, however, using advanced magnetic and gravitational measurement equipment installed in an old Navy Orion P-3 airplane, flew over 70% of Afghanistan's territory between 2006 and 2007 and found that it contained deposits of natural resources valued at US\$ 1 trillion, including gold, copper, coal, lithium, niobium, cobalt, iron, rare earths, gas (between 3.6 trillion and 36.5 trillion m³ in estimated undiscovered reserves in the northeast) and oil

⁷⁵The United Nations Refugee Agency, 2012 UNHCR country operations profile—Afghanistan, Working environment. Johnson (2010, p. 32).

⁷⁶Rashid (2002b, p. 19).

⁷⁷United Nations Development Programme, Afghanistan, Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger (Goal 1), <http://www.undp.org.af/MDGs/goal1.htm>

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ali (2010, p. 53).

⁸¹Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, <http://www.sigar.mil/about/>

(reserves ranging from 4 million to 3.6 billion barrels).⁸² The Pentagon appointed the Task Force for Business and Stability Operations with the mission of characterizing 24 areas of economic interest, half of which of world-class mineral. These resources remained virtually untapped, not only because of the lack of security, but also because the electrical grid would need to be expanded to use machinery and railways would need to be built to export the ores.⁸³

9.5 Mercenaries, American Soldiers and Drug Trafficking

According to a survey performed by the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the area reserved for poppy cultivation reached 131,000 ha in 2011, compared to 123,000 ha in the 2 previous years. The production of opium jumped from 3600 tons in 2010 to 5800 tons in 2011.⁸⁴ The opium trade had become the main component of Afghanistan's economy, the main source of funding for the insurgency and of corruption, exceeding US\$ 2.4 billion, equivalent to 15% of the country's GDP. David Musto, member of the Strategy Council on Drug Abuse in the Jimmy Carter administration, had already warned in 1980 that the *mujahidin* were deeply involved in the production and trade of opium and heroin, stating that "*we were going into Afghanistan to support the opium growers in their rebellion against the Soviets*".⁸⁵

The *mujahidin* understood that the Kur'an forbade opium for Muslims, but believed that growing it for consumption by the *kafir* (non-believers) was permissible.⁸⁶ In the 1980s, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) identified 40 syndicates of heroin producers, including some headed by authorities of the Pakistani government, but the CIA did nothing so as not to spoil the relations with the *mujahidin* and warlords. In the 1990s, they started using drugs to pay salaries and purchase armaments and supplies, since the war had devastated agriculture.⁸⁷

⁸²James Risen, "U.S. Identifies Vast Riches of Minerals in Afghanistan", *The New York Times*, June 13, 2010. Blake Hounshell, "Say what? Afghanistan has \$1 trillion in untapped mineral resources?", *Foreign Policy*, June 14, 2010. "Afghans say US team found huge potential mineral wealth", *BBC News South Asia*, June 14, 2010. Rashid (2008, pp. 399–400).

⁸³Sarah Simpson, "Afghanistan Holds Enormous Bounty of Rare Earths, Minerals", *Scientific American*, September 29, 2011.

⁸⁴2011—Afghanistan Opium Survey and to the preparation of this report, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (Kabul), Jean-Luc Lemahieu (Country Representative), Ministry of Counter-Narcotics: Mohammad Ibrahim Azhar (Deputy Minister), UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Counter Narcotics.

⁸⁵Scott (2010b, p. 224) and McCoy (2003, pp. 461–462). Jeffrey Steinberg, "The Golden Crescent Heroin Connection", *Executive Intelligence Review*, October 13, 1995.

⁸⁶Rashid (2008, p. 317).

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, p. 319.

The American intelligence services knew the location of the main heroin processing laboratories and points of sale, but they did nothing to stop these operations.⁸⁸

In January 2010, The American professor Alfred McCoy of the University of Wisconsin delivered a document to the Bundestag (the German Parliament) entitled “*Kann irgendjemand den weltgrößten Drogenstaat befrieden?*” He accused the CIA of participating in the drug trade and the government of Hamid Karzai of receiving US\$ 2.5 billion, the equivalent to one quarter of national income.⁸⁹ The Russian ambassador in Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, stated that the CIA was really involved in drug trafficking using American military aircraft, according to the suspicions that were circulating in Kabul, remarking that there is no smoke without fire.⁹⁰ The Russian general and Afghanistan veteran Mahmut Gareev declared that the production of drugs had almost ceased between 1989 and 1990 with the exception of some areas, but that it had since grown by 44%. And 90% of the production was being shipped to the former Soviet republics. The Americans themselves, general Gareev said, conceded that drugs were often carried in American airplanes, providing them access to a US\$ 50 billion/year trade that helped them maintain their troops in Afghanistan.⁹¹

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Ministry of Counter Narcotics in Afghanistan calculated that the profits of opium growers could exceed US\$ 1.4 billion, equivalent to 9% of GDP in 2011.⁹² And American soldiers and contractors are drug consumers; statistics of the Department of Defense showed that the number of soldiers taking heroin caught in drug tests increased tenfold after 2002 to 116 in 2010. In April 2012, eight died of an overdose.⁹³ And in the first 155 days of 2012, 154 American soldiers committed suicide, more than died in the war against the Taliban. This corresponded to an increase of 18% in relation to the previous year.⁹⁴ Sexual assaults also increased among the troops. One woman in every three was raped, but the Pentagon continued to refuse to disclose the documents.⁹⁵ The soldiers couldn’t bear the climate of this mountainous country, with the high altitudes and rarefied air to which the *mujahidin* were accustomed. Around Kabul, the temperature ranged from minus 20 degrees at night to 10 degrees

⁸⁸Risen (2006, pp. 157–159).

⁸⁹Peter Dale Scott, “Afghanistan: Opium, die CIA und die Regierung Karzai”, January 11, 2010.

⁹⁰Vladimir Radyuhin, “Narco Aggression: Russia accuses the U.S. military of involvement in drug trafficking out of Afghanistan”, Global Research, February 24, 2008.

⁹¹“Afghan drug trafficking brings US \$50 billion a year”, *Russian Today*, August 20, 2009.

⁹²*Ibid.*

⁹³Michael Martinez, “Opiates killed 8 Americans in Afghanistan, Army records show”, *CNN*, April 21, 2012.

⁹⁴“Suizid-Statistik Mehr Selbstmörder als Gefallene in US-Armee”, *Der Spiegel*, 8/6/2012. “Mehr Selbstmörder als Gefallene. Zahl der Freitode in der US-Armee steigt”, *Die Welt*, 9/6/2012. “Suicides are surging among US troops, Pentagon statistics show”, *Associated Press/Fox News*, June 8, 2012.

⁹⁵John Christoffersen, “CLU lawsuit: Military won’t release rape records”, *The Associated Press*, December 13, 2010.

during the day. Troop morale dropped more and more because of the stress of war and violence, the massacre of civilians and other scandals. The same fate suffered by the Soviet soldiers in the 1980s.

The population was dominated by warlords and power brokers, such Ahmed Wali Karzai, leader of Kandahar province and half-brother of President Hamid Karzai,⁹⁶ and it suffered under the corruption, drug trafficking and money laundering that infested the government. Psychically exhausted after two wars and occupations, this drove them to support the Taliban.⁹⁷ Abdul Wali Karzai was the “*biggest drug baron of Afghanistan*”, declared general Hamid Gul, former director general of Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), in an interview to the *Foreign Policy Journal*, emphasizing that the “*most disturbing*” fact was that American war planes were being used to transport drugs to the republics of Central Asia, from Russia to Europe and sometimes directly to the United States.⁹⁸

General Hamid Gul accused Research and Analysis Milli Afghanistan (RAMA), Afghanistan’s new intelligence service created by the United States with the collaboration of India, of trying to destabilize Pakistan and of fanning the Salafist insurgency in Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Chechnya, Karachay-Cherkessia and other republics of the Russian Federation in the northern Caucasus, where Muslims were the majority of the population. As evidence, he cited the American predator drone attacks in Waziristan, which infuriated the Pathan people.⁹⁹ These attacks against the Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) insurgents, an alliance of radical Islamic groups in Pakistan, escalated after 2009, jumping from 52 during the Bush administration to 282 in the first 3 years of the Obama administration. In the three first days of June 2012 alone, the United States carried out 27 drone strikes in South Waziristan, one of which resulted in the death of 15 civilians.¹⁰⁰

In Afghanistan, the predator drone attacks were also fostering feelings of revulsion and further strengthening the Taliban, aggravated by the massacre of 17 innocent civilians by an American sergeant, the burning of copies of the *Qur’an* and other acts of violence and sacrilege. According to UN statistics (UNAMA/AIHR), approximately 2777 Afghan civilians were killed—three quarters at the hand of insurgents— in 2010 alone, an increase of 15% in relation to the previous year.¹⁰¹ The toll rose to 3021 dead and 4507 wounded in 2011, the significant part

⁹⁶Ahmed Wali Karzai worked for NATO and the CIA, where he was in charge of leading an Afghan Special Operations team, simultaneously cultivating ties with the Taliban. In July 2011, he was assassinated with two shots to the head by one of his associates, Sadar Muhammad. Sanger (2012a, pp. 38–41).

⁹⁷Julius Cavendish, “In Afghanistan war, government corruption bigger threat than Taliban”, *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 12, 2010.

⁹⁸Jeremy R. Hammond, “Ex-ISI Chief Says Purpose of New Afghan Intelligence Agency RAMA Is ‘to Destabilize Pakistan’”, *Foreign Policy Journal*, August 12, 2009.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰“US drone attack kills 15 in North Waziristan”, *ColumPK*, June 4, 2012.

¹⁰¹Laura King, “U.N.: 2010 deadliest year for Afghan civilians”, *Los Angeles Times*, March 10, 2011.

as a result of NATO bombings with drones and airplanes. The indignation of the Afghan people reached such levels that President Hamid Karzai had to protest countless times against the killing of civilians and ask NATO to change its strategy of fighting terrorism through air strikes, which he considered an “*illegitimate use of force*”.¹⁰² And after violent episodes and setbacks involving American soldiers, a survey performed by the *New York Times/CBS news* with Republican and Democratic voters revealed that more than two-thirds (69%) of the American people wanted the United States to withdraw from Afghanistan.¹⁰³

¹⁰²Sangar Rahimi e Alissa J. Rubin, “Days After an Order to Restrict Them, Afghanistan Calls for Airstrikes to End”, *The New York Times*, June 12, 2012.

¹⁰³Elisabeth Bumiller e Allison Kopicki, “Support in U.S. for Afghan War Drops Sharply, Poll Finds”, *The New York Times*, March 26, 2012.

Chapter 10

The Technological War on Terror

10.1 Obama Acknowledges Failure and the Secret Negotiations with the Taliban

Bogged down in the most severe economic and financial crisis since the collapse of the New York Stock Exchange after Black Friday in 1929, President Barack Obama announced the exit of the 90,000 American soldiers from Afghanistan before the end of 2014. In May 2012, he made a surprise visit to Afghanistan, where he explicitly stated that the objective of the United States was not to build “*a country in America’s image, or to eradicate every vestige of the Taliban*”, which would require many more years, dollars and American lives.¹ He stressed that al-Qa’ida’s defeat was “*within reach*,” but meanwhile Americans had been holding clandestine negotiations with the Taliban for 9 months. The talks were organized by Germany’s intelligence service—the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND)—, by agents from Qatar, who prepared the logistics, and brokered by German diplomats, unbeknownst to the Pakistani military and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).²

Contacts had been laid in 2009 and 2010, when Germany, with the approval of *Kanzlerin* Angela Merkel and the United States, instructed its ambassador Bernd Mützelburg, as Special Envoy to Afghanistan, to pave the way for peace talks with Mullah Tayyab Agha, a representative of Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar.³ Germany then sent another ambassador to Afghanistan and

¹Jeremy Suri, “Obama’s strategic retreat in Afghanistan”, *CNN*, May 2, 2012.

²Christoph Reuter, Gregor Peter Schmitz and Holger Stark, “Talking to the Enemy. How German Diplomats Opened Channel to Taliban”, *Der Spiegel*, 10/1/2012. “Negotiations in Afghanistan — Karzai Asks Berlin for Help with Taliban Talks”, *Der Spiegel*, 23/7/2012.

³Jochen Buchsteiner, “Bernd Mützelburg Unser Mann für Afghanistan”, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 16/2/2009.

Pakistan, Michael Steiner.⁴ The CIA and State Department were also involved in the meetings held in Doha after the execution of bin Ladin.⁵ The talks failed⁶ in mid-2011 because the government of Afghanistan leaked to the press that Omar Tayyab had been in negotiations with western representatives in Qatar.

President Karzai asked Berlin to take up talks with the Taliban again.⁷ A peace agreement was of interest to the Taliban. They were exhausted after three decades of war, and there was a shot at forming a coalition government with President Karzai and obtaining the support of the West.⁸ But reaching an understanding was very difficult and, while it negotiated in 2010, the Taliban intensified its operations in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.⁹

President Obama supported the attempts to find terms for a peace with the Taliban, given that the costs of the war had already become unsustainable and that the campaign in Afghanistan was really seen as a “*futility*”, a “*colossal failure of the American national security establishment*”, as Stephen M. Walt wrote in the magazine *Foreign Policy*.¹⁰ The United States, ISAF’s main actor, had spent US \$113 billion in the fiscal year of 2011 and President Barack Obama had requested another US\$100 billion for the expenses in 2012. This increased spending depended entirely on borrowed money. President Obama wanted to leave the Kabul government with only two security forces, the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police, trained with Pentagon funding by the mercenaries from MPRI, KBR, Pulau, Paravant and RONCO in the Kabul Military Training Center, also known as the Basic Warrior Center. Calculations suggested that the United States would have to spend approximately US\$6 billion a year to sustain the 365,000 active duty service men of these two security forces, a cost burden that exceeded Afghanistan’s government revenues sixfold.¹¹

⁴“Taliban müssen Al Qaida abschwören”, Ambassador Michael Steiner in an interview with *Tagesspiegel*, 19/11/2010. Rashid, 2002b, p. 113–115.

⁵Carlotta Gall and Ruhullah Khpalwak, “U.S. Has Held Meetings with Aide to Taliban Leader, Officials Say”, *The New York Times*, May 26, 2011.

⁶Dean Nelson and Ben Farmer, “Secret peace talks between US and Taliban collapse over leaks”, *The Telegraph*, August 10, 2011.

⁷Matthias Gebauer, “Negotiations in Afghanistan — Karzai Asks Berlin for Help with Taliban Talks”, *Der Spiegel*, 23/7/2012.

⁸Rashid (2002b), p. 118–119.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁰Stephen M. Walt, “Why isn’t anyone talking about Afghanistan?”, *Foreign Policy*, August 14, 2012.

¹¹Sanger (2012a), p. 49.

10.2 A Devastated Country with Thousands of Refugees and Widows

The situation in Afghanistan was not very different from Iraq, however. In March 2012, the country was still insecure, economically and politically unstable, led by a corrupt and incompetent government—President Hamid Karzai was fraudulently elected without any legitimacy—, facing serious social problems—a third of the population undernourished, a quarter without clean water, high unemployment—, and with 2.7 million Afghan refugees in the region and about 3 million in the rest of the world.¹² According to estimates from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Afghanistan had more than 2 million war widows after two decades of war—30,000 to 50,000 residing in Kabul—in a population estimated at 31 million people (2007).¹³

Even though the US could count on the most sophisticated and advanced technology, and on highly trained and well-equipped special forces, such as the SEALs, Rangers, and Delta Forces, they failed to win the Fourth Generation War, a war waged against enemies who didn't represent a State. Once again, as in Vietnam, the limitations of American power had been laid bare. The US didn't achieve any of its strategic objectives. The Taliban was not defeated, the power of the warlords ruling the country was not broken, the production and trade in opium was not halted, and a truly popular government was never established. Instead, the US shouldered a puppet in the Presidency, whose influence didn't extend beyond Kabul and its surroundings.

The Afghan National Army (ANA) had around 195,000 soldiers. In principle, this force should take control of the country in 2014, but in reality it was crumbling and on the verge of irrelevance. More than half of the Afghan soldiers was spending their days high on hashish and other chemical substances, and about a third deserted each year, forcing the government to find new recruits with ever greater difficulties. The deserters complained about the corruption among the officers, about the poverty, about the food and equipment, about the medical care, about the intimidation of their families by the Taliban, and about the lack of confidence that they could continue the fight after an US withdrawal.¹⁴ Anti-corruption units of the United States had to remove 30 officers—including governors and chiefs of police—and condemn 50 mercenaries (contractors) involved in corruption cases since mid-2010. Brigadier general H. R. McMaster, commander of the Combined Joint Task Force Shafafiyat (Transparency)—an anti-corruption unit—, said in January 2012 that a decade of war in Afghanistan had created “a culture of

¹²2012 UNHCR country operations profile — Afghanistan, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e486eb6>.

¹³Poonam Taneja, “Reaching Afghanistan’s hidden war widows in Helmand”, *BBC News — South Asia*, February 27, 2011.

¹⁴Rod Nordland, “Afghan Army’s Turnover Threatens U.S. Strategy”, *The New York Times*, October 15, 2012.

impunity” with duplicitous behavior from the authorities, drug traffickers and organized crime gangs, fracturing state and society.¹⁵

US/NATO forces had destroyed homes, crops and infrastructure, and driven the displacement of about 350,000 people inside Afghanistan. On October 16, 2011, the Minister of Agriculture, Mohammad Asif Akhundzada, revealed that more than 30% of the Afghan population was living below the poverty line and that an investment of around US\$1 billion per year in agriculture would be required to prevent a famine.¹⁶

10.3 The Tea Party and the Rise of the Christian Right in the United States

Ten years of occupation by US/NATO troops had turned Afghanistan into one of the poorest, most unstable and most insecure countries in the world.¹⁷ But President Barack Obama could not delay the withdrawal beyond 2014. In addition to the economic crisis, which wasn’t showing any signs of relief, the Democratic Party had lost the mid-term elections of 2010. Obama now had to face a strengthened opposition in Congress, with the election of an expressive core of evangelical congress members who identified with Pentecostalism. This group gained greater political influence in the Republican Party, pushing it further to the right. Evangelical, fundamentalist Christianity has adopted business strategies and profoundly reshaped many aspects of politics and society in the United States.¹⁸ This conservative and dogmatic Christian right tightened its grip on the Republican Party¹⁹ and aligned itself even more with the right in Israel,²⁰ which seems to take the words of eighteenth century French philosopher Voltaire quite literally: “*Je vous donnerai tout ce pays depuis le fleuve d’Egypte jusqu’a l’Euphrate.*”²¹

The Christian right expressed itself politically through the emergence of the Tea Party Patriots (TPP).²² This movement with fascist tendencies was founded by Jenny Beth Martin, Mark Meckler and Amy Kremer, and rose to prominence with

¹⁵John Ryan, “Units aim to root out corruption in Afghanistan”, *Army Times*, February 16, 2012.

¹⁶GHANIZADA, “Above 30% of Afghan population facing poverty: Officials”, *Khaama Press*, Afghan Online Newspaper, October 16, 2011.

¹⁷“Afghanistan’s Most Vulnerable — The Poverty of War”, *Afghanistan 101*, February 24, 2012.

¹⁸“Earthly Empires. How evangelical churches are borrowing from the business playbook”, *BusinessWeek Online*, May 23, 2005.

¹⁹Chip Berlet, “Religion and Politics in the United States: Nuances You Should Know”, *The Public Eye Magazine*, Summer 2003, Political Research Associates.

²⁰Bacevich (2005), p. 123–135.

²¹“I will give all this land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates.” Voltaire (1964), p. 248.

²²By adopting the name of Tea Party, the right sought to evoke the protest movement of the tea growers, known as the Boston Tea Party, against England’s Tea Act, which increased the taxes on the sales of tea on December 16, 1773, turning into one of the precedents of the war of

Sarah Palin, running mate of the republican Senator John McCain in the 2008 campaign. Sarah Palin, an extremely ignorant woman with a political base in Alaska, was a practicing Pentecostal Christian of the evangelical sect Assembly of God in Wasilla (Alaska),²³ a “dominionist” and “reconstructionist” church that wanted American society to be governed by the Bible. She harbored apocalyptic views about the end of times, starting with the war in Iraq, and believed that Christ’s return to earth, in Israel, was near.

The Tea Party’s origins could probably be traced to the fading influence of WASPs (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants) as a result of the growing number of ethnic minorities, especially Latinos. This was signaled by the election of Barack Obama, a black man of African descent. Many WASPs couldn’t cope with this and reacted. But this didn’t mean that Barack Obama, as President, could fundamentally alter US foreign policy. The ranks of liberals and moderates in Congress had thinned, reflecting the increasing funding of electoral campaigns by the richest segments of the population, who were ideologically aligned with more conservative candidates.²⁴ And the defeat of the Democratic Party in the 2010 mid-term elections was not only caused by the economic crisis, which could be attributed in large part to the deregulation of the financial system promoted by President George W. Bush, but also by the inconsistent policies of the Obama administration.

Although the middle and upper classes had benefited from the significant economic growth in the United States since the end of the Second World War, the material well-being of low-income classes had stagnated.²⁵ Social inequality had continued to increase in a period of increasing prosperity. A survey performed in 2010—*Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2010*—concluded that the average income of families had declined between 2009 and 2010 and that poverty had increased in the same period from 14.3% to 15.1%, i.e., from 43.6 million in 2009 to 46.2 million in 2010, the fourth consecutive annual increase and the highest number in the 52 years that poverty estimates were being published. The number of people without health insurance rose from 49 million in 2009 to 49.9 million in 2010.²⁶ And unemployment was reaching 9.2% by mid-2011, despite the negative interest rates.

The turnout in the 2010 midterm elections was very weak, and it was mostly the Latino and young voters who stayed away, apparently disenchanted with President Obama. There hadn’t been any major advance since his administration’s inauguration in 2009. President Obama failed to deliver on even half of the promises he

independence of the 13 English colonies in North America. Crates of tea belonging to the British East India Company were taken from the ships and thrown into the waters of Boston Harbor.

²³Randi Kaye, “Sarah Palin — Pastor: GOP may be downplaying Palin’s religious beliefs”, BBC Politics, September 8, 2008. Julia Duin, “Sarah Palin — Pentecostal”, *The Washington Times*, August 29, 2008. Amy Sullivan, “Does Sarah Palin Have a Pentecostal Problem?”, *Time*, October 9, 2008.

²⁴Mccarty et al. (2006), p. 141–146.

²⁵Ibid., p. 1–3, 116.

²⁶Denavas-Walt et al. (2011).

made during the electoral campaign. He didn't close the concentration camp in Guantánamo, despite having promised this repeatedly, including at Cairo University. He only managed to get a health care reform and regulations for the financial system passed, which angered the republicans. But he intensified the war in Afghanistan. And after the official withdrawal of US troops from Iraq, certain private military companies (contractors) continued to employ a small fleet of unarmed drones over Kurdistan as part the cooperation effort with the Diplomatic Security Service of the State Department.

President Barack Obama was in no condition to substantially change the foreign policy of the United States, a country where the Christian, fundamentalist²⁷ and intolerant right had become so strong that they were fighting and trying to forbid the teaching of Charles Darwin's scientific discoveries on the origins and evolution of species.²⁸ President Obama "*changed virtually nothing*", said John Rizzo, General Counsel of the CIA, adding that when the Bush administration ended, "*things continued. Authorities were continued that were originally granted by President Bush beginning shortly after 9/11. Those were all picked up, reviewed and endorsed by the Obama administration*".²⁹

Bolstered by the fundamentalist Christian right and intertwined with the interests of the military-industrial complex, the neo-conservative mentality had penetrated the entire state apparatus, society's main commanding and ordering body, in alignment with the political interests of the economically dominant classes and the psychological and cultural foundations of all layers of the population. In 1849, the head of the Brazilian delegation in Washington, Sérgio Teixeira de Macedo, had already remarked: "*I don't believe there is a single civilized country where the idea of provocation and war is as popular as in the United States*."³⁰

10.4 The Kill/Capture Campaign

When President Obama received and accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 2009, he did not hide that his challenge was to "*reconcile two seemingly irreconcilable truths—that war is sometimes necessary, and that war at some level is an expression of human folly*."³¹ He said he believed that all nations—"strong and weak

²⁷Just as the Islamic fundamentalists, who must submit to the will of Allah, fundamentalist Christians in the United States believe that the only acceptable reason for living is to submit to the will of God and of his Son, Jesus Christ.

²⁸Hedges (2006), p. 113–120.

²⁹Priest and Arkin (2011), p. 275.

³⁰"Política externa dos Estados Unidos e o perigo que ela representa para o Brasil", Ofícios, Sérgio Teixeira de Macedo ao Visconde de Olinda, Washington, 6/8/1849, Historical Archive of the Itamaraty — 233/3/5.

³¹Remarks by the President at the Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize Oslo City Hall, Oslo, Norway. Immediate Release, Office of the Press Secretary The White House December 10, 2009.

alike”—should adhere to standards that govern the use of force and that he, as any other Head of State, reserved the right to act unilaterally if necessary to defend his nation. He added that “*there will be times when nations—acting individually or in concert—will find the use of force not only necessary but morally justified*”.³² And as one of these situations, he mentioned the need for intervention “*to prevent the slaughter of civilians by their own government, or to stop a civil war whose violence and suffering can engulf an entire region*.” “*I believe that force can be justified on humanitarian grounds, as it was in the Balkans, or in other places that have been scarred by war*,” Obama stressed.³³ He was foreshadowing, no doubt, the contingency of having to intervene in countries in the Middle East, where the uprisings of the so-called Arab spring were already brewing.

President Obama’s strategies continued to reaffirm the commitment to militarism and the preservation of international hegemony, consolidating the *full spectrum dominance* of the United States and, consequently, of financial capital, seeking to increase its economic space wherever possible, excluding its competitors, especially Russia and China, and converting the entire world in an investment zone for the ultra-imperialist cartel of western powers. Obama maintained the same imperial agenda of his predecessors. He only perfected and fleshed out some methods of the *American way of war* and intensified the kill/capture operations performed by General Stanley McChrystal, commander of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), the “*top hunter/killer, responsible for the death of hundreds of enemies, maybe terrorists, maybe a few terrorists*”, who was publicly thanked by President George W. Bush for having done excellent work as “*the nation’s most respectable assassin*”.³⁴

“*Find the enemy, then kill or capture ’em*”, as General Tommy Frank, commander in chief of the U.S. forces in Afghanistan, had already ordered Lieutenant Colonel Pete Blaber, commander of the Delta Forces (Special Forces Operations Detachment-Delta) in December 2001, when he received him at Bagram air base, north of Kabul.³⁵ It was through this *Way of War* that the United States continued to employ high-tech killing machines as the death squadrons of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), including the Delta Forces and Navy SEALs,³⁶ to summarily assassinate and/or capture the heads of al-Qa’ida and the Taliban in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan and throughout the Arab Peninsula.³⁷ The targets were part of a Joint Prioritized Effects List (JPEL), which even

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Hastings (2012), p. 15–16.

³⁵Blaber (2008), p. 204.

³⁶The Navy SEALs are a special unit of the United States Naval Special Warfare Command (NAVSPECWARCOM), headquartered in Coronado, California. They’re part of the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). It was a Navy SEALs commando who executed bin Ladin in Pakistan. SEAL is an acronym for Sea, Air and Land.

³⁷Priest and Arkin (2011), p. 251.

included American citizens, based on legal or extralegal premises according to classified guidelines from President Obama.

10.5 The War on Terror on an Almost Industrial Scale

This campaign constituted an “*almost industrial-scale counterterrorism killing machine*”,³⁸ declared Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl, one of the advisors of General David Petraeus, when interviewed in the PBS show *Frontline*.³⁹ Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl revealed that, in only 90 days of 2010, the soldiers of Special Operations Command carried out 3000 operations, penetrating villages in Afghanistan during the dead of night, and killing or capturing more than 12,000 Taliban and/or al-Qa’ida militants that year.

According to information from Amrullah Salih, head of Afghanistan’s National Directorate of Security (2004–2009), the operations under the command of General McChrystal killed or captured 700 Taliban commanders, and from July to September 2010 alone, the ISAF conducted 3279 special operations, which resulted in the death of 293 insurgent leaders and in the capture of 2169.⁴⁰ Between April 25, 2010, and April 25, 2011, Special Operations Forces killed 3200 insurgents and captured 800. Between January and May 10, 2011, alone, they killed or captured 500 insurgent leaders and 2700 “*lower-level insurgents*”.⁴¹ General David Petraeus was General McChrystal’s successor in command at ISAF between July 2010 and July 2011.

These *night raids*, however, based on technological monitoring with mainly the MQ-1 Predator and the MQ-9 Reaper drones, unmanned aircraft guided at a distance by the CIA and equipped with AGM-114 Hellfire air-to-ground missiles, among others, resulted in the death of thousands of militants and countless innocent civilians.⁴² Through the robotization of military activities, Tom Engelhardt wrote, President Obama had begun to imbue the *American way of war* with *terminator-*

³⁸Georgie Anne Geyer, “Killing Our Way to Defeat — Obama’s Private Killing Machine. U.S. seems to be getting good at killing ‘Taliban’, but why? John Nagl, a former counterinsurgency adviser to Gen. Petraeus, described JSOC’s kill/capture campaign to *Frontline* as ‘an almost industrial-scale counterterrorism killing machine’”, May 23, 2011. Gretchen Gavett, “What is the Secretive U.S. ‘Kill/Capture’ Campaign?”, *Frontline*, Afghanistan/Pakistan > Kill/Capture, June 17, 2011.

³⁹*Frontline* is a TV show in the United States from PBS (Corporation for Public Broadcasting), funded by the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and by the Reva & David Logan and Park Foundation.

⁴⁰Van Linschoten and Kuehn (2012), p. 313.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 313. Katherine Tiedemann, “Daily brief: U.S. prepared for fights with Pakistanis during bin Laden raid: report”, *Foreign Policy*, The Afpak Chanel, May 10, 2011.

⁴²Gretchen Gavett, “What is the Secretive U.S. ‘Kill/Capture’ Campaign?”, *Frontline*, Afghanistan/Pakistan > Kill/Capture, June 17, 2011.

style terror. Drones, hunter-killer teams and night raiders of the SOF, SEALs and CIA⁴³ were now infiltrating countries, violating their national sovereignty, to kill terrorist suspects without trial, sentencing or the right to defense.

In 2011, Obama decreed the construction of a constellation of bases on the Arab Peninsula and the Horn of Africa, in Ethiopia, in Djibouti and even one of the islands of the Seychelles archipelago in the Indian Ocean, where a squadron of “hunter-killer drones” was stationed for an aggressive campaign against the hardline fundamentalist organization Harakat Al-Shabab al-Mujahidin (HSM), an al-Qa’ida affiliate based in Somalia and active in Sudan and Yemen.⁴⁴ Other bases were established in southern Sudan, as well as in Obo and Djema, where the Pentagon sent 100 Special Operations Command (SOCOM) soldiers with the mission of assisting Ugandan forces in the hunt of Joseph Kony, leader of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA).⁴⁵ These special US commandos also operated in South Sudan, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In conjunction with Special Operations Command (SOCOM), the CIA was increasingly operating as a paramilitary force. In addition to espionage and intelligence gathering, it was involved in almost all the tasks performed by the SOF, in various regions, according to a secret presidential finding signed by President George W. Bush on September 17, 2001, which allowed the CIA to create teams tasked with catching, detaining or killing designated terrorists in all parts of the world. And despite his Nobel Peace Prize, President Obama made more use of this *Way of War* than President George W. Bush, placing himself above national and international laws. Obama personally conducted the mass extermination campaign of real or alleged Islamic terrorists, which also killed hundreds of innocent civilians, women and children. All it took was signing an *Executive Order* (EO) or *finding*⁴⁶ to authorize the assassination (*killing targets*) and other covert operations without having to consult Congress.

And so the wars kept multiplying, not only as a political necessity, but mainly as an economic necessity: the operations in Somalia (1993–present), Afghanistan (2001–present) and Iraq (2003–present) increased the demand for weapons⁴⁷ and, therefore, created/maintained jobs in the war industries and production chains specialized in armaments with capital intensive technology, in addition to shoring

⁴³Tom Engelhardt, “Offshore Everywhere — How Drones, Special Operations Forces, and the U.S. Navy Plan to End National Sovereignty As We Know It”, *TomDispatch.com*, February 5, 2012.

⁴⁴Craig Whitlock and Greg Miller, “U.S. assembling secret drone bases in Africa, Arabian Peninsula”, *The Washington Post*, September 21, 2011.

⁴⁵“U.S. special forces close in on jungle hideout of Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony”, *Daily Mail*, April 30, 2012.

⁴⁶An authorization given by the president of the United States, almost always in writing, in which he states (finds) that a covert action is important for national security. The finding is the most secret among the documents of the American government.

⁴⁷Barry D. Watts, “Strategy for the Long Haul: The US Defense Industrial Base. Past, Present and Future”, The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), 2008, p. 23–24.

up the tax revenues of the States where they were located, mainly in the *sunbelt* (California, Texas, Missouri, Florida, Maryland and Virginia). Between 2001 and 2007, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman and Boeing Integrated Defense registered more than US\$30 billion in annual sales, while General Dynamics and Raytheon had annual revenues exceeding US\$20 billion.⁴⁸ These were the same companies responsible for the construction and maintenance of the killer and surveillance drones, with facilities overseas as well as in Virginia, California, South Carolina, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii and Alabama.⁴⁹ In 2011, the drone market was evaluated at US\$5.9 billion and forecasted to double in the next decade. These unmanned airplanes cost millions of dollars and came in several different models, such as the MQ-1 Predator and the MQ-9 Reaper, some of the more sophisticated varieties, and the Parrot air.Drone, which cost about \$300 and could be piloted from an iPhone.⁵⁰

Faced with the high costs and failure of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, President Obama opted for more cost-effective counterinsurgency tactics that didn't risk many American lives. He decided to employ drones on a large scale to kill terror suspects. He made more use of them than his predecessor, George W. Bush, and in the 2012 budget, he requested approximately US\$5 billion from Congress for the construction of more machines.⁵¹ Advised by the CIA veteran John O. Brennan, he transformed the conventional *War on Terror*, which had Afghanistan and Pakistan as its main theaters of operations, into a "*high-tech global*" effort to locate and eliminate, one by one, those who were perceived as enemies of the United States.⁵²

10.6 The War in Somalia and Yemen

Obama also extended the campaign to Yemen and Somalia, where, in October 2012, around 300 SOF soldiers were stationed in the high-security compound Camp Lemonnier, working incognito and concealing their names while coordinating the plans for the drone raids and flights.⁵³ In total, 3200 people were garrisoned there, including soldiers, civilians and contractors training foreign military personnel. This secret base was of high strategic value as it was located between East Africa

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 39.

⁴⁹Priest and Arkin (2011), p. 210–2011.

⁵⁰Nick Wingfield e Somini Sengupta, "Drones Set Sights on U.S. Skies", *The New York Times*, February 17, 2012.

⁵¹"Predator Drones and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)", *The New York Times*, May 11, 2012. Peter W. Singer, "Do Drones Undermine Democracy?", *The New York Times*, January 21, 2012.

⁵²Karen DeYoung, "A CIA veteran transforms U.S. counterterrorism policy", *The Washington Post*, October 25, 2012.

⁵³Craig Whitlock, "Remote U.S. base at core of secret operations", *The Washington Post*, October 26, 2012.

and the Arab Peninsula. From here, the US armed forces could hit targets in both Somalia and Yemen in a matter of minutes. Additionally, the port of Djibouti offered easy access to the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea.⁵⁴

The Obama administration has taken several initiatives to sustain the drone campaign for over a decade, developing and designing a new database of objectives, called the “*disposition matrix*”, with the *kill-list*, the procedures for clandestine operations and a classified “*playbook*” to specify how the decisions to kill this or that person should be taken.⁵⁵ The United States tended to decrease the number of conventional wars and the Obama administration expected to continue adding names to the *kill/capture* list, institutionalizing it after more than a decade of use.⁵⁶ The Journalist Greg Miller of the *Washington Post* remarked that the global war on terror had arrived at its midpoint and that Obama planned to make it a permanent.⁵⁷ And the logic of a state at war, stressed Norberto Bobbio, “has terrorism as its extreme consequence, or in other words, the death of the innocent”.⁵⁸

⁵⁴Ibid. See also: New America Foundation: America’s Counterterrorism Wars. Tracking the United States’ drone strikes and other operations in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia. In: <https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/americas-counterterrorism-wars/> See also: Drone theater expands beyond Pakistan. Sources: New America Foundation; Longwarjournal.org; staff reports | Julie Tate and Bill Webster/The Washington Post October 24, 2012. In: http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/drone-theater-expands-beyondpakistan/2012/10/24/1fd3a666-1d27-11e2-ba31-3083ca97c314_graphic.html. Accessed: May 05, 2015.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Greg Miller, “Plan for hunting terrorists signals U.S. intends to keep adding names to kill lists”, *The Washington Post*, October 24, 2012.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Bobbio (1999), p. 102.

Chapter 11

Drones and Kill/Capture Campaign in Pakistan

11.1 Unmanned Vehicle Systems (Drones): Death Raining from the Skies

At the start of 2012, the United States had over 7000 Unmanned Vehicle Systems, the so-called drones, and more 12,000 ground systems for many uses, including surveillance, espionage and bombing. These devices were (and still are) employed in hundreds of covert strike operations in at least six countries—Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen—, eliminating over 1900 insurgents.¹

Authorities in Washington considered the drone to be the cheapest, safest and most accurate instrument to eliminate their enemies² and on September 30, 2011, such an UAV was used to kill the American citizen [Anwar al-Awlaki](#)—a fundamentalist Muslim and al-Qa’ida preacher born in Denver. Al-Awlaki’s location was discovered thanks to the double agent Morten Storm from Politiets Efterretningstjeneste (PET), Denmark’s intelligence and security service. Storm was mediating the marriage of [Anwar al-Awlaki](#) with a blond Croatian woman known only by the name of Aminah. But the trap had not been cheap. It cost the CIA US\$200,000, paid to Morten Storm, who then told the whole history to the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*.³

¹Peter Singer, “Do Drones Undermine Democracy?” *The New York Times*, January 21, 2012. Peter W. Singer is head of the 21st Century Defense Initiative at the Brookings Institution and author of *Wired for war: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century*. Peter W. Singer, “Predator Drones and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)”, *The New York Times*, May 11, 2012.

²Scott Shane and Thom Shanker, “Strike Reflects U.S. Shift to Drones in Terror Fight”, *The New York Times*, October 1, 2011.

³Scott Shane, “A Biker, a Blonde, a Jihadist and Piles of C.I.A. Cash”, *The New York Times*, October 19, 2012. Af Orla Borg, Carsten Ellegaard and Morten Pihl, “CIA i hemmelig optagelse: Obama kendte til dansk agent. I en skjult lydoptagelse lavet af Morten Storm fortæller CIA-agent, at Obama kender til den danske PET-agent”, *Jyllands-Posten*, Oktober 22, 2012.

The execution overseas and without trial of [Anwar al-Awlaki](#), an American citizen, had negative repercussions within the United States. Former President Jimmy Carter, a morally upright man, published an article in the *New York Times* in which he declared that the US was abandoning its role of “*global champion of human rights*”, with government officials in Washington deciding who would be assassinated in countries overseas, including American citizens.⁴ Such violations began after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and have been sanctioned and escalated by bipartisan executive and legislative actions, without dissent among the general public,⁵ wrote Carter. He went on to say that “*as a result, our country can no longer speak with moral authority on these critical issues.*”⁶ He also pointed out that US anti-terrorist policies were clearly violating at least 10 of the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, which prohibits, among others, “cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment”. Carter also criticized the fact that the death of innocent women and children in the vicinity was “*accepted as inevitable,*” in addition to the “*arbitrary rule*” that any man killed by drones was declared an enemy terrorist.⁷

President Hamid Karzai had demanded the end of *drone* operations in Afghanistan, recalled former President Carter, but the United States continued to launch them over areas of Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen, which weren’t war zones. It was unknown how many hundreds of casualties resulted from these attacks, each one approved by the “*highest authorities in Washington*”. “*This would have been unthinkable in previous times,*” Carter concluded.⁸ Between 2347 and 2956 people have been killed by *drones* since 2004 in Pakistan alone (including 175 children), most of them militants.⁹ At least 253 strikes were ordered by President Barack Obama during his mandate.¹⁰ According to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, *drones* killed between 63 and 127 non-militants in 2011, and the Associated Press found evidence that at least 56 villagers and tribal guards were killed in ten major strikes since 2010.¹¹ The Bureau of Investigative Journalism also stated there was reliable information that, in 7 years, 168 children died in the drone attacks, i.e., 44%

⁴Anwar al-Awlaki, a fundamentalist cleric born in New Mexico in the United States, was killed by a drone in the tribal area of Pakistan, in addition to his 16 year-old son, Abdulrahman, born in Colorado. Another American killed by a drone was Samir Khan. They were executed without trials and their families have filed suit against the Pentagon and the CIA. “Military sued over al-Awlaki Yemen drone death”, BBC, USA-Canada, July 18, 2012.

⁵Jimmy Carter, “A Cruel and Unusual Record”, *The New York Times*, June 24, 2012.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Chris Woods, “Drone War Exposed — the complete picture of CIA strikes in Pakistan”, Bureau of Investigative Journalism, August 10, 2011. Benjamin Wittes, “Civilian Deaths from Drone Strikes”, *Lawfare — Hard National Security Choices*, August 12, 2011.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Declan Walsh, Eric Schmitt and Ihsanullah Tipu Mehsud, “Drones at Issue as U.S. Rebuilds Ties to Pakistan”, *The New York Times*, March 18, 2012.

of the 385 (at least) civilians killed.¹² For President Barack Obama, however, the attacks “*did not cause a huge number of civilian casualties*”.¹³

11.2 Drone Terror in Pakistan

A 9-month study performed in 2011 in Northern Waziristan and in various other Pakistani provinces by academics of the University School of Law (New York University Clinic), the International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic of Stanford Law School (Stanford Clinic) and the Global Justice Clinic in New York, concluded that the secret drone strike program “*terrorized*” local communities, killing an enormous number of civilians and fostering anti-American fear across the country.¹⁴ The study—called *Living Under Drones*—found that the inhabitants of the affected regions were afraid to attend public ceremonies, such as weddings and funerals, because the remote operators of the aircraft would often miss their target and hit the innocent.

One of the conclusions was that the drones were causing untold damage to civilian life, in addition to physical death and injury, and that their presence terrified men, women and children, generating anxiety and psychological trauma in the civilian communities because locals feared a lethal attack, always and at any time, and were powerless to protect themselves.¹⁵ The dominant narrative in the United States was that the *drone* was a “*surgically precise and effective*” instrument that enabled the “*targeted killing*” of terrorists with minimal collateral damage. The study, however, stated categorically: “*This narrative is false.*”¹⁶

11.3 More Civilians and Children Killed Under Obama Than in the Bush Administration

The covert drone strikes to kill alleged terrorists were a “key national security policy” of President Barack Obama, noted the journalist Peter Bergen, a national security analyst from CNN. Bergen stated that during his administration, Obama

¹²Chris Woods, “160 children reported among drone deaths”, Covert War on Terror Over — The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, August 11, 2011.

¹³“Obama’s kill list — All males near drone strike sites are terrorists”, *Russia Today*, May 31, 2012.

¹⁴International Human Rights, Conflict Resolution Clinic (Stanford Law School), Global Justice Clinic (NYU School of Law), *Living Under Drones: Death, Injury, and Trauma to Civilians From US Drone Practices in Pakistan*, September 2012, accessed <http://livingunderdrones.org/>. “US drones terrorize communities: Report”, *Al-Akhbar* (English), September 25, 2012.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. vii.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. v.

had already authorized 283 attacks in Pakistan, six times the number of strikes President George W. Bush had signed off in two mandates and 8 years. As a result, the number of deaths—between 1494 and 2618—was four times higher than the casualties until 2009, when Obama took office.¹⁷

President Obama also surpassed Bush in the use of U.S. Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) forces in covert operations to kill supposed al-Qa'ida and Taliban militants in Iraq and Afghanistan, in addition to Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and other countries of the Persian Gulf and Africa.¹⁸ He made widespread use of *covert actions* to support the objectives of his foreign policy, and the lines between the CIA's *covert actions* and the clandestine military operations of the Special Operations Forces (SOF) blurred to the point of vanishing.¹⁹

In mid-2010, the Journalists Karen DeYoung and Greg Jaffe of the *Washington Post*, revealed that the US Special Operations Forces (SOF) were operating in 75 countries, 60 more than at the end of the George W. Bush administration, and colonel Tim Nye, JSOC spokesman, said that this figure could be as high as 120. These numbers indicate that President Barack Obama intensified the *shadow wars* in about 60% of the worlds' nations, and that he expanded the war against al-Qa'ida beyond Afghanistan and Iraq through the clandestine operations of the SOF in Yemen and in every part of the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia.²⁰ Obama also requested an increase of 5.7% in the SOF budget for 2011, raising it to US\$6.3 billion with an additional contingency fund of US\$3.5 billion in 2010.²¹ The SOF had 13,000 active duty soldiers operating in several countries, and possibly 9000 divided between Iraq and Afghanistan.

11.4 The “Kill/Capture” Campaign to Eliminate Enemy Combatants and the Execution Checklist

As outlined above, the collateral damage was enormous, however. From July 2008 to June 2011, the CIA carried out 220 attacks inside Pakistan. It justified them by informing they had killed 1400 “suspects”, along with 30 civilians.²² The private entity Conflict Monitoring Center (CMC) in Islamabad, however, calculated that in

¹⁷Peter Bergen and Megan Braun, “Drone is Obama’s Weapon of Choice”, *CNN*, September 6, 2012.

¹⁸Priest and Arkin (2011), p. 251.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 6. See also: Pakistan. <http://www.asien.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/pakistan-karte.gif>. Accessed 29.07.2015.

²⁰Karen DeYoung and Greg Jaffe, “U.S. ‘secret war’ expands globally as Special Operations forces take larger role”, *Washington Post*, June 4, 2010. Nick Turse, “A secret war in 120 countries. The Pentagon’s new power elite”, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, August 18, 2011.

²¹Karen DeYoung and Greg Jaffe, “U.S. ‘secret war’ expands globally as Special Operations forces take larger role”, *Washington Post*, June 4, 2010.

²²Priest and Arkin (2011), p. 209.

Table 11.1 Estimate of the total number of deaths from drone strikes in Pakistan 2004–2012

Year	Deaths (minimum)	Deaths (maximum)
2012 ^a	153	193
2011	378	536
2010	607	993
2009	369	725
2008	274	314
2004–2007	89	112
Total	1870	2873

Source: The New America Foundation. <http://counterterrorism.newamerica.net/drones>. Accessed 17.11.2014. For more recent data: <https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/americas-counterterrorism-wars/pakistan/>. Accessed 11.04.2017

^aUntil July

the 5 years until June 2011, the “kill/capture” campaign in Pakistan claimed 2052 lives, most of them civilians, and that in 2010 alone, 132 *drone* strikes caused 938 deaths.²³ According to estimates from the New America Foundation, US *drones* killed close to 3000 people in Pakistan between 2004 and July 2012, of which 2447 during the first 3½ years of Obama’s administration (Table 11.1).²⁴

Although these attacks eliminated many militants, they also increased the ranks of the *Tehrik-e-Taliban* of Pakistan (TTP), the group *Quetta Shura* led by the *Pashtun warlord* Sirajuddin Haqqani and the radical Sunni organization *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi Al-Almi*. They also boosted al-Qa’ida’s prestige, which could now rely on countless local safehouses to circumvent the *drone* attacks and organize operations against the United States.²⁵

As a consequence of the attacks, the *Pashtuns* in both Afghanistan and Pakistan took it upon themselves to avenge their dead, whether these were civilians or militants, fulfilling their traditional *Pashtunwali* code of honor. Around 2011, the Taliban in Pakistan were more dangerous than the Taliban in Afghanistan, informed the Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid.²⁶ Camps in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) were training young Swedes, Brits and Germans, among others, to return to their countries and become terrorists.²⁷ Approximately 3 million people lived in tribes in this region, in addition to the 15 million *Pashtuns* of Afghanistan, all of them adhering to the tribal *Pashtunwali* code of honor and conduct, which included *melmastia* (hospitality), *nanawati* (the notion that hospitality could not be denied to a fugitive), and *badal* (the right to vengeance).²⁸

²³Ibid., p. 209.

²⁴“The Year of the Drone — An Analysis of U.S. Drone Strikes in Pakistan, 2004–2012”, New America Foundation, accessed <http://counterterrorism.newamerica.net/drones>. Accessed 17 Nov 2014. Also: http://vcnv.org/files/NAF_YearOfTheDrone.pdf. Accessed 16 Dec 2016.

²⁵Ihsanullah Tipu Mehsud, “The Changing Face of Terror — Al-Qaeda takes hold of tribal regions”, *Asia Times*, July 10, 2012.

²⁶Rashid (2002b), p. 26.

²⁷Ibid., p. 26.

²⁸Rashid (2008), p. 265–266.

Terrorist fundamentalism co-opted a significant part of the tribes in the region, since the Pentagon treated it as a war zone. The economic, social and political conditions in Pakistan also favored radicalization and the strengthening of the Taliban's ranks. About 57% of Pakistan's 190 million inhabitants were illiterate and 22.3% were living below the poverty line. Its GDP of US\$494.8 billion (2011) grew by only 2.4% (2011) and per capita income didn't exceed US\$2800 (2011).²⁹ The lack of job opportunities and food security left many young people without prospects for the future. Propelled by a decade of war in Afghanistan with violent repercussions in Pakistan, many of them felt they had no choice but to opt for the Jihad. Because by dying in the fight against the infidels, they would earn their place in the Garden (Paradise), where the god fearing would find safe harbor. Surah 44 of the *Qur'an* states: "*Indeed, the righteous will be in a secure place; within gardens and springs; wearing garments of fine silk and brocade; and We will marry them to fair women with large, beautiful eyes; they will call therein for every kind of fruit—safe and secure*".³⁰ And Surah 56 says that they will also be served the fruit of their predilection, the meat of the poultry they savor, and *huris*.³¹ This was the hope of the desperate. For the resignation of faith becomes the virtue of the absurd, as Søren Kierkegaard put it.³²

Despite the demands from Islamabad, the US didn't end the drone strikes in Pakistan. Tensions between Islamabad and Washington grew, therefore, especially after two Apache helicopters, two F-15E Eagle jets and one NATO AC-130 airplane penetrated Pakistan and bombed a military outpost in the tribal district of Mohmand (near the border with Afghanistan) on November 26, 2011, killing at least 24 soldiers.³³ The government in Islamabad retaliated. It blocked vital supply routes for the US-ISAF forces in Afghanistan and demanded that Washington close its drone launch base.³⁴

11.5 The Assassination of Usamah Bin Ladin

One of Obama's achievements was the assassination of Usamah bin Ladin, who was summarily executed in the early hours of May 2, 2011, by a squadron of 23 Navy SEALs, transported in Black Hawk MH-60 helicopters from Jalalabad air

²⁹CIA Fact Book, accessed <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/geos/pk.html>.

³⁰*Der Koran* (Arabisch-Deutsch), 2011, Teil 25 — Sure 44 — Der Rauch (ad-Dukhan), 51–55, p. 498. In the several surahs where the *Qur'an* mentions *huris*, which can be boys or girls, there is no reference to any number.

³¹*Der Koran* (Arabisch-Deutsch), 2011. Teil 27, Sure 56, Das Unvermeidliche (al-Waqu'a), 51–55, p. 535.

³²Kierkegaard (1993), p. 48–49.

³³"Pakistan buries 24 troops killed in Nato airstrike", *BBC News Asia*, November 27, 2011.

³⁴See: Supply routes blocked by Pakistan. In: <http://www.schule-studium.de/Sozialkunde/Afghanistan-Pakistan-Krisen-Konflikte-Hintergrundinfos-2.html>. Accessed 11.05.2015.

base in eastern Afghanistan to a house in Abbottabad, in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, north of Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, at a stone's throw from the Military Academy.

The former Navy SEAL Matt Bissonnette published a book entitled *No Easy Day* under the pseudonym Mark Owen. He recalls that bin Ladin was unarmed when he was shot to the right side of the head, and that after he'd fallen, still twitching and turning in the "*blood and brains spilled out of the side of his skull*", the other soldiers continued to riddle his body with bullets until it was "*motionless*".³⁵ There were only two weapons inside the room, an AK-47 assault rifle and a Makarov pistol, both with empty chambers. Bin Ladin was not prepared to defend himself. The mission directive was to "*kill/capture*", i.e., kill first and then recover the corpse. There was virtually no chance of bin Ladin surviving for any trial, whenever or wherever.

President Obama, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and other members of the administration witnessed the whole operation on TV. Operation Neptune Spear, as the execution of bin Ladin and several of his companions and the capture of his wives and children was called, also recovered an extensive amount of material composed of documents, *computer hardware*, *pen drives*, CDs and DVDs.³⁶ Yet another step of the *kill/capture* program had been fulfilled, following the *Execution Checklist* approved by President Obama. Bin Ladin's body was thrown into the sea and crowds celebrated the event in Washington, New York and other cities of the United States.

The assassination of bin Ladin, unarmed and without a trial, provoked a debate on the legality and the ethics of Obama's action, since he could have simply captured and brought him to justice in the United States.³⁷ But ever since President George W. Bush had unleashed the *War on Terror*, legality no longer mattered to Washington, both on the domestic and international level. President George W. Bush himself, following the suggestion of his Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, created the figure of the "*enemy combatant*" to classify the prisoners in Afghanistan, circumventing and disregarding the rights of prisoners of war guaranteed by the Geneva Convention, keeping them indefinitely detained in the concentration camp of Guantánamo, a military base in Cuba outside the jurisdiction

³⁵Owen and Maurer (2012), p. 235–236. Eric Schmitt, "Book on Bin Laden Killing Contradicts U.S. Account", *The New York Times*, August 29, 2012.

³⁶Sanger (2012a), p. 68–113. Priest and Arkin (2011), p. 256–263. Peter Baker, Helene Cooper and Mark Mazzetti, "Bin Laden Is Dead, Obama Says", *The New York Times*, May 1, 2011. Mark Mazzetti and Helene Cooper, "Detective Work on Courier Led to Breakthrough on Bin Laden", *The New York Times*, May 2, 2011. Kate Zernike and Michael T. Kaufman, "The Most Wanted Face of Terrorism", *The New York Times*, May 2, 2011. Scott Wilson, Craig Whitlock and William Branigin, "Osama bin Laden killed in U.S. raid, buried at sea", *The Washington Post*, May 2, 2011. Bob Woodward, "Death of Osama bin Laden: Phone call pointed U.S. to compound — and to 'the pacer'", *The Washington Post*, May 7, 2011.

³⁷"Bin Laden death prompts questions about legality", *USA Today*, 5/4/2011. "Bin Laden's killing prompts uncomfortable legal, ethical questions for US", *Deutsche Welle*, 4/5/2011.

of the United States, subjecting them to various types of torture authorized by Attorney General Alberto Gonzales' "*torture memo*" of August 1, 2002,³⁸ and trying them in illegal and illegitimate military courts.³⁹ John Yoo, counsel of the Department of Justice, wrote a 42-page opinion explaining that the Geneva Convention and the U.S. War Crimes Act did not apply to the *War on Terror* because Afghanistan was a *failed state* and the Taliban, like the al-Qa'ida militants, were "*illegal enemy combatants*", a new category besides civilians and soldiers.⁴⁰ The President of the United States had thus acquired *jus gladii, necis ac vitae*, the imperial power to judge over the life and death of any citizen he considered to be an *enemy combatant*.

In an interview to the TV channel ARD, the former social democratic prime minister of Germany Helmut Schmidt declared that the operation to assassinate bin Laden was a clear violation of existing international law ("*ganz eindeutig ein Verstoß gegen das geltende Völkerrecht*"), which could cause unpredictable consequences and disturbances in the Arab world.⁴¹ But capturing bin Laden and bringing him to trial was not convenient for the US. He could reveal the intimate connections he had had with the CIA until at least 1995–1996, involving the Saudi monarchy, the family of President George W. Bush himself and the Carlyle Group, in which the bin Laden family had invested large sums of money.⁴² "*If there ever was any company closely connected to the U.S. and its presence in Saudi Arabia, it's the Saudi Binladin Group*", Charles Freeman, former US ambassador in Saudi Arabia and President of the Middle East Policy Council, told the *Wall Street Journal*.⁴³

Cynthia McKinney, a Democratic congresswoman in the House of Representatives, had already declared in 2002 that "*there were numerous warnings of the events to come on September 11*", and that "*persons close to [the Bush] administration are poised to make huge profits off America's new war*". She mentioned the Carlyle Group and suggested that the Bush administration knew the attacks were coming, allowed them to happen, and was now reaping the profits, both

³⁸Woods Jr. and Gutzman (2008), p. 182.

³⁹According to some sources, General Colin Powell, then Secretary of State, had wanted to give the status of prisoner of war to the Taliban imprisoned in Afghanistan, which in fact they were. But he yielded to the decision of President George W. Bush, who counted on the support of his adviser and attorney-general, the neocon Alberto R. Gonzales. Gonzales also justified torture, which he euphemistically called *stress and duress* techniques, such as sleep deprivation, isolation, waterboarding, sexual humiliation etc. These methods were not only used in Guantánamo, but also in Abhu Graib, in Iraq and in the Black Sites, the secret CIA prisons in Poland, Romania and other countries. Scarborough (2004), p. 17–19. McCoy (2007), p. 108–135.

⁴⁰McCoy (2007), p. 113–114.

⁴¹Helmut Schmidt, "Bin Laden zweifellos Urheber des schändlichen Attentats", *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 2/5/2011. Lilith Volkert, "TV-Kritik: Beckmann zu Bin Laden Gegengift zur Aufgeregtheit", *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 3/5/2011.

⁴²Briody (2003), p. 146–148.

⁴³Daniel Golden and James Bandler, "Bin Laden Family Is Tied to U.S. Group", *The Wall Street Journal*, p. A3.

financial and political, through its connections to the Carlyle Group. The same newspaper wrote that the bin Ladin family stood to make millions in the war against its own brother.⁴⁴

Even though President George W. Bush proclaimed that he wanted bin Ladin “*dead or alive*” when he launched Operation Enduring Freedom, General Tommy Franks stated shortly after that “*we have not said that Osama bin Laden is a target of this effort*”, but rather the destruction of al-Qa’ida’s network and the shelter that the Taliban was giving them.⁴⁵ Likewise, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff emphasized that “*our goal has never been to get bin Laden*”.⁴⁶ The Democratic nominee in 2004, Senator John F. Kerry, revealed in one of the presidential debates that, regarding the war in Afghanistan and the capture of bin Ladin, president George W. Bush himself had declared on March 13, 2002, that “*I truly am not that concerned about him*.” This was confirmed by White House transcripts.⁴⁷

The truth of the matter is that during 8 years of administration, Bush’s *war on terror* failed to capture or kill bin Ladin, while Obama succeeded in doing so 2½ years after taking office, acknowledging that in the last decade the United States had spent “*a trillion dollars on war, at a time of rising debt and hard economic times*” and that it was “*time to focus on nation building here at home*”.⁴⁸

President Obama’s success violated the national sovereignty of Pakistan, however, and further strained the tense relations between Washington and Islamabad,⁴⁹ which were already significantly damaged by the *drone* strikes in North and South Waziristan and the great number of civilian casualties in the tribal area to the west and southwest of Peshawar, inhabited by the *Pashtuns*, and in the northeast of the country on the border with Afghanistan. Anti-American sentiment was on the rise in the army and particularly in the intelligence apparatus (ISI). Pakistani agents had been closely involved with the *Jihadists* of al-Qa’ida and the Taliban during the war against the defunct USSR, a solidarity that extended into the 1990s.⁵⁰ At the same time, the Taliban hardened their treatment of the population in both North and South Waziristan, resorting to intimidation and murders and imposing *Shari’ah*, banning music, TV, the Internet, and mandating five daily prayers and beards for men.⁵¹

⁴⁴Briody (2003), p. 145.

⁴⁵John Omicinski, “General: Capturing bin Laden is not part of mission”, *USA Today*, 11/8/2001.

⁴⁶Jeremy R. Hammond, “Ex-ISI Chief Says Purpose of New Afghan Intelligence Agency Rama Is ‘to destabilize Pakistan’”, *Foreign Policy Journal*, August 12, 2009.

⁴⁷Maura Reynolds, “The Presidential Debate — Bush ‘Not Concerned’ About Bin Laden in ‘02”, *Los Angeles Times*, October 14, 2004.

⁴⁸Christi Parsons and David Cloud, “Obama announces drawdown of forces from Afghanistan, saying ‘tide of war is receding’”, *Los Angeles Times*, June 22, 2011.

⁴⁹Jane Perlez, “Pakistani Army, Shaken by Raid, Faces New Scrutiny”, *The New York Times*, May 4, 2011. “Pakistan after Bin Laden”, *The New York Times*, May 13, 2011.

⁵⁰Declan Walsh and Eric Schmitt, “Militant Group Poses Risk to U.S.-Pakistan Relations”, *The New York Times*, July 30, 2012.

⁵¹Rashid (2008), p. 375.

Meanwhile, President Obama was convinced that some circles of the Pakistani government knew of bin Ladin's hiding place and assisted him so he could continue to live anonymously in Abbotabad. And so he suspended US\$800 million in aid and equipment, more than one third of the US\$2 billion earmarked for Pakistan's security.⁵² NATO pressured Pakistan's president, Ali Zardari, to open the supply routes to the troops in Afghanistan. And as a result of their considerable interdependence, Pakistan and the United States could not definitively cut their ties, even if they were ambivalent. After the reopening of the borders for NATO logistics transports, the United States released US\$1.1 billion to the Pakistani army from the coalition support fund, which was supposed to reimburse counterinsurgency operations. Since 2001, the United States had already provided US\$11 billion to Pakistan.⁵³ They didn't want to lose it as an ally because of its strategic geopolitical position in the corridor of the largest maritime oil supply route to the West, near the countries of Central Asia and with a projection over South Asia and the Middle East.

⁵²"Obama aide confirms US holding back aid to Pakistan", *The Express Tribune with The International Herald Tribune*, Reuters/AFP, July 10, 2011.

⁵³Saeed Shah, "Anti-Americanism Rises In Pakistan Over US Motives", *McClatchy Newspapers*, September 7, 2009.

Chapter 12

Multiplication of War and Conflict from Tunisia to the Middle East

12.1 The Multiplication of War and Conflict from 2010 to 2011

In a report written for the first 4 months of 2010, the State Department recognized that there were at least 36 active conflicts throughout the world, and that the risk of armed violence was growing in countries with large reserves of natural resources, but poor governments. This risk was linked to a low gross domestic product, predatory corruption, the instability of neighboring countries, hybrid political systems, minimal international ties and access to weapons financing.¹ In turn, the Conflict Barometer (*Konfliktbarometer*) published by the Heidelberg Institute of International Conflict Research (*Heidelberger Institut für Internationale Konfliktforschung—HIIK*), a body of the Political Science Institute at the University of Heidelberg, showed that in just 1 year, 2011, the number of wars and conflicts in the world tripled to the highest figure since 1945: it jumped from 6 wars and 161 armed conflicts in 2010 to 20 wars and 166 conflicts in 2011. These conflicts were playing out especially in the Middle East, Africa and the Caucasus.² And professor Christoph Trinn, director of the HIIK, predicted that this number would increase even further in 2012.³

After the attacks of September 11, the Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) became the main instrument to tackle what the United States described as unconventional warfare: insurgencies, guerrilla warfare, terrorism etc. For many years, the Special Operations Forces had already been operating in *unconventional wars* (UW) in several countries. But the *war on terror*, which had Iraq and

¹“Leading through Civilian Power the First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review 2010”, Department of State — USAID, accessed <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/153108.pdf>.

²“Conflict Barometer 2011”, accessed <http://hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/>.

³Ibid.

Afghanistan as its main theaters since the September 11 attacks, inflamed Islamic fundamentalism even further. It strengthened al-Qa'ida, increased the terrorist network and, in interplay with diverse and complex factors, including the influence of western NGOs, contributed to the destabilization of almost all the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, fanning armed conflict in countries where the financial crisis of 2007–2008 had further deteriorated economic, social and political conditions.

12.2 The War in Pakistan

The war against the Taliban in Afghanistan got entangled with the war against the Taliban in Pakistan (AF/Pak). The Haqqani network (*Quetta Shura*), which was based in Miranshah in Northern Waziristan, on the border with Afghanistan, continued to attack US and NATO troops, and no peace would be possible without including it in the negotiations brokered by Germany. Its fighters operated in three *Pashtun* provinces—Khost, Patika and Paktya—in East Afghanistan. Since 2008, its suicide bombers had carried out several attacks in Kabul, including against ISAF headquarters.⁴

In addition to the Haqqani network, which was led by Sirajuddin Haqqani and accused by Washington of receiving support from ISI, the Pakistani intelligence service, the Taliban had another ally, the party *Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami*, which operated from the north of Pakistan. In the province of Balochistan, situated in the mountains of the southwest, the Baloch—a Persian ethnic minority that can also be found in Iran and Afghanistan—rebelled against Islamabad to demand their independence.⁵ Smugglers, the Taliban and al-Qa'ida militants passed through this region to which few outsiders had access.

12.3 Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Countries Funding Sunni Terrorists

In a secret cable dated December 30, 2009, and revealed by WikiLeaks, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton acknowledged that “*Saudi Arabia remains a critical financial support base for al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT) and other terrorist groups, including Hamás,*” which probably were receiving millions of dollars per year, and that more should be done to halt this flow of money from the

⁴Declan Walsh and Eric Schmitt, “Militant Group Poses Risk to U.S.-Pakistan Relations”, *The New York Times*, July 30, 2012.

⁵“Balochistan — Pakistan’s other war — Baloch politicians and leaders share their vision of self-determination and freedom from Pakistani rule”, *Al Jazeera World*, January 9, 2012.

Gulf to extremists in Pakistan and Afghanistan.⁶ Hillary Clinton stressed that donors in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and the Arab Emirates were the most significant source of funding for Sunni terrorist groups around the world, including *Lashkar e-Tayyiba* (LeT), *Jemaah Islamiyah* and *al-Itihaad al-Islamiya*.⁷ The donations were made during such religious events as the Hajj, Umrah and Ramadan, and through such charitable institutions as the *Zakah*, the religious tribute, one of the five pillars of Islam.

With resources from the Wahhabi-Salafists monarchies of the Persian gulf, armed conflicts intensified, and not only in the Af/Pak (Afghanistan/Pakistan) region. Al-Qa'ida's influence grew. It franchised its name to other terrorist groups and spread its influence over various parts of the Muslim world. Violent clashes continued to occur in Af/Pak and Iraq, with successive terrorist attacks, and also spread to other countries in the Middle East and North Africa, intensifying the permanent antagonism between Shia and Sunni Muslims. And with resources from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, the major sponsors of terrorism, the radical Islamic groups tried to capture the movements which the West had christened as the Arab Spring.

12.4 The Uprising in Tunisia

On December 17, 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi, a 26 year-old Tunisian, desperate and without money to sustain his family, set fire to his own body in the streets of Sidi Bouzid, a city in the center of Tunisia, after the police had confiscated his goods because he didn't have a permit to sell fruits and vegetables and refused to pay a bribe. The built-up tensions, which had already weakened the social mechanisms of integration, led to a political explosion.⁸ Bouazizi's suicide unleashed a wave of protests throughout Tunisia and caused the fall of the republic's President, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who had been in power since 1987. The movement was soon called the Jasmine Revolution because of the similarities with the revolutions in the

⁶Wednesday, 30 December 2009, 13:28, SECRET STATE 131801 — NOFORN — SIPDIS — FOR TFCO EO 12958 DECL: 12/28/2019 TAGS EFIN, KTFN, PTER, PINR, PREL, PK, KU, AE, QA, SA SUBJECT: TERRORIST FINANCE: ACTION REQUEST FOR SENIOR LEVEL ENGAGEMENT ON TERRORISM FINANCER EF: A. (A) STATE 112368 B. (B) RIYADH 1499 C. (C) KUWAIT 1061 D. (D) KUWAIT 1021 E. (E) ABU DHABI 1057 F. (F) DOHA 650 G. (G) ISLAMABAD 2799 Classified By: EEB/ESC Deputy Assistant Secretary Douglas C. Hengel for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d). "US embassy cables: Hillary Clinton says Saudi Arabia 'a critical source of terrorist funding'", The Guardian, December 5, 2010, accessed <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/242073>.

⁷Ibid. Declan Walsh, "WikiLeaks cables portray Saudi Arabia as a cash machine for terrorists. Hillary Clinton memo highlights Gulf states' failure to block funding for groups like al-Qaida, Taliban and Lashkar-e-Taiba", *The Guardian*, December 5, 2010.

⁸Hibou (2011), p. XV.

countries of the Caucasus, based on the strategy of professor Gene Sharp, who had inspired the regime change policy employed by President George W. Bush.

The dictator Ben Ali was an ally of the United States in the war on terror and cracked down hard on the *jihadi* organizations Tunisian Combatant Group (TCG), Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) and *al-Qa'ida/Islamic au Maghrib* (AQIM). Tunisia was also part of the US-North African Economic Partnership (USNAEP), which sought to promote American investments and economic integration in the region of the Maghrib. Between 2006 and 2010, Tunisia received a total of US\$69.28 million in aid from the United States. Only US\$15.69 million of these funds were set aside for the promotion of democracy and human rights. The remaining US\$53.59 million were earmarked for “*military and security*” assistance.⁹ Between 1987 and 2009, arms sales totaled US\$349 million and in 2010, the Obama administration asked Congress to approve US\$282 million for the supply of “*J2 HS-60F Multi-Mission Utility Helicopters*” to Tunisia.¹⁰

In 2009, however, the ambassador of the United States in Tunis, Robert F. Godec, informed the State Department in a cable disclosed by WikiLeaks that President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was aging; that his regime had become “*sclerotic*”; that there was no clear successor; that corruption in the inner circle was growing; and that the “*chorus of complaints is rising*”.¹¹ The Tunisians intensely disliked, even hated, the “*first lady Leila Trabelsi and her family*”.¹² “*Corruption... is the problem everyone knows about, but no one can publicly acknowledge*”, remarked Ambassador Godec.¹³ And he stressed that many Tunisians were frustrated with the lack of political freedoms and incensed about unemployment and regional inequalities. As a result, the risks to the regime’s stability in the long term

⁹Stephen McInerney, “Project on Middle East Democracy, 2010. The Federal Budget and Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2011: Democracy, Governance, and Human Rights in the Middle East”, Heinrich Böll Stiftung — North America, April 2010.

¹⁰Corey Pein, “Tunisia before the Riots: \$631 Million in US Military Aid”, *War is Business*, January 14, 2011. “Massive U.S. Military Aid to Tunisia despite human rights abuses”, *Asian Tribune*, World Institute for Asian Studies, Vol. 11, No. 463, 18/1/2011.

¹¹Friday, 17 July 2009, 16:19 SECRET SECTION 01 OF 05 TUNIS 000492 NOFORN — SIPDIS — DEPT FOR NEA AA/S FELTMAN, DAS HUDSON, AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE GRAY, AND NEA/MAG FROM AMBASSADOR EO 12958 DECL: 07/13/2029 — TAGS PREL, PGOV, ECON, KPAO, MASS, PHUM, TS — SUBJECT: TROUBLED TUNISIA: WHAT SHOULD WE DO? Classified By Ambassador Robert F. Godec For E.O. 12,958 Reasons 1.4 (B) And (D). Source: WikiLeaks. Elisabeth Dickson, “The First WikiLeaks Revolution?”, *Foreign Affairs*, January 13, 2011. Steve Coll, “Democratic Movements”, *The New Yorker*, January 31, 2011. ““First WikiLeaks Revolution”: Tunisia descends into anarchy as president flees after cables reveal country’s corruption”, *Daily Mail*, January 15, 2011.

¹²Friday, 17 July 2009, 16:19 SECRET SECTION 01 OF 05 TUNIS 000492 NOFORN — SIPDIS — DEPT FOR NEA AA/S FELTMAN, DAS HUDSON, AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE GRAY, AND NEA/MAG FROM AMBASSADOR EO 12958 DECL: 07/13/2029 — TAGS PREL, PGOV, ECON, KPAO, MASS, PHUM, TS — SUBJECT: TROUBLED TUNISIA: WHAT SHOULD WE DO? Classified By: Ambassador Robert F. Godec For E.O. 12,958 Reasons 1.4 (B) And (D). Source: WikiLeaks.

¹³*Ibid.*

were growing and extremism represented a continuous threat.¹⁴ President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who had taken power in 1987 through a coup backed by Italy's *Servizio per le Informazioni e la Sicurezza Militare* (SISMI), was already considerably weakened. He could not sustain his rule. He fled to Jiddah in Saudi Arabia, where he went into exile on January 14, 2011. But the protests continued.

The spread of the protests in Tunisia, which erupted when young Mohamed Bouazizi set fire to his own body on December 17, 2010, was not only being fanned by the lack of civil and political liberties. The neo-liberal reforms imposed in the 1990s by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the United States, the corruption, the government's rapaciousness—through which Ben Ali's clan enriched by brokering the privatizations and the import and export trade—, the high unemployment, the rising food prices because of the elimination of subsidies, and several other issues were also contributing to make the dictatorship increasingly unpopular. But the situation was still better than in other North African countries, such as Egypt and Libya.

Tunisia had around 10.4 million inhabitants, highly literate and urbanized, and in 2005 only 11.8% were living below the poverty line, according to the World Bank.¹⁵ But with a workforce of almost four million people, Tunisia had a very high unemployment rate of the order of 15–20% or more. Each year 140,000 young people entered the labor market, but only 60,000–65,000 jobs were created in metropolitan Tunis and the coastal regions.¹⁶ Unemployment was growing in the cities of its heartland, such as Sidi Bouzid, Gafsa and Bengierdane, where protests against the government were already occurring, expressing the social exclusion, which mainly affected the youth.

Under the autocratic rule of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (1987–2011), however, Tunisia remained a secular state, where women were fully emancipated and integrated in urban life, with a right to abortion since the promulgation of the *Code du Statut Personnel* (CSP) by President Habib Bourguiba (1957–1987).¹⁷ “*On women's rights, Tunisia is a model*”, wrote Ambassador Godec on July 17, 2009.¹⁸

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Tunisia Overview, The World Bank, accessed <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tunisia/overview>.

¹⁶Hibou (2011), p. XV, 189–190.

¹⁷Bradley (2012), p. 32–33.

¹⁸Friday, 17 July 2009, 16:19 SECRET SECTION 01 OF 05 TUNIS 000492 NOFORN — SIPDIS — DEPT FOR NEA AA/S FELTMAN, DAS HUDSON, AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE GRAY, AND NEA/MAG FROM AMBASSADOR EO 12958 DECL: 07/13/2029 — TAGS PREL, PGOV, ECON, KPAO, MASS, PHUM, TS — SUBJECT: TROUBLED TUNISIA: WHAT SHOULD WE DO? Classified By: Ambassador Robert F. Godec For E.O. 12,958 Reasons 1.4 (B) And (D). Source: WikiLeaks.

12.5 The Fall of the Dictator Ben Ali

According to the assessment of the journalist John R. Bradley, the revolt in Tunisia was spontaneous and lacked any ideological connotation.¹⁹ If there were any radicals (*bearded zealots*),²⁰ then they had little influence.²¹ But a psychological climate had been created by the programs of the National Endowment for Democracy, whose task, according to William Blum, was to do “*somewhat overtly*” what the CIA had done *covertly* for decades, which would hopefully eliminate the stigma associated with their covert activities.²² The NED, created by Congress in 1983, was being put to work in almost all countries of the Middle East. Its stated objective was to open up political space in countries under authoritarian rule, helping democrats and democratic processes in semi-authoritarian countries, supporting successful democracies, building up democracies after conflicts, and “*aiding democracy in the Muslim world*”.²³ Its efforts included support to journalists and the “*independent media*” in Jordan, Morocco, Yemen and Tunisia; programs to encourage electoral participation “*by political activists*”, accompanied by the monitoring and evaluation of elections, in Egypt, Lebanon and Kuwait; and activities to develop and train civil society organizations, providing opportunities for the construction of “*networks among political activists*” in such politically closed environments as Libya, Syria, Iran and Saudi Arabia.²⁴

President Barack Obama gave continuity to President Bush’s “*freedom agenda*”, and between 2002 and 2012, the MEPI received approximately US\$580 million for more than 680 projects in 18 countries and territories through its headquarters in Washington and regional offices in Tunis and Abu Dhabi, extending to all suburban and rural regions as well as to the tribal communities. These programs “*focused on political process strengthening, legal or institutional frameworks, elections management*”.²⁵

¹⁹Bradley (2012), p. 2.

²⁰Ibid., p. 2. The zealots were a patriotic, radical Jewish sect, which in 48 a.C., during the reign of Idumean Herod, until the fall of Jerusalem and Massada, in 70 A.D. and 73 A.D., deployed a terrorist campaign to encourage the insurgency, murdering Roman legionaries and Jewish collaborators with *sicarii* infiltrated in the cities, who stabbed their victims to death with the *sica* (curved dagger) hidden beneath their robes.

²¹Bradley (2012), p. 2.

²²William Blum, “Trojan Horse: The National Endowment for Democracy”, International Endowment for Democracy.

²³National Endowment for Democracy, “Strategy Document, January 2007.”

²⁴Stephen McInerney, “Project on Middle East Democracy, 2010. The Federal Budget and Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2011: Democracy, Governance, and Human Rights in the Middle East”, Heinrich Böll Stiftung — North America, April 2010.

²⁵U.S. Department of State, Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), April 19, 2012.

12.6 The Explosive Situation in Egypt and Throughout the Middle East

The uprising against Ben Ali came as no surprise to the United States and was probably expected.²⁶ Washington was alert to the situation in Tunisia and in the entire Middle East. When he promised Washington a “*tried-and-true strategy*” to fight terrorism in 2008, President Ben Ali said himself to David Welch, Assistant Secretary of State, that the situation in Egypt was “*explosive*” and that “*sooner or later*” the Muslim Brotherhood would take power in Cairo. He added that Yemen and Saudi Arabia were facing real problems and that the whole region was “*explosive*”.²⁷

The situation in Egypt was in fact volatile. In 2010, Egypt suffered through a severe liquidity crisis caused mainly by a decline in tourism and, consequently, enormous losses to trade, airlines etc. The revenues from the Suez Canal also decreased, particularly because of piracy in the Red Sea, which led companies to seek safer routes. And money transfers from Egyptians abroad had fallen as a result of the economic and financial crisis that was afflicting the United States and the European Union.

The privatization program promoted by President Hosni Mubarak turned corruption into a chronic problem, mainly in the ministries of Health, Agriculture, Oil, Finance and Antiquities.²⁸ Economic growth dropped from 4.6% to 2% in 2008.²⁹ Job opportunities hadn’t accompanied population growth for decades, a population that was set to hit around 78.08 million inhabitants in December 2010,³⁰ with 43.4% living in urban areas, around 20–25% below the poverty line, and a very high unemployment rate of 9.7% in a work force of 26.1 million people.

Meanwhile, some rural regions had excess labor, while others had shortages. The country was politically stagnant under the corrupt dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak (1981–2011). Although the economy had grown 5% since 2005, it didn’t manage to create jobs according to the needs of the population. The youth was seriously affected by unemployment. Approximately 90% of the unemployed were young people aged 30 or less. College graduates had to wait at least 5 years for a job opportunity in administration. And the neoliberal policies implemented by Mubarak exacerbated inequalities and impoverished millions of families.

These facts, in a context of extreme poverty, unemployment, inflation, rising food prices and the political resentment caused by the systematic repression, were apparently fundamental for the revolt’s outbreak, instigated by fundamentalist

²⁶Azadeh Shahshahani and Corinna Mullin, “The legacy of US intervention and the Tunisian revolution: promises and challenges one year on”, *Interface: a journal for and about social movements*, Volume 4 (1): 67, 101, May 2012.

²⁷Steve Coll, “Democratic Movements”, *The New Yorker*, January 31, 2011.

²⁸Elaasar (2008), p. 54–58.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 55.

³⁰Bank of Binary, accessed <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/egypt/population>.

Islamic sects, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, and foreign interests. Disenchantment was widespread, a rejection of the West and a nostalgic search for Islamic roots,³¹ while anti-Israeli sentiment was growing at an alarming rate. For the youth, the West, particularly the spiritual wilderness of the United States, was trying to impose its “immoral” values on the Islamic world.³²

Egypt had a long tradition of Islamic culture. In the mid-tenth century, the Fatimids conquered Tunisia, settled in Mahdia, and then occupied the Nile valley, building the city of Cairo in 969, where they transferred the seat of the Caliphate. The Fatimids were Shia and considered Ali ibn Abi Talib (598/600–661), husband of Fatimah al-Zahra, daughter of Muhammad and Khadija, to be the true successor of the Prophet. They spread his domain from the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, but they didn’t impose the *Isma’ili* doctrines on the Muslims in Egypt, whose majority lived peacefully with Christians and Jews, at least until the reign of the sixth Fatimid Caliph Abu ‘Ali Mansur Tāriq al-Ḥākim (996–1021), the 16th *Isma’ili imam*, who claimed he possessed divine qualities.³³ *Shari’ah* shaped the country’s legal system and was only abolished after the fall of king Fārūq al-Awwal (1906–1966) by the Free Officers Movement led by the colonels Muhammad Naguib (1901–1984) and Gamal Abdel Nasser (born in 1918, president from 1956 to 1970), who ended the dynasty of Muhammad Ali and established a secular republic in Egypt and Sudan.

The Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928 by the imam Sheikh Muhammad Hasan al-Banna (1906–1949) supported the coup, but opposed the secularization of the regime. After accusing it of planning his assassination, the Brotherhood was once again outlawed by President Nasser. Some of its members were executed, but the Muslim Brotherhood could always count on thousands of followers, including within the Armed Forces. In 1966, Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966), author of *Al-Adala al-Ijtima’iyya fi’l-Islam* (Social Justice in Islam) and *Fi Zilal al-Qur’an* (In the Shade of the *Qur’an*), an important scholar of the Salafist movement, was arrested, convicted and hanged, along with other members of the Muslim Brotherhood, under the accusation of plotting against the regime. Sayyid Qutb claimed that the era of the West had come to an end, advocated social justice and the *Jihad* as a way of fighting, said that Islam was the solution (*Al-Islam huwwa al-Hal*) and that only Islam offered hope to the world.³⁴

Certainly inspired by Sayyid Qutb’s ideas, Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Ahmed Showky Al-Islambouli planned and, together with other jihadists of *Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya*, assassinated president Muḥammad Anwar as-Sādāt (1970–1981) during a military parade on October 6, 1981, a date commemorating the attack on Israel that started the war of Yom Kippur (1973). Lieutenant Colonel Islambouli was immediately captured, tried and executed, along with three other conspirators,

³¹ Abdo (2000), p. 3–4.

³² Ibid., p. 131.

³³ Hourani (1991), p. 40–41. Wheatcroft (2003), p. 398–399, 445–446.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 398–399, 445–446.

on April 15, 1982. President Sadat was hated by *Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya*, whose spiritual leader was Sheik 'Umar Abd al-Rahman, known as the *Blind Sheik*,³⁵ and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and other groups tied to the Muslim Brotherhood, because he had signed the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt with prime minister Menachem Begin (1913–1992) on March 26, 1979, after the Camp David agreements (1978) negotiated with US president Jimmy Carter.

President Anwar Sadat's successor, Hosni Mubarak, maintained the same foreign policy and, on June 22, 1995, *al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya* and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, headed by the terrorist Ayman al-Zawahiri and with the participation of Showqi Al-Islambouli, the younger brother of Lieutenant Colonel Islambouli, tried to assassinate Mubarak *en route* to the International Airport of Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), where he would participate of a summit with the presidents of African countries. The *New York Times* reported that President Hosni Mubarak was lucky to escape, observing that he was a "*complicated figure*", a target of radical Islamists for maintaining a secular government and diplomatic relations with Israel, while conducting, at the same time, a "*corrupt and self-perpetuating military autocracy*" in its fifth decade of rule. He offered no hope of democracy or better life conditions for millions of "*desperately poor Egyptian peasants*".³⁶ In such circumstances, the *New York Times* editorial wrote, Islamic fundamentalism, "*the most potent revolutionary force in the modern Middle East*", was going to relentlessly exploit this vulnerability.³⁷

In fact, nearly 2 years after the attempt on Mubarak's life, on November 17, 1997, jihadists from *al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya* launched a devastating attack on the historic city of Luxor, the archaeological site of Deir el-Bahri, to the south of Cairo, killing 62 people, most of them tourists. The head and strategist of the Islamic Jihad was Abbud al-Zumar, a colonel of the military intelligence who had planned to assassinate all the leaders in the country, to capture the barracks of the State Security apparatus and the radio and phone stations, and to trigger an Islamic insurrection against the secular government. This plan failed and Abbud al-Zumar and other terrorists were arrested. Repression was ramped up even further under the authoritarian regime of Hosni Mubarak, but the conditions alluded to in the *New York Times* editorial of 1995, made him even more vulnerable, with millions of people in the countryside living in miserable situation and the short-term macroeconomic situation deteriorating rapidly.

³⁵Sheik 'Umar Abd al-Rahman was sentenced to life imprisonment in the United States for the attack against the WTC in 1993.

³⁶"Mr. Mubarak: Valuable and Vulnerable", *The New York Times*, July 4, 1995.

³⁷*Ibid.*

12.7 Mass Protests in Tahrir Square and the Fall of Mubarak

The successful revolt in Tunisia, which led to the resignation of President Ben Ali on January 14, sparked the popular uprising in Egypt, where, 11 days later, on January 25, 2011, thousands of people marched through the streets of Cairo and occupied Tahrir Square to protest against President Hosni Mubarak and his dictatorship. Simultaneously, thousands of other people took to the streets of Ismailiya, Alexandria and Suez. The following day, the protests took a more violent turn, with the police shooting rubber bullets and deploying water cannons to repress them. Approximately 90,000 Egyptian activists had been mobilized through Facebook and Twitter³⁸ for the Day of Fury, the uprising against the autocratic government of Hosni Mubarak, the corruption, the repression, the poverty, the unemployment and the social conditions in Egypt.³⁹ The objective and subjective conditions were obviously present, but the activists were the ones who lighted the fuse. And after 18 days of mass protests, on February 11, Vice-President Suleiman announced that Mubarak had renounced and relinquished power to the military. But the protests didn't stop for a long time. The military wanted to maintain the *status quo* by getting rid of Mubarak.

For several weeks, Washington remained silent about the upheavals in Tunisia and Egypt. President Barack Obama kept a low profile. And when Hillary Clinton went to Tunis 2 months after the fall of the dictator, there were protests against her visit. But when the uprising began in Cairo, she stated that “*our assessment is that the Egyptian government is stable and is looking for ways to respond to the legitimate needs and interests of the Egyptian people*”. This assessment that Mubarak's regime was stable demonstrates the hypocrisy and double standards of US policy *vis-à-vis* Egypt, whose armed forces had been receiving more than US \$1.3 billion in aid annually since the Egypt–Israel Peace Treaty (1979), in addition to the most modern military equipment.⁴⁰

On December 30, 2008, Margaret Scobey, the American ambassador in Cairo, informed that the groups opposing Hosni Mubarak's regime had drafted a “*regime change*” plan, i.e., a plan to overthrow him before the elections scheduled for September 2011.⁴¹ According to this same cable disclosed by WikiLeaks and published by the London newspaper the *Telegraph*, a young Egyptian dissident, whose name was kept secret, counted on the help of the American Embassy to travel and participate in the Alliance of Youth Movements in New York, sponsored

³⁸Maggie Michael, “Mubarak Faces Egypt Protests on ‘Day of Rage’”, *Huffingtonpost.com*, 25/5/2011.

³⁹Yolande Knell, “Egypt's revolution — 18 days in Tahrir Square”, *BBC News Cairo*, January 25, 2012.

⁴⁰Department of State — Egypt, accessed <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5309.htm>.

⁴¹Tim Ross, Matthew Moore and Steven Swinford, “Egypt protests: America's secret backing for rebel leaders behind uprising!”, *The Telegraph*, January 28, 2011.

by the Department of State. When he returned to Egypt, this activist reported to diplomats that opposition groups had articulated a plan to overthrow President Mubarak and install a democratic government in 2011.⁴² But Ambassador Margaret Scobey questioned if the plan was realistic and if it could actually work.⁴³

Ahmed Maher, one of the founders and the main strategist of the April 6 Youth Movement, and Dalia Ziada made contact with the OTPOR militants in Serbia, and the [International Center on Nonviolent Conflict](#), set up to train activists and agitators, infiltrated in Cairo in order to conduct workshops and distribute the writings of Professor Gene Sharp, such as his “198 Methods of Nonviolent Action”, a list of tactics that ranged from hunger strikes to public protests and the disclosure of the identity of secret agents.⁴⁴ Cables published by WikiLeaks also revealed that professor Gene Sharp’s book *From Dictatorship to Democracy* had been distributed in Arabic to the protestors of Tahrir Square, and that some of these protesters had attended courses in the Center for Applied Non Violent Action and Strategies (CANVAS) together with young dissidents from Syria and Burma.⁴⁵ The cables show that even members of the Muslim Brotherhood were reading *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, in Arabic and on the internet.⁴⁶

Since the approval by Congress of the FY2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 108-447),⁴⁷ the United States had started funding NGOs like Freedom Foundation and others in Egypt through USAID, assisted by a council of activists, according to the Annual Program Statement (APS), without consulting the Hosni Mubarak government. The policies and attitudes of the American government were dubious, confusing and, at the same time, embarrassing, which revealed the duplicity and hesitation regarding what could happen in Egypt, a strategically of the United States in the Middle East.⁴⁸ It was clear that the fall of Hosni Mubarak represented a risk for the United States and Israel. The possibility that the Muslim Brotherhood, the vanguard of Sunni Islam and the only politically organized force in Egypt, would win the elections and take over government, could not be ruled out,

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Sheryl Gay Stolberg, “Shy U.S. Intellectual Created Playbook Used in a Revolution”, *The New York Times*, February 16, 2011.

⁴⁵“Q&A: Gene Sharp — Al Jazeera talks with the quiet but influential scholar of non-violent struggle”, *Al Jazeera*, December 6, 2011. “Gene Sharp — Der Demokrat”, *Die Zeit Online*. Tina Rosenberg, “Revolution — What Egypt Learned from the Students who Overthrew Milosevic”, *Foreign Policy Magazine*, February 16, 2011.

⁴⁶Sheryl Gay Stolberg, “Shy U.S. Intellectual Created Playbook Used in a Revolution”, *The New York Times*, February 16, 2011.

⁴⁷PUBLIC LAW 108-447-DEC. 8, 2004 118 STAT. 2809, Public Law 108-447 — 108th Congress — An Act — Making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year the United States of America in Congress assembled.

⁴⁸David E. Sanger, “As Mubarak Digs In, U.S. Policy in Egypt Is Complicated”, *The New York Times*, February 5, 2011.

which would increase the chances of Muslim fundamentalists prevailing, in some way or another, in other Arab countries.

With the exception of Israel, a secular, hybrid democracy with a strong religious influence, all countries in the Middle East met the objective and subjective domestic conditions for uprisings and conspiracies by dissidents, many of whom living in exile, mainly in Europe. None of the Arab countries, despite their historical, social and political differences and distinct state structures and institutions, had ever had the democratic tradition or awareness that developed in the West. For the Arabs who revolted in North Africa and the Middle East, democracy meant more job opportunities, economic and social progress and political participation. The historical, political and cultural roots were not the same as those that lay at the heart of the development of democracy in Europe and the Americas.

After the First World War (1914–1918), Great Britain and France dismembered the Ottoman Empire (Turkey), divided the Middle East based on the Sykes-Picot Agreement,⁴⁹ reshaped the region, created nation states where the social organization had been predominantly tribal and partly nomadic, outlined borders in the desert sands, and appointed rulers, kings and caliphs.⁵⁰ The lines drawn by François Georges-Picot and Sir Mark Sykes ran from Acre (Akko), in the Bay of Haifa on the Mediterranean coast, to Kirkuk, near the Persian border, and the new countries harbored a mosaic of different ethnic groups, cultures, religions, sects and sub-sects, clans and tribes, most of them with nomadic life styles.

Iraq was artificially created in Mesopotamia by Great Britain, whose troops had advanced from Basra to Baghdad and then to Mosul, where it believed oil could be found.⁵¹ 75% of Iraq's population in 1920 lived in tribes, for a significant part Bedouins.⁵² Britain also took control of Palestine, in the form of a mandate, while France got Syria and Lebanon as a protectorate. In addition, both powers took over the German colonies in Africa.

The amalgam of ethnic groups, however, hindered the creation of a national identity that superseded the clan, the tribal spirit and family solidarity. As already noted by T. E. Lawrence, who organized the revolt against the Ottoman Empire and awakened Arab nationalism in the First World War, the people of the Middle East were dogmatic and despised doubt, perceiving no shades of gray, but only primary colors, black and white. In their deepest instincts and extremes, "*they knew only truth and untruth, belief and unbelief*".⁵³ They were as unstable as the waters.⁵⁴

⁴⁹The Sykes-Picot Agreement was negotiated in secret, in May 1916, by the diplomats François Georges-Picot, from France, and Sir Mark Sykes, from Great Britain, with the assent of Russia. BBC. The Sykes-Picot Agreement, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/world/2001/israel_and_palestinians/key_maps/7.stm. Accessed 24.03.2015.

⁵⁰Fromkin (1989), p. 503.

⁵¹Barr (2011), p. 65–66.

⁵²Fromkin (1989), p. 450.

⁵³Lawrence (1962), p. 36–37.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 36.

Chapter 13

The Uprising in Libya

13.1 Start of Armed Protests in Benghazi

At the same time as the turmoil in Egypt, between January 13 and 16, 2011, violent protests stirred against the regime of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. Public buildings and police barracks were attacked in al-Bayda, Darnah and Benghazi, cities in Cyrenaica, an eastern region of Libya on the Mediterranean coast. 50 soldiers were executed, some decapitated, others hanged, along with police officers, and CNN showed the Danish cartoons against Gaddafi as sign of the *day of rage*.¹

Amer Saad, one of the insurgents, revealed to the *al-Jazeera* TV network that they had taken control of the military base in al Bayda right at the beginning of the protests, and that they had executed 50 African mercenaries and 2 Libyan conspirators (Gaddafi supporters). In Darnah, conspirators had also been executed, locked up in cells of the police station and then set on fire to be burnt alive.² These were no peaceful demonstrations. Nor were those protesting unarmed, since they captured an air base and a police station. It was the beginning of a *hot revolutionary war*. And just as in Tunisia and Egypt, the rising food prices fostered the discontent, aggravated the existing social and political conditions and, no doubt edged on by foreign activists and interests, triggered the movement to overthrow the government of Muammar Gaddafi, who had been in power for 42 years. The situation in Libya, however, was even more complex than in Tunisia and Egypt.

¹“Raucous supporters rally around Libyan leader after day of violence”, *CNN*, February 17, 2011.

²Ian Black and Owen Bowcott, “Libya protests: massacres reported as Gaddafi imposes news blackout”, *The Guardian*, February 18, 2011. Prashad (2012), p. 149.

13.2 The Green Book and the Third Universal Theory

Muammar Gaddafi had taken power in 1969. He overthrew king Idris of the Senussi (*tarikha*) sect, founded in the nineteenth century in Mecca by the Berber Sayyid Muhammad ibn Ali as-Senussi (1787–1859) of the Walad Sidi Abdalla e Sharif tribe, i.e., descendants of Fatimah, daughter of the prophet Muhammad. During the monarchy, the State counted on the support of tribal leaders, who played the role of intermediaries between king Idris and the population, and who redistributed the oil revenues in the form of the *bay'ah*, an obligation established by the *Qur'an*³ and also obeyed by Saudi Arabia and other tribal monarchies.

With the fall of the monarchy in 1969, Gaddafi sought to impose a “direct democracy” on Libya, with the election of “popular congresses” so the people could take control of the “governing machine.” This was the Third Universal Theory outlined in his *Green Book*, offering an alternative to the idea of democracy, the state of the masses (*Jamabirya*) through the organization of the community’s power without the influence of tribes and religions.⁴ The former foreign minister of Russia, Yevgeny Primakov, told *Der Spiegel* that Gaddafi tried to gain the support of Gamal Abdel Nasser, then president of Egypt, so he could obtain the atomic bomb from the Soviet Union if he gave it a lot of money, adding that “*Gaddafi had the mentality of a Bedouin.*”⁵

13.3 Gaddafi’s Attempt to Change the Country’s Tribal Structure

In contrast to Tunisia and Egypt, Libya had not yet consolidated as a nation-state. It was the most tribal among the Arab countries, a sort of semi-tribal state. Its rural structure was based on more than 140 very segmented tribes and nomadic or semi-nomadic clans, for which blood and kinship was the primary unifying factor. They provided indemnity, social fines and collective vengeance to its members. The chiefs of the tribes, clans and families constituted the social elite, the source of power, and all authority derived from them.

At first, Gaddafi tried to reduce the influence of the tribes. They seemed to be an anachronism to him, as they hindered the modernization of the country and it was difficult to integrate or unify them in institutions at a national level. He considered tribalism “*harmful*” to the extent that tribal obedience weakened national loyalty and siphoned authority away from the government.⁶ He divided Libya into zones

³Haimazadeh (2011), p. 108.

⁴Qaddafi (1983), p. 25–38. Fromkin (1989), p. 110.

⁵Matthias Schepp and Bernhard Zand, “What Will Happen After Gadhafi?”, *Der Spiegel*, July 28, 2011.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 85. *Commentary on the Green Book*, vol. I, p. 238–243.

that crossed the tribal borders, separating them and merging them with others in a common zone so as to reduce the power of traditional institutions and local kinship. But Gaddafi was unable to overcome the power of the tribes and had to subsequently negotiate alliances with them and manipulate their loyalty so they would support the dictatorship. Libya continued to be a rentier State, with 92% of its revenue coming from oil.⁷

Gaddafi's tribe—Ghadafa (*Qadhadhfah*)—was made up of Bedouins⁸ of Berber-Arab origin. It joined forces with the Sa'adi confederation, led by the Bara'as (the tribe of Gaddafi's wife, Farkash al-Haddad al-Bara'as). The conflicts between other tribes—the Zawiya and Toubou tribes—and the government forces began between 2006 and 2008 in the Kufra oasis in the southeast of Libya, 590 miles to the south of Benghazi, near the border with Egypt, Sudan and Chad. Benghazi, where the rebellion erupted in 2011, is located in the ancient Roman and traditionally separatist province of Cyrenaica (Pentapolis), where around 80% of Libya's oil reserves, calculated at 43.1 billion (2007 est.), equivalent to 1.7% of world reserves, could be found in Barga (*Marsa al-Brega*) in the Sirte basin east to the Gulf of Sidra. These reserves with oil of the finest quality—“sweet and light”—were of great geopolitical importance due to the proximity of European refineries on the other side of the Mediterranean. As soon as the rebellion started, insurgents tried to occupy the oil installations, advised by British and French special forces. Bloody battles were fought around these facilities.

In addition to its economic importance, Cyrenaica has always been a challenge to Gaddafi. On March 1, 1949, king Sayyid Muhammad Idris bin Muhammad al-Mahdi as-Senussi (1889–1983) proclaimed the independence of Cyrenaica with the support of Great Britain, after the UN had recognized the independence of Libya. The emirate ended when Gaddafi took power in Tripoli, but the Senussi-Sufi influence lingered. Sufism is an ascetic and purifying Muslim sect with a dynastic and hierarchical character, and Benghazi, the second largest city of the country, never accepted Tripolitania's domain.

Misurata, the first city in Tripolitania in the west of Libya, was inhabited by the Warfallah tribes, the largest tribal group divided into 52 sub-tribes, with about one million members, equivalent to approximately 16% of the country's population (compared with 26–27% in Cyrenaica).⁹ These tribes were taken to Libya in the eleventh century by the Fatimids for political reasons. They were allied with the Az-Zintan tribe, which lived in the Nafusa mountains in the northwest of Libya, between the Berber cities of Jahdo, Yefren and Kabaw. They also rebelled and supported the armed struggle against the Gaddafi regime, as did the Tuareg, Warfallah and Hasawna tribes, which defected to the opposition in February 2011.

⁷Haimazadeh (2011), p. 105.

⁸The term Bedouin comes from the Arabic *-b diyah*—and means one who lives in the desert.

⁹Sensini (2011), p. 125. About Libya's ethnic composition: http://julius-hensel.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/libya_ethnic_1974.jpg. Accessed 31.03.2015. Also: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fessan#/media/File:Historische_Provinzen_Libyens.png. Accessed 05.05.2015.

Libya had a population of approximately 6.5 million, with 78% living in urban areas. The unemployment rate was about 30% and a third of the population lived below the poverty line, although the country had a GDP of US\$37.97 billion (2011 est.) and a *per capita* income of US\$14,100 (2010 est.).¹⁰ The Tuareg and Toubou of the Fezzan region were Bedouins, but the Sanusi (*zawaayaa*)—around 500,000—, who lived in the northern Sahara in eastern Libya, formed the largest group of nomads, and their influence was more pronounced in Cyrenaica.¹¹ The education level was lower than in Tunisia and despite the Italian occupation (1910–1947), the influence of European culture was very modest. About 20% of Libya's population remained illiterate, and the poorest had no adequate housing. Libya imported about 75% of its food, and oil exports accounted for about 95% of its trade revenue and 80% of government revenue. But at heart of the discontent lay, *inter alia*, the lack of job opportunities, even though GDP had grown 16.6% in 2010.

13.4 Bin Ladin Supported the Uprising in Libya

Right off the bat, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (*Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyyah al-Muqatilah -bi-Libya*) was one of the main actors in the uprising. It was linked to al-Qa'ida and commanded by Abu Yahya al-Libi, whose *jihadists* had revolted against the Gaddafi regime in 1990, in the cities of Benghazi and Darnah, where they had gathered after returning from the *Jihad* against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Many radical Muslims, Salafists exiled by Gaddafi, entered Libya through the borders of Mali, Egypt and other countries. About 350 former terrorists who were pardoned and released by the Gaddafi regime were already in Benghazi since 2009, and this number rose to 850 when the revolt broke out.¹²

By providing financial resources, weapons and all sorts of logistical assistance to the rebels, the United States and other NATO countries sponsored terrorist organizations, such as the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group,¹³ whose strategic objective was to rebuild the Islamic Caliphate and restore *Shari'ah* as in the times of the Prophet. The former *mujahidin* who had fought U.S. forces in Afghanistan were leading the rebels in Libya. Abdel-Hakim al-Hasidi, one of the insurgent leaders and head of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, admitted to the Italian daily *Il Sole 24 Ore* that he had recruited around 25 *jihadists* in Darnah to fight against U.S. troops in Iraq, and that some of them were now in the front lines at Adjabiya, in northeastern

¹⁰<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ly.html>

¹¹Source: Bethany World Prayer Center, <http://www.joshuaproject.net/people-profile.php?peo3=14,752&rog3=LY>.

¹²Sensini (2011), p. 99.

¹³Michel Chossudovsky, "Our Man in Tripoli: US-NATO Sponsored Islamic Terrorists Integrated into Libya's Pro-Democracy Opposition", Globalresearch.ca, April 1, 2011.

Libya, fighting against the forces of Gaddafi. According to him, the members of *al-Qa'ida* were “good Muslims”.¹⁴ The president of the National Transition Council, Mustafa Abdel-Jalil, said that Libya would be Islamic, based on *Shari'ah*, and that the laws of Gaddafi's regime forbidding polygamy and permitting divorce would be repealed.¹⁵

Documents found in Abbottabad (Pakistan) and made public by West Point's Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) revealed that Usamah bin Ladin was delighted with the uprising in Libya and Syria. In a letter written to Sheikh Mahmud ('Atiyya) 1 month prior to his assassination by a commando of the U.S. Navy SEALs and the CIA's Special Operations Group (SOG) on May 2, 2011, he described the uprisings in the Arab countries as the most “important point in our modern history”, the point at which nations stood against tyrants and he prayed to Allah that this would revive “the dignity of religion and his glory”.¹⁶ He also stated that “what is being witnessed (وإن ما نشهده في هذه الأيام) in these days of consecutive revolutions is a great and glorious event,” that the most likely result, if history was any guide, would be the involvement of the majority of the Muslim world, and that thanks to Allah, things were decisively moving toward Muslims removing America's yoke, which is why Secretary of State (Hillary Clinton) declared during her visit to Yemen on April 26, 2011: “We worry that the region will fall into the hands of the armed Islamists.”¹⁷

Bin Ladin's letter was written during the war in Libya, when NATO was helping the *jihadists* trained in Afghanistan and linked to *al-Qa'ida*, who organized groups with financial support from Qatar and Saudi Arabia and weapons from France to fight against the regime of Muammar Gaddafi. According to information released by CNN, *al-Qa'ida*'s leader Ayman al-Zawahiri sent veteran *jihadists* to Libya in early 2011 in order to establish a base of operations there.¹⁸ And in a message of

¹⁴Praveen Swami, Nick Squires and Duncan Gardham, “Libyan rebel commander admits his fighters have al-Qaeda links”, *The Telegraph*, March 25, 2011. Eli Lak, “Freelance jihadists join Libyan rebels. Ex-al Qaeda member speaks out”, *The Washington Times*, March 29, 2011. Charles Levinson, “Ex-Mujahedeen Help Lead Libyan Rebels”, *The Wall Street Journal*, Middle East News, April 2, 2011.

¹⁵“Jalil: Ora la Libia sarà islamica E Al Qaeda già esulta. Il leader del Cnt parla a Bengasi: ‘Siamo un paese musulmano, niente divorzio, sì a banche islamiche’. Poi chiede ‘tolleranza’”, *Libero Cotidiano*, 15/4/2012. Wil Longbottom, “Libya's new ‘leader’ says Sharia law will be used as basis to guide country after fall of Gaddafi regime”, *Daily Mail*, September 13, 2011. Dugald McConnell and Brian Todd, “Libyan leader's embrace of Sharia raises eyebrows”, *CNN*, October 26, 2011.

¹⁶Don Rassler, Gabriel Koehler-Derrick, Liam Collins, Muhammad al-Obaidi and Nelly Lahoud, “Letters from Abbottabad: Bin Ladin Sidelined?”, Harmony Program, The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, May 3, 2012.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, “Source: Ayman al-Zawahiri — Al Qaeda leader sends veteran jihadists to establish presence in Libya”, *CNN*, December 29, 2011. Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, “In bid to thwart al Qaeda, Libya frees three leaders of jihadist group”, *CNN*, March 23, 2010.

March 28, 2011, found in Abbottabad, bin Ladin himself wrote that he could not forget the response of his “*Libyan brothers*” and that the commander of the eastern front (Darnah) had informed that “*new brothers*” had joined them in the last week, following a group of 30 *jihaddists*, and that others also wanted to go to Libya. “*We ask Allah to empower our brothers to bring them and train them in Tabsa (Algeria).*”¹⁹

The diplomat John Christopher Stevens, as *Chargé d’Affaires* of the United States in Tripoli, visited Darnah (Derna) in Cyrenaica on February of 2008. This city was considered to be the *wellspring* of a large number of “*suicide bombers (invariably described as ‘martyrs’)*” and *mujahidin* who went to Iraq to fight the United States and who were frustrated because they hadn’t been able to overthrow Gaddafi.²⁰ He reported to the Department of State that a “*large number*” of Darnah’s inhabitants was unhappy with the growing religious atmosphere that was taking over the city since 1980, and that his interlocutor attributed this fact to “*unnatural foreign influences*” on the religious practices of the city, since a large number of Libyans who had fought and were subjected to “*religious and ideological training*” in Afghanistan and the West Bank in the late 1970s, had returned in the 1990s to this region in the east of Libya, which security services have struggled to control since the Ottoman Empire.²¹

The return of these fighters, the interlocutor told the diplomat John Christopher Stevens, was not “*coincidental*”, but deliberate, a “*coordinated campaign to propagate more conservative iterations of Islam*”, in part to lay the foundations for a possible overthrow of the regime of Muammar Gaddafi, who was hated by conservative Muslims and by the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (*Al-Jama’a al-Islamiyyah al-Muqatilah bi-Libya*).²²

¹⁹Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, “Letters from Abbottabad: Bin Ladin Sidelined?”, 9/4/(1432 H), corresponding to 28 March (2011), This is the message from al-Nasayib: (the brothers in Algeria), accessed <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/letters-from-abbottabad-bin-ladin-sidelined>.

²⁰DIE HARD IN DERNA — Ref ID: 08TRIPOLI430 — Date: 6/2/2008 16:59 — Origin: Embassy Tripoli — Classification: CONFIDENTIAL/NOFORN — Destination: 08TRIP-OLI120 — Header: VZCZCXRO911900 RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHROVDE RUEHTRO #0430/01 1541659ZNY CCCCC ZZHO P 021659Z JUN 08FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLITO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3484INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVERUEAIIA/CIA WASHDCRUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DCRHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DCRHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DCRUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0484RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0806RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 0022RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI 3989. Tags: PGOV, PREL, KISL, PTER, PHUM, LY, IZ CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 04 TRIPOLI 000430 NOFORN SIPDIS DEPT FOR NEA/MAG, S/CT E.O. 12,958: DECL: 5/27/2018 TAGS: PGOV, PREL, KISL, PTER, PHUM, LY, IZ SUBJECT: DIE HARD IN DERNA REF: TRIPOLI 120 TRIPOLI 00000430 001.2 OF 004 CLASSIFIED BY: Chris Stevens, CDA, U.S. Embassy — Tripoli, Dept of State. REASON: 1.4 (b), (d) Passed to the Telegraph by WikiLeaks — 9:36 PM GMT 31 Jan 2011.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

13.5 The Contribution of Libyan Fighters to the Jihad

The cities of Benghazi and Darnah in Cyrenaica have always been the center of radical, Salafist Islam in Libya. In September 2007, US soldiers invaded a desert camp near the town of Sinjar in northwest Iraq in the search for insurgents. There they found more than 700 documents pointing to the origins of the al-Qa'ida combatants who were fighting against coalition forces. The documents were thoroughly analyzed by Army Colonel Joseph Felter, a researcher at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, and Brian Fishman, a counter-terrorism specialist at the New America Foundation and the Combating Terrorism Center of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. They revealed that approximately 590 *jihadists* had entered Iraq and that most of them—239, i.e., approximately 41%—came from Saudi Arabia.²³ But with only 6 million inhabitants, less than a quarter of Saudi Arabia's population (approximately 20 million), Libya was runner up in the supply of combatants—18.8% (112 soldiers), followed by Syria, Yemen and Algeria.²⁴ The city of Darnah alone, with just 80,000 inhabitants, sent 52 *jihadists* to Iraq, more than any other city, including Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, which had a population of four million. Libya's *per capita* contribution to the *Jihad* in Iraq was higher than that of any other country.²⁵

The cities of Benghazi and Darnah were the *vagina gentium* of the Libyans participating in the *Jihad* in Iraq. And when they returned to Libya, they began to incite and lead the uprising against the Gaddafi regime, disenchanted with the inability of the inhabitants of these cities to rise up themselves. Abu Laith al-Libi restated the importance of the alliance with al-Qa'ida in Benghazi and Darnah, saying that “*Thanks to Allah, we are raising the banner of the Jihad against this apostate regime, under which the leadership of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, the elite of its sons and commanders, has sacrificed its blood in the mountains of Darnah, the streets of Benghazi, the surroundings of Tripoli, the desert of Sabha and the sands of the beach.*”²⁶ Abu Yahya al-Libi was the commander of the *jihadists* of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (*Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyyah*

²³Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, “The Enemies of Our Enemy”, *Foreign Policy Magazine*, March 30, 2011. Webster G. Tarpley, “The CIA's Libya Rebels: The Same Terrorists who Killed US, NATO Troops in Iraq — 2007 West Point Study Shows Benghazi-Darnah-Tobruk Area was a World Leader in Al Qaeda Suicide Bomber Recruitment”, Washington DC, March 24, 2011.

²⁴Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, “The Enemies of Our Enemy”, *Foreign Policy Magazine*, March 30, 2011.

²⁵Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, “Al Qa'ida's Foreign Fighter in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records”, West Point, NY, Harmony Project, Combating Terrorism Center, Department of Social Sciences, US Military Academy, December 2007. Also: West Point Study. US Military Academy, December, S. 9. In: <http://tarpley.net/docs/CTCForeignFighter.19.Dec07.pdf>. Accessed 05.05.2015.

²⁶Webster G. Tarpley, “The CIA's Libya Rebels: The Same Terrorists who Killed US, NATO Troops in Iraq — 2007 West Point Study Shows Benghazi-Darnah-Tobruk Area was a World Leader in Al Qaeda Suicide Bomber Recruitment”, Washington DC, March 24, 2011.

al-Muqatilah bi-Libya), which had revolted against the regime between 1995 and 1998. Benghazi and Darnah had been the centers of the rebellion. He was referring to this low intensity civil war that took place in Cyrenaica, in which Gaddafi's Revolutionary Guard Corps (*Liwa Haris al-Jamahiriyah*) crushed the Salafists. Abu Yahya al-Libi fled to Afghanistan, where he was arrested by ISAF in 2002, but he managed to escape from Bagram prison.

13.6 Controversies, Negotiations and Double-Crossing Between Gaddafi's Supporters and Opponents

According to the West Point Report, there was some controversy in 2007 about the unification of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group with al-Qa'ida and Abu Yahya al-Libi's apparent decision to prioritize logistics support to the Islamic State of Iraq. Some militants preferred to fight against the regime in Libya than to fight in Iraq. The authors of the West Point Report suggested that it could be possible to exacerbate the differences between the leaders of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, who wanted to fight against Gaddafi, and al-Qa'ida's traditional Egyptian-Saudi power base.

On April 9, 2008, *Al Jazeera* reported that Muammar Gaddafi had freed more than 90 militants of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, which had joined al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghrib (AQIM), an organization of *jihaddists* in northwest and sub-Saharan Africa, formerly known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat. With the liberation of 214 such terrorists on March 23, 2010, Gaddafi proceeded with his project to rehabilitate radical Islamists, especially those of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group.²⁷

The negotiations were brokered by Noman Benotman, a former leader of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, with Saif Gaddafi, who took on the risk of initiating the rehabilitation and re-socialization program of Islamic extremists in Libya. MI6 seemingly co-opted Noman Benotman during the period of close cooperation with Gaddafi's intelligence service—*Mukhabarat el-Jamahiriyah*—led by Moussa Koussa. Once released, Benotman became a Senior (Strategic Communications) Analyst for the Quilliam Foundation, a think-tank created by prime minister Tony Blair to monitor terrorist activities at the service of MI6 and MI5.

Moussa Koussa, a close ally of Gaddafi, was also co-opted by MI6. He was the key player in the secret negotiations with Sir Mark Allen, deputy head of MI6, and Steve Kappes, of the CIA, at the Travellers Club in Pall Mall, the favorite spy haven

²⁷“Combating Terrorism in Libya through Dialogue and Reintegration”, ICPVTR Visit to Libya, March 2010. International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Delegation: Professor Rohan Gunaratna, Head, ICPVTR; Dr. Ami Angell, Visiting Research Fellow, ICPVTR; Ms. Jolene Jerard, Associate Research Fellow, ICPVTR.

in London. These negotiations sought to convince Gaddafi to abandon his nuclear and weapons of mass destruction program. On March 28, 2011, Moussa Koussa defected from the Gaddafi regime and crossed the border at Ras Silesian by car to Tunisia, where he made contact with British authorities. He then boarded a Swiss private jet at Djerba airport and flew to London.

13.7 Islamic Radicalism and Opposition in Cyrenaica

Despite Saif Gaddafi's expectations regarding the rehabilitation program, the freed *jihadists* did not turn against al-Qa'ida. To the contrary, they joined forces with al-Qa'ida and tried to encourage the uprising against the regime in Libya.²⁸ The *Wall Street Journal* named three former *mujahidin* who, after landing at Darnah, started training recruits and preventing the infiltration by Gaddafi supporters.²⁹ One of them was Sufyan bin Qumu, a veteran of the Libyan Army who had worked for bin Ladin in Sudan and later for al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan.³⁰ In April 2011, he was training rebels recruited to the east of the port city of Darnah. He had been taken prisoner in Afghanistan and spent 6 years in the concentration camp in Guantánamo, until he was handed over (*extraordinary rendition*) to the Libyan government. The other two were Salah al-Barrani, a *mujahid* veteran, and Abdel Hakim al-Hasady, an Islamic preacher who had spent 5 years teaching in Afghanistan, where he was captured by American troops; he also took it upon himself to train and mobilize around 300 rebels in Darnah.³¹ His commander in Afghanistan was Salah al-Barrani, a veteran *Mujahid* who joined the Libyan Islamic Fighting group when he returned to Libya. In an interview with the Italian newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore*, Abdel Hakim al-Hasady himself admitted that he had recruited 25 *jihadists* from Darnah to fight U.S. troops in Iraq, and that some of them were now on the front lines in Adjabiya, 93 miles to the south of Benghazi.³²

The President of Chad, Idriss Deby Itno, declared that he was "*certain that AQIM [al-Qa'ida in the Maghrib] took an active part in the uprising*" against Gaddafi and that the al-Qa'ida soldiers were pillaging arsenals to acquire weapons, including ground-to-air missiles (SAM 7), which were smuggled to their sanctuaries in Ténéré (Tiniri), an extremely arid region in southern Sahara. And in his

²⁸Ian Birrell, "MI6 role in Libyan rebels' rendition 'helped to strengthen al-Qaida'. Secret documents reveal British intelligence concerns and raise damaging questions about UK's targeting of Gaddafi opponents", *The Guardian*, October 24, 2011.

²⁹Charles Levinson, "Ex-Mujahedeen Help Lead Libyan Rebels", *The Wall Street Journal*, Middle East News, April 2, 2011.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹*Ibid.*

³²Praveen Swami, Nick Squires and Duncan Gardham, "Libyan rebel commander admits his fighters have al-Qaeda links. Abdel-Hakim al-Hasidi, the Libyan rebel leader, has said jihadists who fought against allied troops in Iraq are on the front", *The Telegraph*, March 25, 2011.

opinion, this fact would have “*heavy consequences for the stability of the region and the spread of terrorism in Europe, the Mediterranean and the rest of Africa*”. In turn, Mustafa al-Gherryani, spokesman of the rebels in Benghazi, declared that arms shipments were arriving from neighboring countries and that they were paid for by the United States.³³ The weapons were shipped with Washington’s knowledge by the Egyptian army on Libya’s border³⁴ and delivered to the *mujahidin* of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and the *jihadists* of al-Qa’ida in the Maghrib (AQIM).³⁵

Questioned by Senator James Inhofe about the existence of “*several reports about the presence of al-Qaeda among the rebels*”, who the United States and NATO were assisting for more than a week, Admiral James Stavridis, supreme commander of NATO in Europe, revealed in his testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 28, 2011, that US intelligence services had noted “*flickers of al Qaeda and Hezbollah*” among the rebel groups, even if the opposition leaders seemed to be responsible.³⁶ The British government considered this information “*very alarming*.”³⁷ “*We are examining very closely the content, composition, the personalities, who are the leaders of these opposition forces*”, added Admiral James Stavridis.³⁸

Since the uprising began in Benghazi, however, news agencies and television networks repeatedly reported that dictator Muammar Gaddafi wanted to massacre the rebels, who were portrayed as civilians who rose up against the regime, despite the video clips featuring heavily armed and bearded men shouting *Allahu Akhbar* (Allah is great). The western media applied the lesson of Joseph Goebbels (1897–1945), the Nazi Minister of Information and Propaganda, who said: “*If you tell a lie often enough, people will eventually come to believe it*” (*Eine Lüge muss nur oft genug wiederholt werden. Dann wird sie geglaubt*). And that lesson served the CIA and other intelligence services in the implementation of their psy-ops operations to brain-wash and convince the people of something that might not necessarily be true.

³³Katerina Nikolas, “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghrib pillaging weapons from Libya”, *Hellium News*, March 29, 2011. “‘Al-Qaeda snatched missiles’ in Libya”, [Neus.com.au](http://neus.com.au), AFP, March 26, 2011.

³⁴Charles Levinson and Matthew Rosenberg, “Egypt Said to Arm Libya Rebels”, *The Wall Street Journal*, Middle East News, March 17, 2011. “Egypt arming Libya rebels, Wall Street Journal reports”, March 18, 2011.

³⁵Peter Dale Scott, “Who are the Libyan Freedom Fighters and Their Patrons?”, *Global Research, The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 9, Issue 13, No. 3, March 28, 2011.

³⁶Jennifer Rizzo, “‘Flickers’ of al Qaeda in Libyan opposition, U.S. NATO leader says”, *CNN*, March 29, 2011. “Libya and Middle East unrest”, *The Guardian*, March 30, 2011.

³⁷Nick Allen, “Libya: Former Guantánamo detainee is training rebels — A former detainee at Guantánamo Bay has taken a leading role in the military opposition to Col Muammar Gaddafi, it has emerged, alongside at least one other former Afghan Mujahideen fighter”, *The Telegraph*, April 3, 2011.

³⁸“Rebels Only Show ‘Flickers’ of Al Qaeda”, *Reuters*, March 29, 2011. York (2011). “Are Libyan rebels an al-Qaeda stalking horse?!” *BBC News*, March 31, 2011.

When he was scheming with Joseph Stalin, leader of the Soviet Union, to conceal their operations against Nazi Germany during the Second World War, the notable British statesman Winston Churchill stressed that “*In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies*”.³⁹ The MI6—Secret Intelligence Service (SIS)—had an Information Operations (I/Ops) division in charge of planning the psychological warfare operations, just as the Special Political Action (SPA) and the Information Research Department (IRD) did before it. Its task consisted, among others things, in feeding false stories, rumors and misinformation to the press through *off-the-record briefings* and *double--sourcing*, i.e., confirmations by another agent hired for this purpose.⁴⁰

The compensations paid to newspaper editors by MI6 could be as high as £100,000, with access to money via an *offshore bank* in a tax haven. The Royal Bank of Scotland and, to a lesser extent, the Midland Bank were the most often employed banks. They provided the credit cards to agents in covert operations. These and other activities were revealed in the book *The Big Breach, from Top Secret to Maximum Security*, by Agent D/813317, aka Richard Tomlinson,⁴¹ who broke with MI6 in 1995, and David Shayler of the MI5 (Military Intelligence, Section 5), a security and counterintelligence agency. “*British journalists—and British journals—are being manipulated by the secret intelligence agencies, and I think we ought to try and put a stop to it*”, wrote David Leigh, an investigative journalist of the London newspaper *The Guardian*.⁴²

The protests that started in Tunisia and Egypt turned into a “*hot revolutionary war*” when they spread to Libya and Syria as the activities became illegal and violent.⁴³ This transition from “*peaceful*” to “*hot*”, explained Colonel David Galula, could be gradual and confusing, which was what actually happened and was no doubt expected.⁴⁴ The truth of the matter was that MI6 and the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC) used the international media as an outlet for misinformation and counter-information, masking the direct and/or indirect involvement of the United States and its European allies.

The *New York Times* correspondents in Tripoli, [David D. Kirkpatrick](#) and [Rod Nordland](#), reported themselves that there was a wave of misinformation and confusion. At the beginning of their article, they point out that “*truth was the first casualty in Libya well before this war began, and the war has not improved matters*

³⁹Churchill (1995), p. 876.

⁴⁰Todd and Bloch (2003), p. 110–111. Pipes (1996).

⁴¹Tomlinson (2001), p. 134.

⁴²David Leigh, “Britain’s security services and journalists: the secret story”, *British Journalism Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2000, p. 21–26.

⁴³Galula (2010), p. 43.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 43.

at all, on any side.”⁴⁵ The rebels who were hailed as so-called *freedom fighters* were, in fact, *mujahidin*, radical Islamists, who participated in the war against the United States in Afghanistan and in Iraq and returned to Libya, probably with the backing of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, interested in overthrowing the secular regimes in the Middle East and restoring Islamic law, the *Shari'ah*, based on the *Qur'an* and the traditions of the Prophet.

⁴⁵David D. Kirkpatrick e Rod Nordland, “Waves of Disinformation and Confusion Swamp the Truth in Libya”, *The New York Times*, August 23, 2011.

Chapter 14

NATO Intervention as an Answer to Gaddafi's Goodwill Measures

14.1 Gaddafi's Relinquishment of Nuclear Energy and the Restoration of Good Relations with the West

Ever since Muammar Gaddafi gave up on the production of weapons of mass destruction and swore of terrorism after the invasion of Iraq, Washington had apparently been satisfied with its cooperation in the war against al-Qa'ida. John R. Bolton, Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, told Radio Sawa on April 5, 2003,¹ that the invasion of Iraq constituted a “*message*” from the United States to Libya, Iran and Syria, conveying that “*the cost of their pursuit of weapons of mass destruction is potentially quite high,*” and that “*the role of the United States (...) to keep these incredibly dangerous weapons out of the hands of very dangerous people should not be underestimated.*”²

When Muammar Gaddafi realized that his country could also be invaded, he used a Palestinian contact to get in touch with David Manning at the MI6 headquarters in Vauxhall Cross. Gaddafi wanted to negotiate a *quid pro quo* in which he would destroy his weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program in exchange for the lifting of sanctions against Libya.³ Two MI6 agents traveled secretly by plane to Sirte, where Muammar Gaddafi maintained his headquarters in the desert, surrounded by Bedouins and camels.⁴

The mediator of the negotiations was his son Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, and the first meeting with agents of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) took place at The Connaught, a five-star hotel located between Mount Street and Carlos Place, in the

¹*Sawā'* (سوا), which in many Arab dialects means “together”, is a radio network funded by the United States Congress for countries in the Middle East.

²Paul Kerr, “Top U.S. Officials Voice Concern About Syria's WMD Capability”, *Arms Control Today*, May 2003.

³Corera (2011a), p. 383.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 383.

center of the Mayfair district in London.⁵ Agent Mark Allen and Sir Richard Dearlove, head of MI6 (1999–2004), traveled to Washington and informed President George W. Bush about Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's proposal. The CIA agent Steve Kappes was then sent to participate in the negotiations with the diplomat Moussa Koussa, head of the *Mukhabarat el-Jamahiriya*, Libya's intelligence service. Getting to an understanding was difficult, since this involved the network of scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, who had developed Pakistan's nuclear weapons program and sold Urenco's uranium enrichment technology to Libya, Iraq, North Korea and Iran.⁶

The negotiations with Gaddafi were made public on January 23, 2004, by Flynt Smith, a former member of the US National Security Council, in an article published in *The New York Times*.⁷ And on December 19, 2003, Abdel Rahman Chalgam, Minister of Foreign Affairs, communicated that Libya would freely renounce its weapons of mass destruction program, and that it had also decided to adhere to both the TNP and the Biological Weapons and Chemical Weapons Conventions (BWC and CWC).

In his State of the Union Address (20/1/2004), President George W. Bush announced that Colonel Muammar Gaddafi had “correctly” come to the conclusion, after 9 months of intensive negotiations with the United States and the United Kingdom, that his country would be better off and much safer without weapons of mass destruction,⁸ which is why he had “voluntarily” committed himself to opening and dismantling all his programs, including those for enriching uranium for nuclear weapons.⁹ In 2004, Bush lifted the sanctions against the regime of Muammar Gaddafi.

More than 10 facilities where Libya was developing the full uranium enrichment cycle for nuclear weapons were dismantled, and its biological weapons were destroyed. In addition, Muammar Gaddafi assumed responsibility for the terrorist attack against Pan Am's Boeing 747 (Flight 103), which crashed in Lockerbie, Scotland, on December 21, 1988, and he decided to compensate the families of the victims, just as he would compensate the families of the victims of the attack against the McDonnell Douglas DC-10 airplane from *Union des Transports Aériens*.

⁵Gordon Corera, “Torture claims raise questions over Libya-Britain ties”, *BBC News*, September 5, 2011. “Behind closed doors: The bewildering dance between Gaddafi and MI6”, *The Independent*, August 25, 2011. Nabila Ramdani, Tim Shipman and Peter Allen, “Tony Blair our very special adviser by dictator Gaddafi's son”, *Daily Mail*, June 5, 2010.

⁶Corera (2011a), p. 384.

⁷Flynt Leverett, “Why Libya Gave Up on the Bomb”, *The New York Times*, January 23, 2004.

⁸Questioned by Sir John Chilcot, member of the British Parliament, during the inquiry into Iraq, an SIS1 agent declared: “I think Saddam Hussein woefully misread the world, whereas I think Gaddafi reads it quite well”, accessed <http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/media/52549/sisi1-declassified.pdf>.

⁹2004 State of the Union Address, delivered 20 January 2004, Washington, D.C., The White House, President George W. Bush, accessed <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2004/01/20040120-7.html>.

riens (UTA flight 772) in France, which exploded over the Sahara desert on September 19, 1989.

The United Kingdom also normalized relations with Libya. Between 2008 and 2009, authorities frequently visited Tripoli, and the government in London authorized the export of tear gas, crowd control ammunition and small arms, in addition to projectile launchers. The biggest British and American oil and services companies, including British Petroleum, ExxonMobil, Halliburton, Chevron, Conoco and Marathon Oil, in addition to several other companies, such as Raytheon, Northrop Grumman and Dow Chemical Fluor White & Case, flocked to Libya and set up the U.S.-Libya Business Association in 2005.

On August 19, 2009, a Congressional Delegation made up of Senators John McCain, Joe Lieberman, Lindsey Graham, Susan Collins and Richard Fontaine, of the Armed Services Committee, continued the meetings with Muammar Gaddafi and his National Security Advisor, Mutassim al-Gaddafi.¹⁰ The independent senator of Connecticut Joseph I. Lieberman declared that Mutassim al-Gaddafi was an “important ally” in the war against terrorism, stressing that “*common enemies sometimes make better friends*”.¹¹

14.2 The Revolution Fabricated by France's DGSE

Many countries, including Iran and North Korea, told Gaddafi that it was a mistake to halt the development of long range missiles and become an ally of the West, as Saif al-Islam Gaddafi revealed in an interview to *RT (Russia Today)* after the war was started by France, Great Britain and the United States. He pointed out that Libya's big mistake had been to delay the purchase of weapons from Russia and the construction of a strong army. And he warned that “*our example means one should never trust the West and should always be on alert*”.¹² In fact, everything indicates that neither the United States nor Great Britain nor France ceased to conspire to destroy the Gaddafi regime. According to Vijay Prashad, Gaddafi's collapse sent an important message to other “*rogues states*”: their biggest mistake would be to renounce their nuclear programs.¹³

¹⁰ID 09 Tripoli 677 Subject Codel McCain Meets Muammar And Muatassim Al-Qadhafi Date 2009-08-19 00:00:00 Confidential — Section 01 Of 02 Tripoli 000677 — SIPDIS — State For NEA/MAG and H E.O. 12958: Decl: 8/19/2009 — Tags: PREL PGOV PINS PINR PTER MASS MCAP Ly Subject: Codel McCain Meets Muammar And Muatassim Al-Qadhafi — Ref: A. Tripoli 662; B. Tripoli 674; C. State 43,049; D. Tripoli 648 Tripoli 00000677 001.2 Of 002 Classified By: Joan Polaschik, Charge D'affaires, U.S. Embassy Tripoli, Department Of State. Reason: 1.4 (B), (D). <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/08/09TRIPOLI677.html>.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²“US looks on Libya as McDonald's — Gaddafi's son”, *Russia Today*, July 1, 2011.

¹³Prashad (2012), p. 233.

Although president Nicolas Sarkozy openly maintained good relations with Gaddafi and reportedly even received money for his election campaign,¹⁴ France had at least one solid reason to want to overthrow his regime. In 2009, the French company Total was forced, along with such other oil companies as Chevron and Occidental Petroleum, both from the United States, to accept the renegotiation of contracts for the exploration of oil and gas in Libya.¹⁵ Their contract for the exploitation of the Mabruk and al-Jurf fields with the National Oil Corporation (NOC), Libya's state-owned company, was extended until 2032, but it was significantly reduced. Documents from 2000 made public by WikiLeaks, revealed that Total and the other consortia would now only be entitled to 27% of oil production and to 40% and, subsequently, 30% of gas production, and not the 50% they had taken in the previous contracts. Before the uprising in Benghazi, Great Britain had investments in Libya valued at £1.5 billion, mostly in the oil industry.¹⁶ And before the dust of this uprising had even settled in September 2011, Lord Stephen Green, Minister for Trade and Investment, traveled to Tripoli heading a delegation of British businessmen, including representatives of British Petroleum and Shell, in order to initiate talks with the National Transitional Council.¹⁷

On March 23, 2011, the Italian journalist Franco Bechis wrote in the right wing newspaper *Libero*¹⁸ that the French secret service—*Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure* (DGSE)—had probably started planning the rebellion in Benghazi on October 21, 2010.¹⁹ In fact, Nuri al-Mesmari, Gaddafi's Chief of Protocol, abandoned Libya in October 2010. After passing through Tunisia, al-Mesmari sought exile in France, where he met with the military and started the plot against Gaddafi, which involved opposition activists in Benghazi. Three other Libyans arrived in Paris on December 23, 2010, to organize the movement to overthrow Gaddafi with Nuri al-Mesmari and the French military: Ali Ounes Mansouri, Farj Charrant and Fathi Boukhris. Together with Ali Hajj, these men ignited the uprising in Benghazi. Franco Bechis accused President Nicolas Sarkozy of manipulating the

¹⁴Sensini (2011), p. 149.

¹⁵Maher Chmaytelli, "Total Accepts Lower Share of Libyan Oil Production (Update2)", *Bloomberg*, February 10, 2009.

¹⁶Ian Black, "British trade mission seeks to make most of Libyan goodwill", *The Guardian*, September 26, 2011.

¹⁷Ibid. About the main markets for Libyan oil in 2009: Energy Information Administration <http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-NS7cLQRFQVA/TqyCoyG-mTI/AAAAAAAAADW8/z9nuzYU8pqc/s1600/libya+and+oil.jpg>. Accessed 24.04.2015. Also: Libya S.O.S. <http://libyasos.blogspot.de/>.

¹⁸"Sarko' ha manovrato la rivolta libica", Affaritaliani.it. "French plans to topple Gaddafi on track since last November", *Mathaba News Network*, 25/3/2011. Apud Domenico Losurdo, http://domicolosurdo.blogspot.de/2011_03_01_archive.html, *Blitz quotidiano*, <http://www.blitzquotidiano.it/politica-mondiale/libia-francia-ribelli-bengasi-007-gheddafi-794,604/>.

¹⁹"Libia. La Francia ha armato i ribelli di Bengasi? Le manovre degli 007 di Sarkò con un fedelissimo di Gheddafi", *Blitz quotidiano*.

revolt in Libya.²⁰ There is evidence that he had already infiltrated military forces in the region. And Sarkozy could also rely on the support of the United States.

14.3 The Dictatorial Arrogance of Barrack Obama

On February 26, a few days after the revolt in Benghazi, President Barack Obama declared, as if he were a global dictator, that Gaddafi had lost legitimacy and should leave the government. And on March 21, 4 days after the approval or resolution 1973 of the UN Security Council, he reiterated: *"I have (...) stated that it is U.S. policy that Gaddafi needs to go,"* revealing that *"regime change"* was the objective of the intervention in Libya. He cynically claimed, however, that the actions of the United States were in support of UN Security Council Resolution 1973, with a humanitarian objective.²¹ And Senators John McCain and Joseph Lieberman, who only a year before had become *"good friends"* of Gaddafi after he abandoned his nuclear program, joined the choir with President Obama: *"President Obama last week stated unequivocally that Colonel Gaddafi must go. He reiterated that position again today."*²²

14.4 Psychological Warfare Operations

The purpose of psychological warfare (psy-OP) as defined by the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC), as well as by MI6, is to demoralize the enemy, causing disagreement and turmoil within its ranks, and to convince the population to support the forces of the United States and its allies.²³ And the strategy to unleash war on Libya was to use the media to construct an image in which the dictator Muammar Gaddafi was about to massacre the civilians who were protesting against his regime in Benghazi. On February 26, 2011, 8 days after the beginning of the rebellion in Benghazi, France, Germany, Great Britain and the

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Stephanie Condon 2011, "Obama: Qaddafi must go, but current Libya mission focused on humanitarian efforts". *CBS News*, March 21. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/obama-qaddafi-must-go-but-current-libya-mission-focused-on-humanitarian-efforts/>. 23.12.2014. Jeff Mason 2011, "U.S. says Libya has spoken, Gaddafi must leave now". Washington Sat Feb 26, 2011. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/26/us-libya-usa-idUSTRE71K6D520110226>.

²²Mark Hemingway, "McCain and Lieberman: 'Qaddafi must go'", *The Weekly Standard*, March 11, 2011.

²³U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations, <http://www.psywarrior.com/psyop.html>.

United States succeeded in passing Resolution 1970 through the UN Security Council (UNSC),²⁴

condemning the violence and use of force against civilians, deploring the gross and systematic violation of human rights, including the repression of peaceful demonstrators, expressing deep concern at the deaths of civilians, and rejecting unequivocally the incitement to hostility and violence against the civilian population made from the highest level of the Libyan government.

The goal of this Resolution 1970 was *vendere fumum*, to deceive. It assumed that “the widespread and systematic attacks currently taking place in Libya against the civilian population may amount to crimes against humanity”, decided to refer the matter to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, and adopted a series of sanctions to be applied by members of the United Nations, including:

1. “freezing without delay all funds, other financial assets and economic resources which are on their territories, which are owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by the individuals or entities tied to the regime of Muammar Gaddafi;”
2. “preventing the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (...) of arms and related material of all types, including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment, and spare parts for the aforementioned, and technical assistance, training (...) related to military activities or the provision, maintenance or use of any arms and related material, including the provision of armed mercenary personnel whether or not originating in their territories.”

The *intentio mali* of Resolution 1970 was evident. Less than a month later, on March 17, 2011, the United States, France and Great Britain claimed that Muammar Gaddafi had not complied with resolution 1970, and with the abstention of Russia, China, Brazil, India and Germany, managed to pass Resolution 1973, which authorized the establishment of a “no-fly zone” over Libya and “all necessary measures to protect civilians under threat of attack in the Libya, including Benghazi, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory”.²⁵ The manipulation of the news by the media—BBC, CNN, Al Arabiya and al-Jazeera—, which misinformed and exaggerated the number of casualties, greatly contributed in creating an adverse climate for Libya in the UN Security Council.²⁶

This vague and deceptive resolution adopted by the Security Council violated the Charter of the United Nations itself, however. Article 2 of Chapter 1 establishes that

²⁴RES/1970 (2011) — Security Council — Distr. General February 26, 2011 - 11-24558 (E) *1124558*.

²⁵Security Council SC/10200 — 6498th Meeting (Night) Department of Public Information, News and Media Division, New York, “Security Council Approves ‘No-Fly Zone’ Over Libya, Authorizing ‘All Necessary — Measures’ To Protect Civilians, By Vote Of 10 In Favour With 5 Abstentions”, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sc10200.doc.htm#Resolution>.

²⁶Sensini (2011), p. 116–117.

“nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII.”

Article 42 of Chapter VII further provides that, should the Security Council consider that the

“measures provided for in Article 41 (complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations) would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations.”

14.5 The Human Rights Hoax to Justify NATO Intervention

Military operations by air, sea or land of UN members may only occur if they are required *“to maintain or restore international peace and security”*. The uprising against Muammar Gaddafi’s regime was a domestic issue, he did not threaten international peace and security. An attack by air, land or sea to a sovereign country constitutes an act of war. And this is what Barack Obama, the Prime Minister of Great Britain David Cameron, and the President of France Nicolas Sarkozy had actually planned. It’s certain that the protests that broke out on January 26 were instigated by *jihadists* and by agents of the Western intelligence services.

In the UK, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Sir David Richards, the Secretary of Defense, Liam Fox, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, William Hague, and the Downing Street Chief of Staff, Ed Llewellyn, were convinced since the end of February that action would be required to overthrow Gaddafi and that air strikes alone would not be sufficient to achieve this objective.²⁷ Ground forces would be necessary and mercenaries would have to be hired. And long before the adoption of Resolution 1973, Great Britain had dispatched SIS-MI6 (Secret Intelligence Service) agents, six members of E Squadron, all recruited from the Tier 1 units (SAS, SBS and Special Reconnaissance Regiment) of the United Kingdom Special Forces (UKSF), in a Chinook helicopter to Benghazi. They were equipped with a huge variety of weapons, ammunition, explosives, folders with military information, maps, false passports and secure communication devices. They descended by helicopter on the farm of Tom Smith (an alleged MI6 agent), close to Benghazi,

²⁷Tim Shipman, “Send in the dogs of war: Mercenaries could help the rag-tag rebels say UK generals”, *Daily Mail*, April 6, 2011.

but were imprisoned by the rebels who knew nothing of their mission, after which they were extracted by a British vessel.²⁸

Despite this embarrassing episode, Britain once again sent MI6 agents and SAS (Special Air Service) officers to consult the forces of the so-called National Transitional Council headed by Mustafa Abdel-Jalil, former minister of Justice under Gaddafi. Navy SEALs, agents of the *Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure* (DGSE), commandos of the *Brigade des Forces Spéciales Terre* (BFST), subordinated to the *Commandement des Opérations Spéciales* (COS), MI6 agents and SAS soldiers were all operating in Libya, always dressed as Arabs, as *false-flaggers*, i.e., “illegal teams” with the identity of other countries, so that they could not be identified as British, American or French. On February 24, prior to the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1970, the British frigate *HMS Cumberland* arrived in Benghazi and off-loaded SAS commandos.²⁹ A group of Dutch special forces—*Korps Commandotroepen* (KCT)—which had been transported by a navy helicopter on February 27-, was captured by Gaddafi troops in Sirte, on the southern coast of the Gulf of Sidra.³⁰ And, on March 2, 400 US soldiers of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (24th MEU) and the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) arrived in Crete. Major Carl Redding, spokesman for the Marine Corps, explained that these troops were sent aboard the *USS Kearsarge* of the Expeditionary Strike Group, and the *USS Ponce*, “as part of our contingency planning to provide the President flexibility on a full range of options regarding Libya.”³¹

The United States, Britain and France didn't establish the *no-fly zone* to protect civilians, an ambiguous and questionable concept introduced through resolutions 1265 (1999), 1296 (2000), 1325 (2000), 1674 (2006) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and 1738 (2006), approved by the UN Security Council. They carried out the war against Libya through air strikes and by allying themselves openly with the rebels, just as Nazi Germany had done during the civil war in Spain (1936–1939), when it not only bombed Guernica, but several other cities, inaugurating their Junkers Ju 52 and Heinkel He 111 bombers and Messerschmitt and Junkers Ju 87 fighters, which destroyed 386 planes of the republicans.

One day after the resolution's approval, France took the lead and began the bombings with 19 Rafale and Mirage aircraft from its Air Force, while planes from Italy carried out surveillance operations. Shortly after, submarines from the United

²⁸Caroline Gammell and Nick Meo, “Libya: inside the SAS operation that went wrong”, *The Telegraph*, March 6, 2011. “Libya unrest: SAS members ‘captured near Benghazi’”, *BBC Magazine*, March 6, 2011. Mark Urban, “Inside story of the UK's secret mission to beat Gaddafi”, *BBC Magazine*, January 19, 2012.

²⁹Sensini (2011), p. 109.

³⁰Mark Urban, “Inside story of the UK's secret mission to beat Gaddafi”, *BBC Magazine*, January 19, 2012. Sensini (2011), p. 109.

³¹“Ship carrying Marines heads to Libya”, *ABC News*, March 1, 2011. Rial World http://www.riahlworldview.com/carnivorous_conservative/2011/03/400-marines-head-toward-libya.html. Sensini (2011), p. 110.

States and Great Britain launched at least 114 cruise missiles³² against 20 Libyan air and ground defense systems, while B-2 Spirit bombers destroyed the largest airport in the country, in Tripoli,³³ and Tornados launched Storm Shadow missiles against various strategic targets.³⁴ Around March 21, the entire strategic air defense system (SAM) along Libya's coast had already been destroyed. In addition to the NATO allies, planes from Sweden, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan took part in both the air surveillance and strike operations over Libya.³⁵

After openly starting the campaign in Libya, President Barack Obama, Prime Minister David Cameron and President Nicolas Sarkozy jointly signed and published an article in the *New York Times*, in which they said: "*Our duty and our mandate under U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973 is to protect civilians, and we are doing that. It is not to remove Qaddafi by force. But it is impossible to imagine a future for Libya with Qaddafi in power.*"³⁶

This article revealed the double standard and hypocrisy of the United States, Great Britain and France, the main leaders of the military campaign against Libya, showing that they wanted to cynically extrapolate and violate the mandate of Resolution 1973, which consisted in establishing a *no-fly zone* for the protection of civilians and didn't authorize the use of force to promote regime change, much less the elimination Muammar Gaddafi.

Long before Resolution 1973, President Obama had ordered the Treasury Department to freeze the accounts of the Libyan National Oil Corporation and to arbitrarily seize US\$30 billion. Gaddafi's regime had 143.8 tons in gold, worth more than US\$6.5 billion (£4 billion), deposited as international reserves in 25 nations, according to the International Monetary Fund.³⁷ These funds were frozen. And through the sanctions approved in the UN Security Council, the Western powers appropriated the sovereign wealth funds (SWF), which Libya had invested overseas as oil-exporting country.

In Italy, Libya possessed 7.5% of Unicredit, the second largest bank of the country, 2% of Finmeccanica, an industrial conglomerate controlled by the State, 1.5% of the Juventus Football Club, less than 1% of the companies belonging to the

³²Each cruise missile cost US\$1 million, and the new model, US\$2 million. On the first day of Operation Odyssey Dawn, US expenditures with missiles alone reached US\$100 million.

³³"The Pentagon says 114 Tomahawk cruise missiles have been launched from U.S. and British ships in the Mediterranean, hitting more than 20 (...)", *FoxNews*, March 20, 2011. Sanskar Shrivastava, "US Launches Missile Strike in Libya", *The World Reporter*, March 20, 2011.

³⁴Frank W. Hardy, "French Rafale Fighter Jets Attack and Destroy Libyan Targets", *North Africa Affairs*, March 19, 2011.

³⁵Christian F. Anrig, "A Força Aliada na Líbia — Avaliação Preliminar". http://www.airpower.au.af.mil/apjinternational/apj-p/2012/2012-2/2012_2_02_anrig_p.pdf. Accessed 25 Feb 2015.

³⁶Barack Obama, David Cameron and Nicolas Sarkozy, "Libya's Pathway to Peace", *The New York Times*, April 14, 2011.

³⁷Paul Peachey, "Regime clan has £4bn in gold reserves, says IMF", *The Independent*, March 24, 2011. Sensini (2011), p. 157.

Fiat group, and approximately 0.5% of ENI, the state oil company.³⁸ The bank HSBC was the main *custodian bank* of Libya's monetary reserves. Only in September 2011 did the Western powers agree to unfreeze US\$15 billion in confiscated assets in Europe and in the United States. The total value of these assets was estimated to reach US\$150 billion. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and other countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) funded the *jihadists* and the purchase of armaments by the insurgents.

Removing Muammar Gaddafi had been scheduled many years ago in the “*promotion of democracy*” program. Washington was only waiting for the right opportunity to execute it. In an interview he gave to the journalist Amy Goodman on March 2, 2007, General (r) Wesley Clark, former commander-in-chief of NATO, revealed that the George W. Bush administration had planned to attack seven countries in 5 years: Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Iran. And he later stressed: “*Obama's invasion of Libya was planned under the Bush administration, Syria is next.*”³⁹

14.6 Qatar's Special Forces in Libya

The special forces and the intelligence services of the NATO countries had effectively given the rebels all sorts of assistance and collaboration, planning operations, guiding bombings and gathering information, including with the use of *drones*.⁴⁰ Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Bulgaria, among other countries, sent elite troops to assist the so-called rebels. Five other countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman, all ruled by Sunni Oligarchies—cooperated with NATO. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates even provided airplanes during 6 months to NATO for the bombing campaign.⁴¹ And on August 20, the last day of Ramadan, a NATO vessel landed on the Libyan coast with heavy weaponry, former *jihadists* and special forces from

³⁸Giorgio Sacerdoti, “Freezing Sovereign Wealth Funds Assets Abroad Under U.N. Security Council's Resolutions: The Case of the Implementation in Italy of Asset Freezes Against Qadhafi's Libya”, May 1, 2012.

³⁹“Gen. Wesley Clark Weighs Presidential Bid: ‘I Think about It Everyday’”, *Democracy Now*, with Amy Goodman and Juan González, March 2, 2007. “U.S. General Wesley Clark: ‘Obama's invasion of Libya was planned under the Bush administration, Syria is next’”, *Foreign Policy*, September 14, 2011. Trevor Lyman, “Obama's invasion of Libya was planned under the Bush administration, Syria is next”, Bastiat Institute, September 14, 2011.

⁴⁰Jorge Benitez, “Intell and Special Forces from allies helped rebels take Tripoli”, *Nato Source*, August 22, 2011. Jorge Benitez, “Covert teams from NATO members ‘provided critical assistance’ to Libyan rebels”, *Nato Source*, August 23, 2011.

⁴¹Rick Rozoff, “Saudi Arabia — Persian Gulf of Strategic Interest to NATO”, *Stop NATO*, June 20, 2012.

JSOC, of the United States, BFST, of France, and SAS, of the UK. These forces drew up the strategy for a fast advance, leading the rebels to take Tripoli.

The Qatar emirate played a crucial role in the campaign against the Gaddafi regime, however, sending not only financial resources and armaments, but hundreds of ground troops (QSOC)⁴²—something that NATO was formally barred from doing⁴³—and commanding the offensive planned by the SAS and MI6 officers.⁴⁴ Major-General Hamad bin Ali al-Atiya, Qatar's Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, confirmed that *"we were among them and the numbers of Qataris on the ground were hundreds in every region"*.⁴⁵ His special forces trained the rebels, took charge of communications, and oversaw the battle plans, because they were civilians and had no military experience, and, in the words of Major-General Hamad bin Ali al-Atiya, the Qataris acted as the link between the rebels and NATO.⁴⁶

Lieutenant General Joseph Charles Bouchard, commander of NATO's Operation Unified Protector, praised the guidance given by Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Kalifa ak-Thani and said he was proud *"of Qatari forces' performance and this is justifiable from every perspective"*.⁴⁷ He also commended the role of the media in the success of the mission, especially Al Jazeera and the news channels BBC and CNN.⁴⁸ Without NATO's logistical support and bombing campaign, without the Qatari, French and British special forces, and without the flow of CIA intelligence supplied by the *drones*, the so-called rebels would not have advanced far beyond Benghazi.

⁴²"*The principle source of support for the rebels came from Q-SOC, the Qatari special forces, says this source, who would only be identified as a former US intelligence contractor with direct knowledge of operations in Libya.*" Spencer Ackerman, "Tiny Qatar flexed big muscles in Libya", *Wired.co.uk*, August, 26, 2011. *"But on the ground here, credit for helping to get the rebel army into shape goes to military advisers from the tiny Arabian Peninsula emirate of Qatar. (...) 'Qatar had stood by us from the very beginning, even before it was announced that they were here,' said Col. Ahmed Bani, a spokesman for the rebel army. 'They have been more effective than any other nation. They just haven't boasted about it.'"* Portia Walker, "Qatari military advisers on the ground, helping Libyan rebels get into shape", *The Washington Post*, May 13, 2011.

⁴³Ian Black, "Qatar admits sending hundreds of troops to support Libya rebels. Qatari chief-of-staff reveals extent of involvement, saying troops were responsible for training, communications and strategy", *The Guardian*, October 26, 2011.

⁴⁴Gordon Rayner, Thomas Harding and Duncan Gardham, "Libya: secret role played by Britain creating path to the fall of Tripoli", *The Telegraph*, August 22, 2011.

⁴⁵Ian Black, "Qatar admits sending hundreds of troops to support Libya rebels. Qatari chief-of-staff reveals extent of involvement, saying troops were responsible for training, communications and strategy", *The Guardian*, October 26, 2011.

⁴⁶*Ibid.* Karen DeYoung and Greg Miller, "Intell and Special Forces from allies helped rebels take Tripoli", *The Washington Post*, NATO Source, October 26, 2011.

⁴⁷Ayman Adly, "Nato commander hails Qatari forces' role in Libya's liberation", *Gulf Times*, March 26, 2012.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

Chapter 15

US and NATO Attempts to Maintain World Domination

15.1 The Subversion of International Law

Protecting civilians had become a subterfuge to justify aggression against Libya and legitimize the doctrine of humanitarian intervention. By invoking this doctrine, the ultra-imperialist cartel subverted the principles and concepts of the nation-state, national sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, and the equality of states regardless of their size. These principles and concepts arose consensually from the Treaties of Westphalia, signed in Münster and Osnabrück (Germany) on May 15 and October 24, 1648, putting an end to the Thirty Years' War, and underpinning international law ever since,¹ even if they're often disregarded. In order to avoid a repeat of the massacre in which one third of the population of Central Europe perished, the Treaties of Westphalia separated international politics from the domestic politics of states, as Henry Kissinger has emphasized. Domestic politics was based on national and cultural unity and therefore considered sovereign, while international politics was limited by the interaction of the established borders. For the drafters of the treaties, these new concepts of national interest and balance of power didn't expand, but rather limit power.²

Washington, however, "*ignores whenever convenient*"³ the principles of national sovereignty and equality of nations, observed the journalist William Pfaff. It was based on these principles that the great Brazilian jurist Ruy Barbosa, as head of the Brazilian delegation in the Second Hague Peace Conference (1907), proclaimed that "*la souveraineté est. la grande muraille de la patrie*" and he advocated "*l'égalité des Etats souverains*" against the position of the United States

¹*Acta Pacis Westphalicae*, Supplementa electronica, 1, accessed <http://www.pax-westphalica.de/>.

²Henry A. Kissinger, "Syrian intervention risks upsetting global order", *The Washington Post*, June 2, 2012.

³William Pfaff, "Empire isn't the American way — Addiction in Washington", *International Herald Tribune*, 4/9/2002.

and other great powers, who wished to create a Supreme Court of Arbitration, discriminating against all other countries in its composition.⁴ The equality of states was “*la condition primordiale de la paix entre les nations*”, stressed Ruy Barbosa.⁵ And article 2, paragraph 7, of the UN Charter, ratified the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of member states, one of the pillars of International Law, supporting the principle of national sovereignty.

15.2 The American Objective of Maintaining World Domination

International Law, however, hasn't been respected by the United States since the bipolar political and ideological conflict virtually disappeared with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Financial capital, globally dominant and concentrated in the United States, where it finds its main headquarters in Wall Street, and in other industrial powers of the West, has ceased to acknowledge the right to self-determination and political independence of all nations, an expression of the democratic belief in the equality of sovereign states. The nation-state as it formed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries gradually began to disappear with globalization, noted the German political scientist Herfried Münkler.⁶ Since the end of the socialist bloc, the United States has endeavored to establish the *Pax America* through the creation of informal protectorates under the guise of NATO. The notable Austrian economist Rudolf Hilferding (1877–1941) had already written in his classic work *Das Finanzkapital*, published in 1910, that financial capital was the great conqueror of the world, that each conquered territory established a new frontier to be crossed, and “*als Ideal erscheint es jetzt, der eignen Nation die Herrschaft über die Welt zu sichern*”, i.e., the idea was now to ensure world domination for the nation itself, an aspiration as limitless as the capitalist lust from which it arose.⁷ And this is why the United States insisted on imposing the concept that the world was entering a “*post-sovereign era*”, as Henry Kissinger has put it, to legitimize the projection of its values (free enterprise, free exchange, free movement of capital and goods). In this new era, the norms of human rights prevailed over the traditional prerogatives of sovereign governments.⁸

In fact, as the political scientist Antonio de Sousa Lara has pointed out, “*the blurring of physical, legal and cultural boundaries*” with the globalization of the economy was profoundly changing international society.⁹ Human rights, however,

⁴Barbosa (1966), p. 251–268. See also Cardim (2007), p. 115–149, 124–135.

⁵Barbosa (1966), p. 256 and 369. The speeches were given in French.

⁶Münkler (2005).

⁷Hilferding (1968), p. 457.

⁸Kissinger (2011), p. 454.

⁹Sousa Lara (2011), p. 41.

were being used as a pretext to abolish the principle of national sovereignty and were but a code name to encompass the interests of the financial capital and multinational monopolies that constituted the American Empire.

15.3 National Sovereignty as the Privilege of Strong Nations

This new concept that the United States was set on imposing involved the perception that the importance of the nation-state was declining and that, subsequently, the international order would be based on transnational principles. This is why the US considered that its *regime change* policy in other countries was an act of foreign politics, instead of an intervention in domestic affairs.¹⁰ The premise, Kissinger explained, was the idea that democracies were inherently peaceful, while autocracies tended to violence and international terrorism.¹¹ As a learned man, Kissinger couldn't possibly believe what he had written. The United States, presented as the symbol of democracy, has been in a state of almost permanent war throughout its history, accumulating vast experience in "*extrajudicial executions*" and "*targeted killing*" operations, i.e., assassinations, bombings, sabotage, chemical and biological warfare, torture etc., in Asia, Africa and Latin America, where the CIA has operated since 1947 as the "*chief and pioneering perpetrator of preemptive state terror*", in the words of Arno Mayer, professor *emeritus* of the University of Princeton.¹²

Throughout its history, the US has empirically demonstrated that in international relations, law doesn't derive from justice, but from strength. *Jus est. in armis*, i.e. might is right. And so the tenets on war crimes and crimes against humanity, while positive, only affect the defeated and the rulers of weak and small states. *Vae victis!* Thomas Hobbes rightly pointed out that the interpretation of laws depended on the sovereign authority, and that their interpreters had to be the subjects who owed obedience to the sovereign authority.¹³ International law is only observed among those States whose forces are balanced and which have the ability to retaliate, in one way or another. As the Romans already understood, *vis legibus inimica et vis vi repellitur*.¹⁴

¹⁰Ibid., p. 459.

¹¹Ibid., p. 459.

¹²Arno Mayer, "Untimely Reflections", *Theory & Event*, Volume 5, Issue 4, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.

¹³Hobbes (2002), p. 190.

¹⁴Strength is the enemy of law and strength is repelled by strength.

15.4 The Responsibility to Protect Civilians (RtoP and R2P) as Ultra-imperialist Farce

The doctrine of the responsibility to protect (RtoP) the civilian population against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity was established in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the “Outcome Document” of the 2005 World Summit, which was held in New York between September 14 and 16, 2005. It was reaffirmed in April 2006 by the UN Security Council through Resolution 1674. This doctrine—RtoP—consists in not recognizing national sovereignty as a right, but as a responsibility to prevent and deter four crimes—genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing—under the generic term *Mass Atrocity Crimes*.

The initiative came from Canada, reflecting the broad interests that created and guided the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICSS) in Ottawa, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Simons, Rockefeller, William & Flora Hewlett and Catherine T. McArthur foundations.¹⁵ This commission was tasked with formulating the *Responsibility to Protect Report*¹⁶ in order to substantiate the RtoP and R2P (Responsibility to Protect) and the “*right of humanitarian intervention*” doctrines because of the existing controversies since the interventions in Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo, as well as in Rwanda, where such an intervention could not be carried out.

This responsibility to protect (RtoP and R2P) doctrine is based on the principle that sovereignty is not a right, but a privilege, and that if a State violates the tenets of good governance, the international community (the United States and its NATO vassals) is morally obliged to revoke the sovereignty of the nation and assume command and control of the offending state. It’s quite obvious that this principle seeks to *pulverem oculis effundere*, i.e., throw dust in the eyes. Because in practice, it can only be applied by the major powers against the weaker nations, who have no power to defend themselves or retaliate. And the objective conclusion is that all states should arm themselves as much as possible, including with nuclear artifacts.

The concept of crimes against humanity is based on the Nuremberg principles (1950), established at the trial of the leaders of Nazi Germany (1945–1946) after the Second World War and approved by the UN (Resolution 177) with the *status* of *ius*

¹⁵Sensini (2011), p. 75.

¹⁶*The Responsibility to Protect*—Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, December 2001. The members of the Committee were Gareth Evans (President), Mohamed Sahnoun (Vice President), Gisèle Côté-Harper, Lee Hamilton, Michael Ignatieff, Vladimir Lukin, Klaus Naumann, Cyril Ramaphosa, Fidel Ramos, Cornelio Sommaruga, Eduardo Stein, Ramesh Thakur.

cogens, or a peremptory, punitive norm of international relations.¹⁷ These crimes included genocide, maritime piracy, both slavery and slave trade, torture, and wars of aggression or conquest without the justification of self-defense, among others.

The Rome Statute, which established the International Criminal Court (ICC) on July 17, 1998, and entered into effect on July 1, 2002, defined as crimes against humanity, *inter alia*, acts of violence perpetrated intentionally during an armed conflict against a civilian population that is not directly participating in hostilities; attacks against civilian installations that have no military purpose, as well as the knowledge that such attacks will cause incidental loss of life or injury to civilians or damage to civilian objects or to the environment; attacks or bombings, by whatever means, of defenseless towns, villages, residences or buildings that serve no military purpose; and dictating sentences and carrying out executions without a prior judgment pronounced by a duly constituted court, with the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensable.¹⁸ But as the Greek sophist philosopher Thrasymachus (c. 459–400 B.C.) put it in Plato, “*justice is nothing more than the interest and the advantage of the stronger*”.¹⁹

President George W. Bush saw the International Criminal Court as a threat to the interests of the United States and didn’t ratify it to exempt his authorities and military personnel from war crimes and crimes against humanity.²⁰ But although the US didn’t adopt the Rome Statute, it did appeal to the tenets of the responsibility to protect the civilian population (RtoP) on February 26, 2011, 1 week after the start of the rebellion in Benghazi, accusing the Muammar Gaddafi government by stating there were “*widespread and systematic attacks underway in Libya against the civilian population, which may constitute crimes against humanity*”. The US counted on the support of its partners in the European Union, just as happened in the conflicts in Sierra Leone (Resolution 1132, 1997) and Yugoslavia-Kosovo (Resolution 1160). The indictment against Gaddafi was promptly sent to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. And less than a month later, the same Western powers managed to pass Resolution 1973, authorizing the establishment of a “*no-fly zone*” over Libyan airspace and of “*all necessary measures*” to protect civilians under threat of attack in Libya. Russia and China both had veto power, but abstained. The alleged purpose was to protect civilians, an ambiguous and questionable concept introduced through resolutions 1265 (1999), 1296 (2000),

¹⁷Principles of International Law Recognized in the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal and in the Judgment of the Tribunal 1950—Copyright © United Nations—2005—Text adopted by the International Law Commission at its second session, in 1950 and submitted to the General Assembly as a part of the Commission’s report covering the work of that session. The report, which also contains commentaries on the principles, appears in *Yearbook of the International Law Commission*, 1950, vol. II, § 97.

¹⁸*Rome Statute of International Criminal Court* (as corrected by the procès-verbaux of 10 November 1998 and 12 July 1999), Part 2, Jurisdiction, Admissibility And Applicable Law—Article 5—Crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court.

¹⁹Plato (2000), Book I, p. 12–13.

²⁰Maia (2012), p. 197.

1325 (2000), 1674 (2006) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and 1738 (2006), approved by the UN Security Council.

Article 2, paragraph 4, of the UN Charter prohibits its member states of using force in international relations, regardless of the reason, except in the exercise of legitimate defense (article 51) or in situations referred to in article 39 with authorization from the Security Council. In Libya's case, there was no evidence that justified the use of force under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, nor the outsourcing to NATO to intervene militarily in the country to support the rebellion against the government of Muammar Gaddafi, transforming it into a civil war. By outsourcing the war to NATO, Washington managed to dodge accountability to the public by operating behind the scenes.

The objective of Operation Odyssey Dawn, the military campaign unleashed by France, Great Britain and the United States immediately after the approval of Resolution 1973, was not actually to protect civilians. What the powers of the ultra-imperialist cartel really wanted was *regime change* in Libya. And so the task was delegated to NATO and the air war was baptized as Operation Unified Protector. But the United States continued to spend US\$10 million each day to sustain the operations, using *drones*, the unmanned aircraft guided by the CIA, and committing war crimes and human rights violations through the bombing and massacre of civilian populations, such as those that occurred in Sirte and several other cities.²¹

In an article published by *The Financial Times*, the President of the Council on Foreign Relations, Richard N. Haass, recognized himself that the “*humanitarian intervention introduced to save lives believed to be threatened*” was in fact a “*political intervention*” to produce “*regime change*”.²² This article confirmed *in flagranti* that Germans regarded *Heuchelei* (Hypocrisy) as one of the American virtues.²³ “*hypocrisy is a fashionable vice, and all fashionable vices pass for virtues*”, Molière (1622–1673) already wrote in the seventeenth century.²⁴

The fact that NATO assumed a UN mandate to protect civilians and used it as a shrewd pretext to attack Libya and overthrow Gaddafi's regime, constituted a violation of Article 5 of the treaty that created it on April 4, 1949, which directed “*each of the member states to consider an armed attack against one of the states as an armed attack against all of them*”. The objective, in a Cold War context, was mutual defense in the event of a virtual attack by the Soviet Union of a country in Western Europe.

²¹Charlie Savage, “2 Top Lawyers Lost to Obama in Libya War Policy Debate”, *The New York Times*, June 17, 2011.

²²Richard N. Haass, “Libya Now Needs Boots on the Ground”, *Financial Times*, August 22, 2011.

²³Weber (1988), vol. 1, p. 35.

²⁴Molière (1862), p. 72.

15.5 The Myth of the Civilizing Mission

President Jimmy Carter (1977–1981) stated that “*human rights is the soul of our foreign policy. And I say this with assurance, because human rights is the soul of our sense of nationhood.*”²⁵ In the Cold War context, this statement sought to recover the American prestige and image, both laying in the gutter after the war in Vietnam, the support to the *coups d'état* and military dictatorships in Latin America and the Watergate scandal. The moral force, the *ethos* of the United States had to be recovered, and a *rationale* had to be provided for its foreign policy in the fight against communism and the Soviet Union. President Carter was obviously protecting the interests of his country, but he was also expressing the conscience that was awaking in the American people at the time, evoking the democratic traditions of his culture.

However, in his work *Imperialism*, published in 1902, the British economist John A. Hobson (1858–1940) already diagnosed that this spirit of adventure, “*the American ‘mission of civilization’*”, was clearly subordinate to the driving economic forces, with direct and overwhelming control of *business men* over politicians, propelling imperialism.²⁶ He added that “*the adventurous enthusiasm of President Theodore Roosevelt and his ‘manifest destiny’ and ‘mission of civilization’ party must not deceive us.*”²⁷ The United States invoked humanitarian reasons to take Panama from Colombia and to build the transoceanic canal.²⁸ It also alleged humanitarian reasons to intervene in Europe during the First World War.²⁹ “*Les Etats-Unis impérialistes seront portés à violer le droit internationale*”, observed Joseph Patouillet in 1904, citing the intervention in Cuba (1898) as “*une guerre injustifiable et criminelle, un acte illégitime d’intervention par la violence dans les affaires d’un Etat voisin*”.³⁰

The right to humanitarian intervention, which the United States started to employ intensively between the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century with the support of the western powers, uses this “*mission of civilization*” myth and seeks to abolish the principle of national sovereignty to maintain American world domination. A domination that is fading and deteriorating in the midst of the economy’s growing internationalization and the consequent increase in social inequality, in addition to the economic and political recovery of Russia and the emergence of China and other powers. As a result of the acute contradiction between the economic dimension of capital, which is becoming ever more globalized, and the strictly territorial dimension of the nation-states, the

²⁵Jimmy Carter, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights Remarks at a White House Meeting Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Declaration’s Signing”, December 6, 1978.

²⁶Hobson (1975), p. 74–79.

²⁷Ibid., p. 77.

²⁸Patouillet (1904), p. 162–165.

²⁹Ibid., p. 163–164.

³⁰Ibid., p. 273.

United States is trying to assert itself as an ultra-imperial power, supported by its NATO vassals, and playing the part of *global cop*, waving its *big stick* on a planetary level. The domination of the borderless global economy requires a perpetual war of an infinite and unlimited scope, maintaining a climate of permanent tension and terror in order to control a system of multiple states and subjecting all countries to the dictates of the global market under the preeminence of financial capital and the multinational corporations.

The threat posed by a major power with the highest levels of industrial and technological development, but with a huge hunger for and gaps in consumption, especially energy, can be much greater when it's losing preeminence and wants to preserve it, than when it is still expanding its empire and needs to legitimize its economic and political hegemony. This is the situation in which the United States found itself between the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century: a superpower that was no longer a creditor, but a debtor, dependent on everything, highly vulnerable, facing a profound existential crisis since the disappearance of the specter of communism with the crumbling of the socialist bloc and the Soviet Union (1989–1991).

Presidents George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama ignored the law. The United States, its territories, possessions and Armed Forces were not being threatened in Kosovo (1998–1999), in the Gulf War (1991) or in Libya (2011). Even in the invasion of Iraq ordered by President George W. Bush on March 20, 2003, Congress adopted resolution H.J. 114 on October 16, 2002, and only under influence of the manipulation of public opinion, authorizing *the use of United States Armed Forces against Iraq*,³¹ under the allegation that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction and threatened peace. “*If you want to keep the peace, you’ve got to have the authorization to use force*,” George W. Bush told Congress.³² The Office of Strategic Influence (OSI), a Pentagon division created in secret by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, was tasked with promoting *psychological operations* (PSY-OPS) and manipulating public opinion through false information, the same goal as the *Ministerium für Propaganda und Volksaufklärung* headed by Joseph Goebbels during the Third Reich.

The military intervention in Iraq was a presidential war, just as the other wars of the United States since 1945, and it was only the first step in an escalation through which the George W. Bush administration (2001–2009) sought to redraw the

³¹107th Congress H. J. Res. 114—To authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces against Iraq.

³²Then Secretary of State, General Colin Powell, appeared before the UN Security Council on February 5, 2003 and showed satellite images, transcripts of intercepted phone conversations and other intelligence reports as “solid” evidence that Iraq had not complied with the UN resolution determining its disarmament. “*My colleagues, every statement I make today is backed up by sources, solid sources*.” “Powell presents US case to Security Council of Iraq’s failure to disarm”, UN News Centre—UN News Service. Subsequently, Colin Powell had to acknowledge himself that Saddam Hussein no longer possessed such weapons when the war was unleashed. Peter Slevin, “Powell Voices Doubts about Iraqi Weapons”, *The Washington Post*, 25/1/2004, p. A14.

geopolitical and strategic map in the Middle East, i.e., gain control of the Iraqi oil reserves, consolidate American predominance in the Islamic world, ensure the oil & gas pipeline routes, provide greater security to Israel, enable great business deals for American corporations, and prevent OPEC from replacing the dollar by the euro in international transactions, as Saddam Hussein was doing.

Following in the footsteps of President George W. Bush, President Barack Obama didn't pass any law or consult the attorneys of the Pentagon and the Department of Justice, nor did the request authorization from Congress to wage war in Libya, as he legally should according to Article 1, Section 8, of the US Constitution. This disrespect for the Constitution of the United States was no unprecedented fact, however. In its 230 years of history, the American Congress has only declared five wars: against England in 1812; against Mexico in 1846; against Spain in 1898; and the World Wars of 1914–1918 and 1939–1945. Thomas Paine (1737–1809), a libertarian and internationalist born in Norfolk (England) and one of the *Founding Fathers* of the United States, wrote in his classic work *Rights of Man* that the American Constitution was “to liberty what a grammar is to language: they define its parts of speech, and practically construct them into syntax”.³³ But “our federal government has perverted beyond recognition this system that the *Founding Fathers* created”, concluded the American scholars Thomas E. Woods Jr. and Kevin R. C. Gutzman.³⁴

Antonio Gramsci pointed out that to understand modern states from a critical and historical perspective, it was important to see to what extent “the written Constitution adapts itself (is adapted) to variations in political circumstances, especially those that are unfavorable to the ruling classes.”³⁵ In fact, the written constitution, or the *Blatt Papier* (the paper sheet), drafted by the *Founding Fathers* was perverted to the point of becoming unrecognizable, as it no longer corresponded to what Ferdinand Lassalle described as the “*tatsächlichen Machtverhältnisse*”,³⁶ i.e., the actual relations of power, which are the “*wirkliche Verfassung*” (the real Constitution) represented by financial capital, corporations and the military-industrial complex, among others. In his work *De la Démocratie en Amérique*, written between 1835 and 1840, Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859) found that the American ruler seemed to him “*aussi centralisé et plus énergique que celui des monarchies absolues de l'Europe*.”³⁷ A presidential republic where “every four years, Americans elect a king—but not only a king, also a high priest and prophet”,³⁸ concentrating more power than a constitutional monarch.³⁹

³³Paine (1996), p. 58.

³⁴Woods Jr. and Gutzman (2008), p. 202.

³⁵Gramsci (2000), p. 299.

³⁶Lassalle (1991), p. 86–87, 94–100, 106–115.

³⁷Tocqueville (1968), p. 157.

³⁸Novak (1974), p. 3.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 15.

In the 60 or so years after the Second World War until 2002, no US president requested authorization from Congress to send troops to fight overseas. In 1950, President Harry Truman drove the country into the Korean War (1950–1953) in the sole capacity as the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, without requesting authorization from Congress.⁴⁰ On November 7, 1973, in the midst of the Vietnam fiasco, a war that the United States lost after 58,269 of its soldiers were killed, 153,303 were injured and 1672 went missing, Congress passed the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148, Title 50, United States Code, Sections 1541–1548), confirming the principle that the President of the Republic could only send armed forces overseas with joint authorization of both houses of Congress or in the event of “*a national emergency created by attack upon the United States, its territories or possessions, or its armed forces.*”⁴¹

When speaking before the Parliament of Great Britain on May 25, 2011, President Barack Obama justified the intervention in Libya by saying he didn’t simply believe in the rights of nations, but in the rights of citizens.⁴² And he pointed out that it would be easy to say, at the beginning of repression in Libya, “*that none of this was our business—that a nation’s sovereignty is more important than the slaughter of civilians within its borders.*”⁴³ This argument carried some weight, Obama reflected, but he stressed that the United States “*are different*” and that it embraced the principle of “*broader responsibility*”,⁴⁴ without considering the principles of national sovereignty and non-intervention in the affairs of other States to be self-evident. And that was the reason why “*we stopped the massacre in Libya.*”⁴⁵

In his State of the Union address of January 24, 2012, President Obama boasted that the tide of war was receding, that a wave of change was washing over the Middle East and North Africa, from Tunis to Cairo, from Sana to Tripoli; that Gaddafi, the dictator with the longest rule, was gone; and that he had no doubt that the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria would soon discover that the forces of change could not be reversed and that human dignity could not be denied. President

⁴⁰Woods Jr. and Gutzman (2008), p. 183.

⁴¹War Powers Resolution—Joint Resolution Concerning the War Powers of Congress and the President. 2008 Lillian Goldman Law Library—Yale Law Library, accessed http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/warpower.asp

⁴²Remarks by the President to Parliament in London, United Kingdom—Westminster Hall, London, United Kingdom. The White House—Office of the Press Secretary—For Immediate Release May 25, 2011 3:47 P.M. BST.

⁴³*Ibid.*

⁴⁴In a memorandum dated August 4, 2011, President Barack Obama signed the principle that preventing “*mass atrocities and genocide*” lay at the heart of American national security and moral responsibility. Presidential Study Directive on Mass Atrocities (Presidential Study Directive/Psd-10), The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, August 4, 2011.

⁴⁵Remarks by the President to Parliament in London, United Kingdom—Westminster Hall, London, United Kingdom. The White House—Office of the Press Secretary—For Immediate Release May 25, 2011 3:47 P.M. BST.

Obama ultimately admitted that “*how this incredible transformation will end remains uncertain.*”⁴⁶

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was more realistic and lucid, however. He published an article in the *Washington Post* observing that, although the so-called Arab Spring was presented as a regional revolution led by young people in favor of liberal principles and democratic rights, Libya was not actually being governed by these forces and “*hardly continues as a state,*” neither was Egypt, whose largest and “*possibly permanent*” constituency was overwhelmingly Islamic; nor did democrats seem to predominate in the Syrian opposition.⁴⁷ He pointed out that the consensus of the Arab League on Syria was not shaped by countries previously distinguished by the practice or advocacy of democracy, but that it instead reflected the millennium-old conflict between Shia and Sunni, with the Sunni majority trying to reclaim dominance over the Alawite minority (represented by the Bashar al-Assad regime), which is why many minority groups, such as Druzes, Kurds and Christians, objected to the regime change in Syria.⁴⁸

Kissinger stated that the doctrine of humanitarian intervention in the revolutions of the Middle East would prove to be “*unsustainable*”, unless it was linked to the concept of US national security. Any intervention, he argued, would have to consider the strategic significance and social cohesion of the country, including the possibility of fracturing its complex sectarian makeup, and assess what can plausibly arise in place of the old regime. And in the case of the Middle East, Kissinger noted, one could see that the traditional fundamentalist forces, strengthened by the alliance with the radical revolutionaries, threatened to dominate the process, while the social network that had triggered the revolt was being marginalized.⁴⁹

In another article, also published in *The Washington Post*, he pondered the purpose of removing Bashar al-Assad from the Syrian government, writing that a *regime change* policy almost by definition creates the need for *nation-building*, and that if the latter fails, international order begins to disintegrate. These empty, lawless spaces, such as in Yemen, Somalia, northern Mali, Libya and northwestern Pakistan, could also open up in Syria with the collapse of the State, turning it into fertile ground for terrorism or the supply of weapons to neighboring countries in the absence of a central authority. He warned: “*Who replaces the ousted leadership, and what do we know about it? Will the outcome improve the human condition and the security situation? Or do we risk repeating the experience with the Taliban, armed by America to fight the Soviet invader but then turned into a security challenge to us?*”⁵⁰

⁴⁶President Obama’s 2012 State of the Union Address, *USA Today*, 25/1/2012.

⁴⁷Henry A. Kissinger, “A new doctrine of intervention?”, *Washington Post*, March 31, 2012.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰Henry A. Kissinger, “Syrian intervention risks upsetting global order”, *The Washington Post*, June 2, 2012.

There was no acceptable justifications to engage in war (*jus ad bellum*) against Libya. The available information was contradictory and vague. On February 22, the International Coalition Against War Criminals estimated that 519 rebels had been killed, 3980 wounded and more than 1500 had gone missing, but Human Rights Watch reported that at least 233 had been killed, and the *Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme* estimated between 300 and 400 casualties. The Venezuelan ambassador in Libya, Afif Tajeldine, who had moved to Tunisia, declared to *La Radio del Sur* that prior to NATO's entry, 118 people had been killed in the country, and that after the bombings began, more than 70,000 died in Tripoli and its surroundings.⁵¹

The number of deaths in Tunisia caused by the government of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali reached 300 during the uprising. In Egypt, this figure reached at least 846 during the peaceful demonstrations in Tahrir Square against the regime of Hosni Mubarak, whose security forces—the State Security Investigative Service (SSIS)—and police continued to torture and kill hundreds of opponents. On those occasions, the Western powers failed to propose any resolution to protect the civilian population. The rebels in Libya, however, were no unarmed civilians protesting peacefully against the government, as was the case in Tunisia and Egypt, and they relied on the support of foreign special forces, including CIA advisors who were present even before the approval of Resolution 1973 by the UN Security Council.

15.6 NATO Oversteps Its Statute of Creation

The United States, France and England didn't just support the rebels in Libya. As laid out in Chap. 14, American and British war ships launched approximately 124 cruise missiles against Libya to destroy Gaddafi's defenses, accruing costs that far exceeded US\$100 million (see note 33 of the same chapter). And the US didn't observe any ethical standards during the campaign (*jus in bello*) or after the victory and the barbaric assassination of Muammar Gaddafi (*jus post bellum*), and neither did France, Great Britain and its allies in the Middle East.

Article 5 of the NATO Treaty only authorizes action, including the use of armed force, "*to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.*"⁵² It does not

⁵¹"A um ano da invasão da Líbia: pobreza, divisão e morte", *Diário da Liberdade* (Galiza), 3/4/2012.

⁵²"Article 5. The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area." The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington D.C., April 4, 1949.

provide for interference in North Africa. After the collapse of the Soviet bloc in the 1990s, NATO started to act outside its jurisdiction without any other force to counteract it. In 1995, it intervened in Bosnia and, in 1999, when it incorporated the States belonging to the defunct Warsaw Pact, it bombed Serbia during the Kosovo war. Since 2001, NATO embraced the United States' war in Afghanistan as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and then extended its operations to Africa, providing logistical support to the African Union in Darfur, in western Sudan, bordering Libya, in the Central African Republic and in Chad. Between 2005 and 2007, it transported numerous African Union troops to Darfur, in western Sudan, and in 2010, it led 2500 soldiers from Uganda and Burundi to Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, in order to carry out counter-insurgency operations.

NATO maintained an outpost with 2000 American soldiers and the headquarters of the Combined Joint Task Force of the Pentagon in the Horn of Africa, in Djibouti. NATO uses the semi-autonomous state of Puntland (northeastern Somalia) as base for its Operation Ocean Shield to fight piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea. Puntland harbors Shabeel, where the Horn Petroleum Corporation, a subsidiary of the Canadian company Africa Oil Corp. (CVE: AOI), is prospecting for oil at a depth of 2703 m, indicating the existence of reserves (possibly the 14th largest in the world) in the valleys Dharoor and Nugaal, with more than 10 billion barrels.⁵³

Not for nothing, the British Prime Minister David Cameron hosted 55 country delegations for a conference on Somalia on February 23, 2012. This conference counted with the presence of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and sought to obtain financial support to combat terrorism, provide humanitarian aid, stabilize and rebuild the country.⁵⁴ Soon after, the British Foreign Secretary William Hague traveled to Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, to talk with President Abdirahman Mohamed Farole about the country's reconstruction. But the underlying British concern wasn't the humanitarian crisis. It was oil.

Although NATO acknowledged that it "*is a regional, not a global organization*", it launched its New Strategic Concept in 2009 under the title *NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement*,⁵⁵ overstepping its scope and jurisdiction so as to allow its forces to intervene anywhere beyond the North Atlantic, under the most varied of pretexts, such as fighting terrorism, protecting the environment,

⁵³Mark Townsend and Tariq Abdinisir, "Britain leads dash to explore for oil in war-torn Somalia. Government offers humanitarian aid and security assistance in the hope of a stake in country's future energy industry", *The Guardian*, February 25, 2012.

⁵⁴Foreign & Commonwealth Office, February 23, 2012, Full text of the Communique from the London Conference on Somalia at Lancaster House on 23 February, accessed <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=PressS&id=727,627,582>.

⁵⁵NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement, Analysis and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO, May 17, 2010, accessed http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_63654.htm.

protecting civilians and preventing human rights violations.⁵⁶ These themes were incorporated in several resolutions of the UN Security Council in order to change the international legal order, adapting it to a globalized capitalist economy under the hegemony of the United States and its European partners after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc.

15.7 Brazil Rejects NATO's Operation in the South Atlantic

During the debates regarding NATO's new strategic concept, Portugal tried to make an explicit reference to the South Atlantic, Africa and the Maghrib.⁵⁷ In 2009, its minister of Foreign Affairs, Luís Amado, advocated a "*change of NATO's strategic focus in the geographical area of the Atlantic*", taking advantage of the "*privileged relations (of Portugal) with the African continent, the Mediterranean and, particularly, Brazil*."⁵⁸ He insisted that NATO should "*reset*" itself in the Atlantic, and underlined the role Portugal could play because of its "*special relationship*" with Africa and Brazil. He also emphasized that with the "*shift*" of the geopolitical and economical axis to Asia and the Pacific, the construction of a new strategic concept of the Atlantic Alliance should "*give attention to the Mediterranean and to relations in the South Atlantic*", since it is an "*alliance based on geography that used the Atlantic as its reference, and that is where it should be focused in order to maintain its own raison d'être*."⁵⁹

In that same year, 2009, British naval and air forces, including Typhoon planes, conducted war exercises under the codename Cape Bayonet in the Malvinas/Falklands, simulating an invasion by enemy (Argentine) forces, as had occurred in April 1982.⁶⁰ These exercises occurred at the same time that the prospecting for oil and gas was increasing pace around the archipelago, whose submerged reserves were estimated at 60 billion barrels, almost comparable to the North Sea.⁶¹

⁵⁶"Because of its visibility and power, NATO may well be called upon to respond to challenges that do not directly affect its security but that still matter to its citizens and that will contribute to the Alliance's international standing. These challenges could include the humanitarian consequences of a failed state, the devastation caused by a natural disaster, or the dangers posed by genocide or other massive violations of human rights." Ibid.

⁵⁷Pedro Seabra, "South Atlantic crossfire: Portugal in-between Brazil and NATO", Portuguese Institute of International Relations and Security, *IPRIS Viewpoints*, November 2010, p. 12.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹"NATO — Luís Amado defende 'recentramento' no Atlântico e sublinha papel de Portugal pelas relações com África e Brasil", 26/3/2009—Público—Agência Lusa.

⁶⁰"Security Industry — U.K. mounts warfare exercise in Falklands", *Business News*, December 28, 2009.

⁶¹Ibid.

Through Great Britain and the United States, which reactivated the Fourth Fleet in 2008, NATO was actually already present in the South Atlantic.⁶² And at the end of the II Roosevelt Forum on April 16, 2010, promoted by the Luso-American Foundation in Angra do Heroísmo (Azores) to discuss the new challenges faced by Europe and the United States and the role of the emerging powers of the South Atlantic and Pacific, the Portuguese minister of defense, Augusto Santos Silva, once again insisted on the adoption of an “*effective security and defense policy in which all could find themselves in this Euro-Atlantic space*”,⁶³ noting that Portugal could help NATO look to the South Atlantic.⁶⁴

The idea was that the South and North Atlantic should not be separated, creating the concept of “the Atlantic basin”. But the Brazilian Minister of Defense at the time, Nelson Jobim, attacked this strategy, which sought to expand NATO's area of intervention, stating that neither Brazil nor South America could accept the United States establishing the right to intervene in “*any theater of operation*” under “*the most varied pretexts*.”⁶⁵ And at the end of the International Conference *The Future of the Transatlantic Community*, in Lisbon (2010), he accused NATO of continuing “*to serve as a tool for the advancement of the interests of its principal member, the United States of America, and, secondarily, of its European allies*.”⁶⁶

Minister Nelson Jobim expressed the same thoughts in Washington at a meeting with Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Homeland Security. Despite the Brazilian opposition, the Portuguese minister of defense, Augusto Santos Silva, told the news agency Lusa that NATO was neglecting and not giving due attention to the South Atlantic Ocean in its new strategic concept. And by emphasizing that the South Atlantic was “*strategic*”, he recommended that it should be included in NATO's “fundamental lines of action” for the coming decade.⁶⁷

⁶²The Fourth Fleet of the U.S. Navy operated in the South Atlantic between 1943 and 1950.

⁶³Portugal considers the political triangle linking the country to the Madeira and Azores archipelagos to be a strategic Euro-Atlantic space, hence its projection to the South Atlantic.

⁶⁴The government of Portugal and defended the extension of NATO to the South Atlantic since the time of the dictatorship of António de Oliveira Salazar (1932–1968), in order to defend Africa from a communist attack and ensure the freedom of maritime traffic, the Cape route, through which oil was transported to Western Europe and the United States. The United States possess the Lajes Base in Terceira (Azores).

⁶⁵Claudia Antunes, “Ministro da Defesa ataca estratégia militar de EUA e Otan para o Atlântico Sul”, *Folha de S. Paulo*, 4/11/2010.

⁶⁶Minister Nelson Jobim, speech at the end of the International Conference *The Future of the Transatlantic Community*, Lisbon, Institute of National Defense, 10/9/2010.

⁶⁷“NATO neglecting South Atlantic in new strategic concept — MoD — Draft recommendations for a new strategic concept for NATO do not pay sufficient attention to the South Atlantic, says Portugal's defense minister, promising to raise the issue with alliance leader”, *The Portugal News Online*, 18/9/2010.

Chapter 16

Humanitarian Intervention and the Credibility Issue in Libya

16.1 Intervention in Libya Kills Tens of Thousands and Discredits the Humanitarian Protection Doctrine

The operations in Libya discredited NATO and the humanitarian intervention doctrine for the protection of civilians. From March 31 to October 22, NATO's Operation Unified Protector carried out 26,281 sorties against the Gaddafi regime, while a total of 17 NATO war ships patrolled the Mediterranean with the mission of blocking any weapon shipments to Libya.¹ These sorties performed by the American, French, British,² Italian and other NATO air forces destroyed 5900 military installations, but they also killed between 90,000 and 120,000 Libyans and foreigners, devastated cities and displaced more than 2 million people, including workers from other countries.³ In the city of Sormam, 45 miles to the west of Tripoli, roman ruins were destroyed with ground penetrating BLU-109 (*Bunker Busters*) bombs.

Even the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Franco Frattini, told the press that NATO was damaging its credibility, killing many civilians in the bombings.⁴ And the American congressman Dennis Kucinich demanded on the floor of the House of Representatives that the NATO commanders should be held accountable and

¹NATO JFC Naples, *NATO and Libya, Operational Media Update for October 22, 2011*. Stefan Hasler, "Explaining Humanitarian Intervention in Libya and Non-Intervention in Syria", Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, June 2012, Unclassified, Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89), Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18 93943-5000.

²France carried out one third of the attacks, Great Britain 21%, and the United States 19%. C. J. Chivers and Eric Schmitt, "In Strikes on Libya by NATO, an Unspoken Civilian Toll", *The New York Times*, December 17, 2011.

³Franklin Lamb, "Anatomy of a NATO War Crime", Information Clearing House, December 17, 2011.

⁴"Libya civilian deaths 'sap NATO credibility' — Italy's foreign minister says military alliance was losing the propaganda war to Gaddafi", *Al Jazeera*, June 20, 2011.

brought to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for bombing and killing civilians in Libya. “NATO’s top commanders may have acted under color of international law, but they are not exempt from international law”, stressed Kucinich in the official statement released by his office. He wrote to the prosecutor of the ICC, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, and to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, calling for an end to the expansion of the use of drones by NATO, which were killing civilians. He also insisted that, if Gaddafi should answer before the criminal court, then the NATO commanders should also be prosecuted because of the victims caused by the bombings.⁵

Oana Lungescu, NATO spokeswoman in Brussels, admitted in December 2011 that “it appears that innocent civilians may have been killed or injured.”⁶ But the thousands of innocent civilians killed and wounded were not the only victims of the NATO bombing campaign. The air strikes, which also used drones and missiles fired from war ships, devastated the infrastructure in Libya, destroying hospitals, food warehouses and stores, means of communication and distribution, vehicles, TV stations and 1600 civilian buildings in most cities of the country, including Tripoli, Surman, Mizdah, Ziltan, Ga’a, Majer, Ajdabiya, Misurata, Sirte, Barga (Brega), Sabratha and Benghazi.⁷ NATO launched at least 7700 bombs or missiles and also destroyed the reservoir and the machines of the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer System, which pumped 6,500,000 cubic meters of fresh water per day to Tripoli, Benghazi, Sirte and other cities. This aquifer of essential fossil water, located south of the Sahara, supplied 70% of the population in Libya, a country where deserts cover 95% of the land.⁸ It was known as the Great Man-Made River and its construction had cost the Gaddafi government approximately US\$25 billion.

Great Britain officially declared almost £300 million in spending on the war against the Gaddafi regime, i.e., to destroy the infrastructure in Libya, and the UK Department of Trade and Investment expected to obtain £200 billion in profits with the participation of British companies over the next 10 years through contracts to rebuild the electricity, water, health and education systems. John Hilary, executive director of the anti-poverty charity *War on Want*, told the TV station *Russia Today* (RT) in an interview that American companies had won the best contracts after the war in Iraq. “We bomb, we destroy, and then we get the contracts to rebuild afterwards,” he added, with the observation that the business interests that

⁵“Libya: NATO Generals Should Be taken to ICC says US Rep. Dennis Kucinich”, *Afrique.com*. “Kucinich Calls for NATO Accountability”. John Glaser, “-Kucinich: NATO Not Exempt From Law — Top commanders should be held accountable for civilian deaths, Kucinich said in a statement”, *AntiWar.com*, August 23, 2011.

⁶C. J. Chivers and Eric Schmitt, “In Strikes on Libya by NATO, an Unspoken Civilian Toll”, *The New York Times*, December 17, 2011.

⁷Franklin Lamb, “End Game for Benghazi Rebels as Libyan Tribes Prepare to Weigh In?”, *Foreign Policy Journal*, August 3, 2011. C. J. Chivers and Eric Schmitt, “In Strikes on Libya by NATO, an Unspoken Civilian Toll”, *The New York Times*, December 17, 2011.

⁸“NATO bombs the Great Man-Made River”, Human Rights Investigations, July 27, 2011.

concerned Great Britain were always those of British Petroleum (BP) and Shell, which hoped to go to Libya once the sanctions were lifted.⁹

The British military costs were much higher than the £260 million announced by its Defense Secretary Liam Fox, however. According to the estimates by Francis Tusa, editor and defense analyst of the *Daily Mail*, the number of attacks carried out against the Gaddafi regime by the Royal Air Force (RAF) and the Royal Navy would cost £1.75 billion by the end of October 2011.¹⁰ The London newspaper *The Guardian* revealed that the price tag exceeded £600 million, potentially reaching £1.25 billion with the extra expenses.¹¹ According to information from Whitehall, until then Great Britain had already spent £20.34 billion in just two wars—Afghanistan and Iraq.¹² Its public debt had hit a record £1 trillion by December 2011.¹³

The French minister of defense, Gérard Longuet, calculated at the beginning of September 2011 that the costs of the war in Libya would amount to €320 million by the end of the month. They were probably much higher. A 1-hour flight in a Rafale fighter guzzled €13,000 and in a Mirage between €10,000 and €11,000. Each Tomahawk missile purchased from the United States cost US\$650,000. And dozens were fired by France against Libya. If the engagement in operations abroad had cost France €900 million in 2010,¹⁴ then surely the expenses with the 11 months of war in Libya in 2011 would exceed €1 billion. Great Britain carried out 1300 sorties against Libya during the campaign (25% of the total); France 1200, Italy 600, and the Canadian Frigate HMCS *Charlottetown* (FHH 339) carried out 350 bombings after May 5. Denmark and Norway dropped 700 bombs on Libya, Belgium carried out 60 sorties and Sweden sent 120 soldiers and 8 aircraft to the region.¹⁵

The United States spent around \$1.1 billion or much more (neither the CIA, nor the State Department, nor other agencies publicly revealed their spending) with the “covert intervention” in Libya to overthrow the Muammar Gaddafi regime in 2011, providing missiles, surveillance aircraft, drones and all sorts of ammunition to

⁹“Britain spent £ 300 million to destroy Libya’s infrastructure & expects £ 200 billion in reconstruction”, *CounterPsyOps*. “British bombs, destroy and rebuild”, *Press TV*. Also: The United Kingdom’s costs in the War in Libya. *The Guardian*. In: <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/sep/26/uk-operations-libya-costs>. Accessed 05.05.2015.

¹⁰Ian Drury, “Libyan campaign ‘could cost UK £1.75billion’ (after politicians told us it would be a few million)”, *Daily Mail*, October 30, 2011.

¹¹Nick Hopkins, “UK operations in Libya: the full costs broken down”, *The Guardian*, September 26, 2011.

¹²Gerri Peev, “UK’s £20bn bill for fighting Iraq and Afghan wars”, *Daily Mail*, June 21, 2010. “Cost of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan tops £20bn”, *BBC UK*, June 20, 2010.

¹³“Government debt rises to a record of £ 1tn”, *BBC News Business*, January 24, 2012.

¹⁴“La guerre en Libye aura coûté 320 millions d’euros, selon Longuet”, *Le Monde*, 6/9/2011. “Combien Ça Coûte ? — Le prix de l’intervention en Libye”, *Big Browser, Blog LeMonde*. Emmanuel Cugny, “Guerre en Libye, le coût pour la France”, *France Info*, Mars 22, 2011.

¹⁵Richard Norton-Taylor and Simon Rogers, “Nato operations in Libya: data journalism breaks down which country does what”, *The Guardian*, October 31, 2011.

NATO.¹⁶ NATO's Operation Unified Protector cost billions of dollars and involved thousands of military and civilian personnel, at least 13,000 from 18 countries, especially from the United States, with approximately 8000 serving on board ships and fighter planes.

16.2 Gaddafi Lynched, Brutalized, Abused, Murdered

This was the immense force deployed by NATO and the United States to destroy Libya, including more than 26,281 aerial sorties, and to assassinate Muammar Gaddafi. For this, no doubt, was what the NATO allies intended. In a meeting with the National Transitional Council and the so-called rebels, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that Washington wanted to see him “*captured or killed*.”¹⁷ Gaddafi's private residence was even destroyed by a bombing, which was clearly an attempt to eliminate him.¹⁸ The president of the National Transitional Council, Mahmoud Jibril, confirmed that Gaddafi was actually captured alive, but unlike his official explanation, Gaddafi didn't die from lethal injuries in a crossfire minutes before reaching the hospital.¹⁹ Gaddafi was lynched, brutalized, abused, killed and dragged through the streets of Sirte, his home town, where he was about to escape into desert in a convoy before he was detected and attacked by a *Predator* drone, which fired a Hellfire missile (costing US\$10 million in 2011) on his vehicle.

Russia's President Vladimir Putin blamed the United States for the murder of Gaddafi, saying that drones, including American ones, had attacked Gaddafi's car convoy, and that special forces had called the so-called rebels over the radio, who then killed Gaddafi without investigation or trial.²⁰ A young man assumed responsibility for the fatal shot.²¹ In an exclusive interview to the BBC, Omran el Oweib, the commander of the militia that captured Gaddafi, said that he was dragged out of the drain pipe where he was hiding, took about ten steps and then fell to the ground while being attacked by a group of combatants.²² Gaddafi was lynched to cries of

¹⁶John Barry, “America's Secret Libya War”, *The Daily Best*, August 30, 2011.

¹⁷“Será possível? Hillary Clinton pregou publicamente um assassinato?!”, *Quoriana*, Blog Leonor en Líbia (de Trípoli), article published in *Russia Today*, edited by Mathaba (The Libyan Resistance), 21/10/2011.

¹⁸“Un bâtiment de la résidence de Kadhafi détruit par l'Otan”, *Le Figaro*, 25/4/2011.

¹⁹“The mystery of Muammar Gaddafi's death”, *Pravda*, 21/10/2011. “Libya's Col Muammar Gaddafi killed, says NTC”, *BBC News Africa*, October 20, 2011.

²⁰“Putin accuses US of role in Gaddafi death”, *Daily Mail*, December 16, 2011. Maxim Tkachenko, “Putin points to U.S. role in Gadhafi's killing”, *CNN*, December 15, 2011.

²¹Damien Gayle, “‘I killed Gaddafi’, claims Libyan rebel as most graphic video yet of dictator being beaten emerges”, *Daily Mail*, October 25, 2011.

²²Gabriel Gatehouse, “Libyan commander describes Muammar Gaddafi's last moments”, *BBC News Africa*, October 22, 2011. “Gaddafi's death details revealed”, China.org.cn, October 23, 2011.

Allahu Akhbar (Allah is great). The corpse was then taken to the city of Misrata and placed in a cooled compartment along with his son Mutassim, also assassinated.

President Obama celebrated Gaddafi's death, stating that the coalition, which included the United States, NATO and Arab nations, persevered through the summer to "*protect Libyan civilians*". He added that this happened when "*we see the strength of American leadership across the world*" and "*we've demonstrated what collective action can achieve in the 21st century.*"²³ Vice President Joe Biden was more to the point and revealed that the expenses were higher than advertised: "*In this case, America spent \$2 billion and didn't lose a single life.*"²⁴ The United States had spent US\$2 billion to destroy a country and take the lives of thousands of its inhabitants, using discontent Salafists, al-Qa'ida terrorists and special forces from the Sunni autocracies of the Gulf, especially Qatar, without risking the life of a single American soldier.

16.3 The Scramble for Libyan Oil

The war in Libya opened new markets for the United States and the other western powers, providing a way to end the industrial depression, develop its productive forces, mitigate the effects of the crisis with the expansion of the consumption cycle of capital, and continue the process of capitalist reproduction. Western oil, construction and infrastructure companies turned to Libya soon after the murder of Gaddafi in search for opportunities, just as they had done in Iraq and Afghanistan. They recognized the great business potential of the country and believed that the National Transitional Council and the new government to be established would have the goodwill to grant them investment contracts because of the support NATO had given them during the uprising.²⁵ Several cables published by WikiLeaks revealed that the United States Embassy in Tripoli had been plotting since 2009 to prevent state enterprises, such as Russia's Gazprom, from obtaining control of the major oil facilities in Libya.²⁶

On August 22, 2011, with Gaddafi still alive in Sirte, *The New York Times* reported that the war had not ended in Tripoli, but that "*the scramble*" to ensure access to Libya's oil wealth had already begun, and that the western powers—especially the NATO members who had given crucial air support to the rebels—wanted to ensure first pickings for their companies in the exploration of the oil in

²³Remarks by the President on the Death of Muammar Qaddafi, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, October 20, 2011.

²⁴Pepe Escobar, "The Roving Eye — How the West won Libya", *Asia Times*, October 22, 2011.

²⁵Scott Shane, "West Sees Opportunity in Postwar Libya for Businesses", *The New York Times*, October 28, 2011.

²⁶Kevin G. Hall, "WikiLeaks cables show that it was all about the oil", *McClatchy Newspapers*, July 12, 2011.

the country.²⁷ A week before Gaddafi's death, who was killed on October 20, a delegation of 80 French companies arrived in Libya to meet with members of the National Transitional Council. Shortly after, the British Defense Secretary Philip Hammond urged the British companies to go to Libya. "*There is a gold rush of sorts taking place right now,*" said David Hamod, president and CEO of the National U. S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce.²⁸ And with Gaddafi's corpse still on display in Misrata, the British company Trango Special Projects was already offering its services to British investors.

After NATO had devastated its cities, Libya literally needed to reconstruct the hospitals, clinics, schools, roads, bridges, hotels, residential complexes and banks that lay in ruins, in addition to training and equipping its new armed forces. A task, no doubt, to be performed by such contractors as DynCorp, KBR, MRPI and others hired by the Pentagon. Horace Campbell, professor of African Studies at the University of Syracuse in New York, explained that the American involvement in the bombing of Libya sought to open the gates for privatizations, benefiting the companies hired by the Pentagon—DynCorp (NYSE:DCP), MRPI and KBR Inc.—which used AFRICOM as a front for their predatory business operations in Africa,²⁹ using the threat of armed force for economic and geopolitical leverage.³⁰

AFRICOM hadn't actually had a Marine Corps battalion on its bases since it was created by President George W. Bush in 2007. Its activities were carried out by "*private military contractors*" (PMCs), i.e., by the mercenaries from DynCorp International and co., which provided logistical support and military training to African armed forces at a cost of US\$100 million within the scope of the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program.³¹ DynCorp had obtained an exclusive US\$20 million contract to support operations and maintain the Edward B. Kesselly Barracks and Camp Ware in Liberia.³² Other companies, including PAE Government Services (a Lockheed Martin subsidiary), and Protection Strategies Inc., won contracts valued at US\$375 million each, and KBR Inc., a former Halliburton subsidiary, was hired to support the three military bases in Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia used by the U.S. Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa.³³ Northrop Grumman, in turn, was awarded US\$75 million to train 40,000 African peacekeepers for 5 years, and MPRI (Military Professional Resources Inc.), a division of L-3 Communications, was hired by the Department

²⁷Clifford Krauss, "The Scramble for Access to Libya's Oil Wealth Begins", *The New York Times*, August 22, 2011.

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹"AFRICOM as Libya Bombing Motive", Common Dreams—Institute for Public Accuracy (IPA), Washington, March 24, 2011.

³⁰Oliver Takwa, "The Crisis in Libya — the Imperative of rushing the ASF", *The Current Analyst*, May 21, 2011.

³¹"U.S. Military Contractors Move into Africa", AllGov.com, March 24, 2010.

³²"DynCorp International Wins \$20 Million Africap Task Order In Liberia", Press Release.

³³"U.S. Military Contractors Move into Africa", AllGov.com, March 24, 2010.

of State to train military personnel in Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Senegal, in addition to providing assistance to the armed forces of South Africa.³⁴

By destroying the cities of Libya, NATO burned through the military surplus and simultaneously created business opportunities and profits for American, British and French companies, among others, through the reconstruction activities that were to be paid for by the oil industry, which was mostly spared and remained intact. The two refineries in Zawiya, the port city that connects Tripoli to Tunisia, survived, and 6 months after the end of the conflict, they were once again operational with 2300 employees, producing gasoline and other fuels at 100% capacity.³⁵ They were occupied several times by militias, however, including the Zintan militia, who demanded payment because they argued that they had protected them during the war. In any case, oil output reached 1.5 million bpd by May 2012, a level that was only slightly lower than before the war, around 1.77 million bpd.³⁶ In 2007, Libya had proven oil reserves of the order of 3.5 billion barrels, which represented about 3.5% of global reserves.³⁷ And in July 2012, British Petroleum announced it would resume exploiting the concessions it had been granted.

Not for nothing, some human rights groups were already pointing to a decline in American credibility in the field of human rights.³⁸ The US was fast losing influence in the Middle East and the Maghrib as the Muslims were starting to see its policies—under the guise of the *War on Terror*—as an attempt to convert a broad movement within the Islamic world to accept the values of modernity, violating the tenets of the Qur'an and capturing their energy resources.³⁹

16.4 Libya, a Country Without Government or State

A report of the *United Nations Human Rights Council* stressed that the anti-Gaddafi militias and NATO “committed serious violations” of human rights “including war crimes and breaches of international rights law”.⁴⁰ The rebels, who were sustained by the United States and NATO and who Obama celebrated as heroes, or *freedom-fighters*, were mostly Qatari special forces, terrorists, sectarians and bandits who took advantage of the war to kill and pillage. They plundered houses, set fire to

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵James Foley, “Libya’s Oil Industry Defies Expectations”, *PBS NewsHour*, July 6, 2012.

³⁶Reese Erlich, “Militias Become Power Centers in Libya”, *Roots Action*, July 25, 2012. *The Progressive*, September 2012 issue.

³⁷Keenan (2009), p. 126.

³⁸Peck (2010), p. 247.

³⁹Ibid., 248.

⁴⁰Neil MacFarquhar, “U.N. Faults NATO and Libyan Authorities in Report”, *The New York Times*, March 2, 2012.

homes, hospitals, stores and other properties, abused human rights and committed war crimes in four cities they captured in the mountains of Nafusa, beating civilians, torturing and summarily executing Gaddafi supporters.⁴¹

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has extensively documented the looting of homes and stores, the burning of the residencies of suspected Gaddafi supporters and, even more disturbing, the “vandalization” of three medical clinics and small hospitals, including the theft of medical equipment in cities like al-Awaniya, Rayayinah, Zawiyat al-Bagul and al-Qawalish. “*The rebel conduct was disturbing*,” said Fred Abrahams, Special Advisor to Human Rights Watch.⁴² The bombing of the cities of Bani Walid and Sirte proved that NATO didn’t intervene in Libya to protect civilians. The civilians in these and in other cities were the biggest victims of NATO and its “*freedom fighters*,” and by mid-2012, the country was still a mess.

“*The rebels are worse than rats. NATO is the same as Usamah bin Ladin*,” a resident of Sirte told the correspondent of the British daily *The Telegraph*, saying that now ten families were living in the same house with little food, insufficient clean water and no gas. And he added: “*before we lived healthy lives, (. . .) now we live worse than animals*.”⁴³ Another inhabitant of Sirte, Susan Farjan, told the same journalist that “*we lived in democracy under Gaddafi, he was not a dictator. I lived in freedom, Libyan women had full human rights*.”⁴⁴ Families in Sirte said that the NATO bombings, and later the militias of the National Transitional Council, had turned the region into a “*living hell*.”⁴⁵ “*I saw missiles and bombs and rebel fighters. There were missiles everywhere*,” noted 80-year old Mabrouka Farjan, claiming that life under Gaddafi was “*good*” and that they were never afraid. Another woman exclaimed: “*They are killing our children. Why are they doing this? For what? Life was good before!*”⁴⁶ NATO and its so-called rebels had devastated Sirte. Only rubble remained.

After Gaddafi’s assassination, the UNSC announced the suspension of Resolution 1973 on October 27, 2011, ending the *no-fly zone*. The United States, France and England had deceitfully violated and intervened in Libya in order to bring about *regime change* and the consequent opening of the market for the investments and capital accumulation by their corporations. But the so-called rebels, together with the NATO forces, the *jihadists* from the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, the al-Qa’ida terrorists, the Qatari special forces and others, continued the killing of

⁴¹CNN Wire Staff, “Libyan rebels looted and beat civilians, rights group says”, *CNN*, July 13, 2011.

⁴²“Libyan rebels abused civilians: Human Rights Watch”, *BBC News Africa*, July 12, 2011.

⁴³Ruth Sherlock, “Gaddafi loyalists stranded as battle for Sirte rages”, *The Telegraph*, October 2, 2011.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

Gaddafi supporters or opposing tribes, and the massacre of innocent civilians.⁴⁷ The prisons were overflowing with alleged Gaddafi loyalists, black immigrants accused of being mercenaries, if they were not immediately executed.

Not for nothing, former President Bill Clinton declared on March 25, shortly after the UNSC adopted Resolution 1973 and NATO began bombing Libya, that it would: “*be harder to achieve stability in these countries than to overthrow the old order. So now I think they are shooting at an uncertainty.*”⁴⁸ And the president of the Council on Foreign Relations, Richard N. Haass, urged President Obama to reconsider his decision to not put “*American boots on the ground*” and, consequently, to occupy Libya with US troops, since the Libyans seemed incapable of handling the situation after the fall of Gaddafi and required foreign assistance.⁴⁹ Gaddafi’s fall had left a political *vacuum*. The State, which should be characterized by the monopoly on violence, had disappeared. Real power was represented by 60 sectarian and tribal militias, armed and in conflict with each other. Each one claimed a region, a city, an area, and would not accept any interference. They refused to submit to the National Transitional Council. Mustafa Abdel-Jalil, president of the National Transitional Council, had no legitimacy or authority. He was ineffective.

16.5 Political *Vacuum* and Tribal Disputes

Libya became a patchwork of the semi-autonomous fiefdoms of each militia.⁵⁰ The militias, who had been armed by the Western powers and who’d also captured the arsenals of Gaddafi’s regime, formed belts around regions and cities, such as Misrata, Zintan and Zuwarah, and rekindled their tribal idiosyncrasies. The head of the Zintan militia, Mokhtar al-Akhdar, occupied Tripoli’s International Airport with 2200 men and refused to hand it over to the National Transitional Council, which then mobilized about 5000 fighters to take back control of the site.⁵¹ Al Akhdar’s men, uniformed and carrying AK-47 assault rifles, occupied several government buildings in Tripoli.

The former *jihadi* Abd al-Hakim Belhadj, Emir of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and commander of a powerful militia, occupied Tripoli, assumed control of the Military Council and created the party *Al-Watan* (The Nation) to compete in the

⁴⁷Kareem Fahim and Adam Nossiter, “In Libya, Massacre Site Is Cleaned Up, Not Investigated”, *The New York Times*, October 24, 2011.

⁴⁸Mariana Barbosa, “Bill Clinton diz que aliados ‘atiram contra incerteza’ na Líbia”, *Folha de S. Paulo*, 26/3/2011.

⁴⁹Richard N. Haass, “Libya Now Needs Boots on the Ground”, *Financial Times*, August 22, 2011.

⁵⁰David D. Kirkpatrick, “Libyan Militias Turn to Politics, a Volatile Mix”, *The New York Times*, April 2, 2012. Hadeel Al-Shalchi, “Libya militia hands Tripoli airport control to government”, *Reuters*, April 20, 2012.

⁵¹“Libyan forces clash with militia at Tripoli airport”, *Russia Today*, June 4, 2012.

elections.⁵² Abdullah Naker, one of the commanders of the Zintan militia, arrested him at the airport in Tripoli, and then promptly released him, even if he accused him of being a Qatari agent who had arrived at the last moment, infiltrating among the rebels and occupying Bab al-Aziziya, Gaddafi's headquarters.⁵³ Abd al-Hakim Belhadj was a *mujahadi* veteran of the war in Afghanistan. In 2004, he was arrested at the airport in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, by MI6 agents, who delivered him to the CIA, which ultimately handed him over to Libya (*extraordinary rendition*) so he could be tortured and interrogated by Gaddafi's security service.⁵⁴ He remained incarcerated in Libya for 6 years, until he received amnesty in 2010.

Libya was becoming a regime of warlords, with politicians and companies paying tribute for their support and protection. Everything signaled that Libya would once again fall apart, just as happened after Italy's defeat in 1943, when Barga was occupied by Great Britain, Fazzan by France, and Tripoli came under the control of Mellaha (Wheelus) Air Base, captured by the British, used by the Americans to bomb Germany and finally shut down by Gaddafi. The real objective of the United States, Great Britain and France—and of Israel in the shadows—could now be glimpsed: deconstruct the political map of the Middle East, set up since the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, so that it would break up into various regions according to the ethnic, tribal and religious differences, forming weak and poorly organized, but easily controlled States.

The tribal leaders and militia commanders declared the region of Cyrenaica, the richest oil region of Libya, to be semi-autonomous, challenging the coalition that had formed the National Transitional Council. Thousands of people attended the inauguration of the Congress of the People of Cyrenaica, close to Benghazi, so as to transform the province into a Federal State.⁵⁵ The regions of Tripolitania and Fazzan were under the virtual control of al-Qa'ida militants. The assumption was that the Western powers wanted to separate the region of Barga, which stretched from Sirte in the west to Al-Salloum in the east, on the border with Egypt, and to establish a kind of federal system with semi-autonomous states, as in Iraq.

⁵² Adrian Blomfield, "'Rendition' Libyan commander Abdel Hakim Belhadj to form his own party. Abdel Hakim Belhadj, a prominent Islamist commander suing MI6 over his alleged rendition by the C", *The Telegraph*, May 15, 2012. "Profile: Libyan rebel commander Abdel Hakim Belhadj", *BBC News Africa*, July 4, 2012.

⁵³ "Rival militia briefly holds Libya Islamist chief", Reuters, November 25, 2011.

⁵⁴ Rod Nordland, "In Libya, Former Enemy Is Recast in Role of Ally", *The New York Times*, September 1, 2011.

⁵⁵ "Semi-autonomous region declared in oil-rich eastern Libya", *Al Arabiya*, March 6, 2012.

16.6 Complex Set of Actors in the Great Game of the Middle East

The *Great Game* in the Middle East, however, was far too complex for this proposed federalist solution. The competition between the mid-size actors was intensifying because of the radical ethnic and, above all, religious differences involving Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), as well as Iran. These differences clearly came to light in the theaters of the Cold War, which the United States and the western powers continued to wage against Russia since it had recovered economically and politically, and since China emerged as a global power to compete for the markets and sources of raw materials in Africa and in all other continents.

Al-Qa'ida was also asserting itself as an important invisible actor in the *Great Game* of the Middle East. Usamah bin Ladin greeted the uprisings in the Middle East with joy and, 1 week before his assassination, he wrote in a letter seized in Abbotabad by the SEAL commandos that the Muslim Brotherhood, as keeper of the Salafist doctrine, should take the reins of these movements and establish the true Islam, the rule of Allah according to *Shari'ah*, in the countries of the Middle East.⁵⁶ Qatar funded the Muslim Brotherhood and bin Ladin understood that the current conditions—the revolts against the “*tyrants*” in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libya and Syria, who were considered apostates and heretics—brought “*unprecedented opportunities*” and that the coming Islamic governments should follow the Salafist doctrine in favor of Islam. He hoped that the regimes in Libya, Syria and Yemen would fall, just as those in Tunisia and Egypt.⁵⁷

The strategy recommended by bin Ladin to groups linked to al-Qa'ida consisted in first fighting the Americans, who were the greatest “infidels”, and making the United States abandon its vast military base in Saudi Arabia, the center of Islam, where two of its holy cities could be found: Mecca and Medina. In another letter addressed to the Head of al-Qa'ida in Yemen (AQI), Qādī As Bashir,⁵⁸ bin Ladin

⁵⁶Combating Terrorism Center At West Point, *Letters from Abbottabad: Bin Ladin Sidelined?*, SOCOM-2012-0000010. The letter is signed: “*Your brother, Abu 'Abdullah*” (bin Ladin's codename) Monday, 22, Jamadi al-Awal 1432 (Monday April 26, 2011).

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Abu Bashir: Nationality: Yemeni Passport no.: Yemeni passport number 40483, issued on 5 Jan. 1997 National identification no.: no Address: na Listed on: 19 Jan. 2010 Other information: Since 2007, leader of Al-Qaida in Yemen (AQY). Since Jan. 2009, leader of Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (QE.A.129.10.) operating in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. His deputy is Said Ali al-Shihri (QI.A.275.10.). Associated with senior Al-Qaida (QE.A.4.01.) leadership, claims he was secretary to Usama Bin Laden (QI.B.8.01.) prior to 2003. Arrested in Iran and extradited to Yemen in 2003, where he escaped from prison in 2006 and remains fugitive as at Jan. 2010. INTERPOL Orange Notice (file #2009/52/OS/CCC, #75) has been issued for him. Security Council Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee Adds Names of Two Individuals, One Entity to Consolidated List Security Council SC/9848 — 19 January 2010 — Department of Public Information, News and Media Division, New York, <http://www.sfc.hk/edistributionWeb/gateway/EN/circular/openFile?refNo=H575>.

noted that intolerance and vengeance were deep-seated traits in Arab culture and that the *ḥadīth* of prophet Muhammad proved that anyone fighting against Muslims under the flag of the United States should be killed.⁵⁹ And in order to establish an Islamic state in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, he should first make sure that the *jihadists* were capable of gaining control of it.

⁵⁹Combating Terrorism Center At West Point, *Letters from Abbottabad: Bin Ladin Sidelined?*, Letter to the Generous Brother Abu Basir, s/d, SOCOM-2012-0000016-HT.

Chapter 17

Religious Antagonism and Islamic Uprising from Tunisia to Saudi-Arabia

17.1 Religious Antagonisms and Islamic Uprising in Yemen

For years, Yemen had been in turmoil because of tribal disputes, sectarian conflicts and two rebellions caused by deep-seated and intensifying political-religious animosities. The situation was made worse because 45% of Yemen's 24.7 million inhabitants lived under the poverty line (2003 est.) while 35% were unemployed. President Ali Abdullah Saleh repressed the South Yemen Movement with separatist tendencies in the provinces of Lahj, Inga and Hadramout, headed by the former *mujahid* Tariq al-Fadhli.¹ Since 2004, he was also facing a Shia insurgency in the province of Sa'ada in the north of the country near the border with Saudi Arabia. This revolt was led by Abdul Malik al Houthi, who commanded the al-Houthi Zaydi, also known as Ash-Shabab al-Mu'min (the Believing Youth), a group accused of maintaining ties with Iran and Hizballah.

The Wahhabi monarchy in Saudi Arabia and the entire Sunni elite of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries had come to think of Iran as their main enemy after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini,² the spiritual leader of the Shia, led the Islamic revolution and seized power in Tehran. Iran became the first country to be dominated by Shia Muslims in the Middle East in the twentieth century. The religious schism was the main driving force behind the antagonism that crossed the borders of Arabia Felix, as the Romans called the Arabian Peninsula.

The number of Shia in Yemen could reach 45% of the population, and Imam Zayd, patron of the [Zaidiyyah](#) sect, was considered to be a direct descendant of Ali

¹Ginny Hill, "Yemen: Economic Crisis Underpins Southern Separatism", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2, 2009.

²Ruhollah al-Mousavi al-Khomeini.

and Fatimah.³ The Shia communities in Oman, settled mainly in Baharna (Bahraini), Ajmi and Lawatia, constituted less than 5% of the population of 2.7 million and were well integrated with economic and political influence, including in the government. The Shia nevertheless looked at Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, in Najaf, for guidance and some young people were potentially being recruited by Hizballah, led by Ayatollah Muhammad Fadlallah in Lebanon.⁴

17.2 Shia in Strategic Areas for the West

The Saudi king Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Sa'ud feared a spillover of the insurgency led by Abdul Malik al Houthi to the territory of Saudi Arabia. The Shia predominated in the south of his country, on the border with Yemen, with about 1.5–2 million inhabitants. Protests had broken out there since 2011. Although the Shia represent only 10–15% of all Muslims, they constitute the majority of the population in Iran, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Bahrain, and qualitatively important minorities in almost all other countries in the Middle East and its surroundings. And they are concentrated in areas of strategic importance to the West.⁵

The Shia represented about 10% of the 19.4 million inhabitants of Saudi Arabia. Most lived in al-Qatif and al-Awa-miyah in the Eastern Province, the most oil-rich

³According to the Shia, it was the prophet who pointed to Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, his cousin and son-in-law, husband of Fatima, his only child, as his successor. Ali was the fourth caliph and the last one to be elected among the early converts to Islam. But he had to fight for what he considered his rights and ended up murdered. His head is supposedly preserved in Kerala, the holy city of the Shia located in Iraq. The Shia are a majority in Iraq and Iran. The Sunni saw the choice of the early Caliphs as a purely electoral process and followed the first four caliphs—Abu Bakr Siddique, father-in-law of Muhammad, Umar ibn al-Khattāb, Uthman ibn Affan and Ali ibn Abi Talib. They advocate the principle that the Caliph should be chosen based on the *Shura* and the consensus of the *ummah* (community). But there are no essential differences between the two currents of Islam, which obey the teachings of the *Qur'an*, although they do have some different obligations and places of worship, in addition to having split into several different trends.

⁴Subject: Shi'a Islam in Oman; Origin: Embassy Muscat (Oman); Cable time Tue, 22 Jul 2008 08:15 UTC; Classification: CONFIDENTIAL. 09MUSCAT851 VZCZCXRO2957 RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHROV DE RUEHMS #0540/01 2040815 ZNY CCCCC ZZH R 220815Z JUL 08 FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9810 INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC Hide header CONFIDENTIAL L SECTION 01 OF 03 MUSCAT 000540 SIPDIS DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP, DRL E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/22/2018 TAGS: PGOV [Internal Governmental Affairs], PHUM [Human Rights], PINR [Intelligence], PREL [External Political Relations], OPRC [Public Relations and Correspondence], KIRF [International Religious Freedom], MU [Oman] SUBJECT: SHI'A ISLAM IN OMAN REF: 07 MUSCAT 0125 Classified By: Ambassador Gary A. Grappo for Reasons 1.4 b/d. Source: <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/07/08MUSCAT540.html>

⁵Bradley, 2012, pp. 95–97. About the percentages of Sunni and Shia: Sunni and Shia: The CIA Factbook. And: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/episodes/pilgrimage-to-karbala/sunni-and-shia-the-worlds-of-islam/?p=1737>. Accessed 08.04.2015.

region. They were like a dagger pointed at the oily heart of the country, which provided 12% of the 19 million barrels consumed daily by the United States in 2011.⁶ The Shia lived in the worst economic conditions, suffering institutionalized discrimination and banned from building their own mosques, among other things, by the Salafist/Wahhabi monarchy, just as the Sufi Muslims in Jeddah and the Ishmaelites in the south, the poorest region of Saudi Arabia. These were long-standing tensions. The Sunnis, especially the Salafist/Wahhabi Sunnis,⁷ had always hated the Shia, as well as the Sufis and Ishmaelites, who they regarded as heretics and apostates.

17.3 Riots in Saudi Arabia and in Bahrain

The Shia protests intensified after 2011, but the peaceful demonstrations were brutally repressed by the troops of King Abdullah Al Sa'ud. In the early months of 2012, other protests flared up against the Wahhabi regime and the United States along the ports of Saudi Arabia—Qatif (*al-Qatif*), Rabiya (*al-Rabeeya*) and Awamiyah (*al-Awamia*)—through which more than 2 million bpd of crude oil flowed.

Dozens of civilians were killed and thousands arrested in the peaceful demonstrations of November 24, 2011 and January 24, 2012.⁸ In addition to its enormous economic importance due to its oil fields, this eastern Saudi province was of vital geopolitical and strategic significance because of its location at the margins of the Persian Gulf, with its capital, Accra, connected to Bahrain through the bridge of Manamah.⁹

The Shia made up about 70% of the population of Bahrain, estimated (2011) at 1,214,705 inhabitants (517,368 were foreign workers). Here, they were also economically and politically marginalized, living in the same conditions as their counterparts in Saudi Arabia. In 2011, they also rebelled. The Sunni emir Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, who proclaimed himself king in 2002, imposed

⁶Alexander Cockburn, "Trouble in the Kingdom", *CounterPunch Diary* —Weekend Edition, October 7–9, 2011.

⁷After subjugating the coast of the Gulf of Aden and the south of Yemen in 1839, Great Britain sought to get a hold on the Persian Gulf by supporting primarily the alliance of the Sa'ud bin ad-Aziz and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab tribes, inciting them to take up the *Jihad* against the Ottoman Empire. Between 1865 and 1891, their warriors undertook a campaign of rebellion and looting in an attempt to submit the entire Arabian Peninsula to the Wahhabi-Sa'udi hegemony. Their headquarters were moved to Riyadh, close to Dariyah, in the northeast of Saudi Arabia. Schwartz, 2002, pp. 78–91.

⁸Jafria News, <http://jafrianews.com/2012/01/25/saudi-forces-fire-on-peaceful-shia-protesters-in-qatif/>

⁹Map of Saudi Arabia and its 13 provinces in: Lonely Planet. Also: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. In: <http://www.bpb.de/cache/images/7/52477-st-original.jpg?41B57>. Accessed 08.04.2015.

martial law and the protestors were massacred by troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which crossed the Manamah bridge with the backing of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in order to quell the demonstrations and protect the existing “*strategic facilities*”. But the demonstrations demanding democratic reforms and led by the cleric Shayk Isa Qassim, didn’t stop. The Shia Majority in Bahrain had revolted at least twice (in 2011 and in March 2012) against the ruling Sunni dynasty of Shayk Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, and both times it was brutally suppressed by Saudi troops.

17.4 US Navy and Air Bases and The Strait of Hormuz

Bahrain is a small island country of 430 square miles, an archipelago of 35 islands and islets in the Persian Gulf, previously inhabited by pearl fishermen. It was here that oil first gushed in the Arabian Peninsula with the Bahrain Petroleum Company, a subsidiary of Standard Oil of California established in Canada.¹⁰ And although its oil production is low, approximately 239,900 bbd (2009 est.), Bahrain is nevertheless of vital geopolitical and strategic importance to the United States. In Juffair, next to al-Manamah, the Pentagon maintains a large naval base that harbors the fifth Fleet, including planes, destroyers—around 40 war ships—and 30,000 service men, and its Air Force has started using Muharaq airport and the Shaikh Isa airbase for operations in the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, Arabian Sea and the Strait of Hormuz. Approximately 22% of the crude oil and petroleum products imported by the United States from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates pass through these routes.

17.5 Kill/Capture Campaigns in Yemen

For a while, at least, King Abdullah’s troops managed to quell the Shia riots in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. In Yemen, however, President Ali Abdullah Saleh was unable to resist the intensifying uprising and resigned. After an attempt on his life that left him seriously injured, for which he was treated in Saudi Arabia, a compromise solution was brokered that gave Saleh immunity. The vice president, Field Marshal Abd Rabbuh mansur al-Hadi, took over the government after the election, on February 21, 2011, promising the British Foreign Secretary William Hague to keep up the fight against al-Qa’ida with all his force. In the first half of 2012, the United States kept launching drones, probably from the military base in Djibouti, against the insurgents in the south of Abian, in the province of al-Mahfad,

¹⁰Yergin, 1993, pp. 280–281. About the US Maritime Base in Manama: <http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/infopage/persiangulf.htm>. Accessed 06.05.2015.

the region where al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the group Ansar al-Shari'ah (Supporters of the Shari'ah), also linked to al-Qa'ida, had allegedly proclaimed an Islamic Caliphate. The United States was still *at war* in Yemen, just as in Pakistan. The drones continued to claim thousands of victims, especially women and children, because of faulty information about the targets in the regions of Aden, Hadramaut and Abian.

The United States were running two separate kill/capture campaigns in Yemen, one headed by the CIA using its drones, and another executed by the troops of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), which deployed 43 operations since 2011, killing at least 274 people qualified as extremist militants, many of whom were adolescents.¹¹ General James Jones of the Marine Corps and former National Security Advisor, described Yemen as an “*embryonic theater that we weren't really familiar with*”. President Obama demanded to see the “*kill lists*” with the biographies of the suspects, macabrely christened as the “*baseball cards*” of an “*unconventional war*” by government officials.¹²

In Yemen, US drones, possibly launched from bases in Djibouti, Seychelles and Madagascar, eliminated between 294 and 651 suspected terrorists, in addition to 55–105 civilians and 24 children between 2002 and 2004.¹³ In a single strike in October 2011, a Hellfire missiles fired from a drone killed at least nine people in the south of the country, including an al-Qa'ida leader of the Arabian Peninsula based in Yemen, and one American, the 17 year-old Anwar al-Awlaki, which was very controversial because he was born in the United States and executed without trial.¹⁴ And the use of these Hellfire missiles violated a 1992 UN resolution, which only permitted their use for “*exclusively military*” purposes.

John Brennan, advisor to president Obama, tried to explain the criminal procedures of the administration by claiming that the United States remained *at war* with al-Qa'ida, with authorization from Congress after the terrorist attacks of September 11 through the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), which allowed the president to use coercive power and to apply it in a pragmatic and flexible way, from case to case, despite the constraints imposed by domestic and international law.¹⁵

¹¹Noah Shachtman, “29 Dead in 8 Days as U.S. Puts Yemen Drone War in Overdrive”, *Danger Room*, September 5, 2012. “Arabian Peninsula Media Roundup”, *Jadaliyya*, September 11, 2012.

¹²Jo Becker and Scott Shane, “Secret ‘Kill List’ Proves a Test of Obama’s Principles and Will”, *The New York Times*, May 29, 2012.

¹³Daya Gamage, “Civilian death by drone attacks is high: but US sidesteps the issue arguing legality”, *Asian Tribune* (Asiantribune.com), 5/9/2012.

¹⁴Laura Kasinof, “Airstrikes Hit Yemen—Violence Escalates in Sana”, *The New York Times*, October 15, 2011.

¹⁵“Obama and the Laws of War”, Interviewee: Matthew C. Waxman, Adjunct Senior Fellow for Law and Foreign Policy, Interviewer: Jonathan Masters, Online Editor/Writer, Council of Foreign Relations, May 10, 2012.

The truth of the matter is that the authorization, while elusive and fallacious, had been given for the use of military force against “*those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States*.”¹⁶ President Obama, meanwhile, sought to perpetuate the authorization and legalize the *kill/capture* program to kill almost on an industrial scale, in addition to using advanced weapons systems, such as drones and helicopters carrying special forces—SEALs—to infiltrate Yemen for *unlawful extrajudicial killings*, i.e., eliminating all those suspected of terrorist activities. Authorities in Washington calculated that since Obama’s inauguration in 2009, more than 2000 militants and civilians had been killed in Yemen, Pakistan and other countries.¹⁷

The Bureau of Investigative Journalism headquartered in the United Kingdom, however, estimated that, between 2004 and 2011, US drones killed between 2500 and 3000 people in Pakistan alone, including between 479 and 811 civilians, including 174 children.¹⁸ The Pakistani ambassador in the US, [Sherry Rehman](#), said herself in a conference call with Douglas Lute in the Aspen (Colorado) Security Forum, between July 25 and 28, 2012, that the drone attacks “*have diminishing rate of returns*”, even if they might help in the fight against terrorism, and that they contributed to the increase in anti-Americanism in the country and the recruitment of new militants.¹⁹

Haykal Banafa, a Yemeni lawyer, wrote directly to President Obama and warned him that whenever a missile fired by an American drone killed a child in Yemen, its father would certainly turn to war. He added that this had nothing to do with al-Qa’ida.²⁰ The death of each Muslim, civilian or terrorist, no doubt multiplied the enemies of the United States because of the tribal solidarity and the *hadith of revenge*. The number of militants of al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), based in south Yemen, jumped from 300 in 2009 to more than 1000 in 2012.²¹ And its leader, the terrorist Nasir al-Wahayshi, threatened to kill the president of Yemen Ali Abdullah Saleh, to eliminate the Saudi royal family and President Mubarak, and

¹⁶107th Congress Public Law 40—From the U.S. Government Printing Office], [DOCID: f: publ040.107]—[[Page 115 STAT. 224]], Public Law 107-40—107th Congress, Joint Resolution: To authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States. NOTE: Sept. 18, 2001—[S.J. Res. 23], accessed <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-107publ40/html/PLAW-107publ40.htm>

¹⁷Laura Kasinof, “Airstrikes Hit Yemen—Violence Escalates in Sana”, *The New York Times*, October 15, 2011.

¹⁸Daya Gamage, “Civilian death by drone attacks is high: but US sidesteps the issue arguing legality”, *Asian Tribune* ([Asiantribune.com](#)), 5/9/2012.

¹⁹Kimberly Dozier, “Pakistan demands CIA stops drone strikes”, USA Today, 29/7/2012. Joe Wolverton, “As CIA Drone War Deaths Increase, So Does Anti-U.S. Sentiment”, [Infowars.com](#), New American, August 4, 2012. “Pakis-tani diplomat calls for end to U.S. drone strikes—Sherry Rehman says attacks have a ‘diminishing rate of return’”, *The Associated Press—CBC News World*, July 27, 2012.

²⁰Joe Wolverton, “As CIA Drone War Deaths Increase, So Does Anti-U.S. Sentiment”, [Infowars.com](#), New American, August 4, 2012.

²¹Noah Shachtman and Spencer Ackerman, “Let’s Admit It: The US Is at War in Yemen, Too”, *Danger Room*, June 14, 2012.

to bring the *Jihad* to the steps of the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount, called *Al Haram Al Sharif* by the Arabs, the third holiest place to Muslims because they believe it's there that Muhammad ascended to the Garden (Paradise) to receive Allah's revelations of the Qur'an.

At the beginning of 2010, professor Gregory Johnsen, an expert from Princeton University, warned that the preeminence of al-Qa'ida in Yemen was growing 20 years after its reunification; and that the Shia rebellion was advancing in the north and the south, where the oil reserves could be found, threatening the country once again with secession.²² He predicted that Yemen could explode still in 2010. The explosion actually occurred in January 2011. At the same time that the protests against Mubarak broke out, the insurgency intensified against the government of Ali Abdullah Saleh, a gradual and confusing mixture of *cold* and *hot revolutionary war*.

Bin Ladin had informed Qāḍī Abū Bashir that the "*jihadist ideology*" had spread to other regions, particularly among young people, in comparison with other Islamic movements, and that the Salafist ideology worked well with the issues of the community (*Ummah*).²³ He was referring to the experiences in Syria, Egypt and Libya and said that the "*enemies*" (United States) considered Yemen their property because of its location near the largest oil reserves in the world,²⁴ the Persian Gulf. Yemen's proven reserves of the order of 3.16 billion bbl (2010) were small, however, and oil production, approximately 288,400 bpd (2009), represented 25% of GDP and 70% of government revenue. The remaining resources came from coffee, dried and salted fish and, more recently, liquefied gas.

Bin Ladin knew, however, that Yemen had an enormous strategic significance because of its geopolitical location close to the Strait of Bab el Mandab, linking the Gulf of Aden to the Red Sea, separating Africa (Djibouti and Eritrea) from Asia (Yemen), a crucial passage to the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, the *chokepoint* of the maritime oil transport from the Persian Gulf before entering the Suez Canal and the 200-mile SUMED pipeline of the Arab Petroleum Pipeline Company/Sumed Company.

The Department of Energy in Washington estimated that 3.2 million bpd flowed to the United States and Europe through the Strait of Bab el-Mandab and the Suez/SUMED complex in 2009.²⁵ Under the pretext of fighting piracy in Somalia and the threat of al-Qa'ida in Yemen, the United States therefore militarized the region around Bab el-Mandab, deploying military bases, such as Camp Lemonnier (Naval Expeditionary Base) in Djibouti. With the control of this strait, the United States would be able to stop the flow of oil from Saudi Arabia to China or other countries.

²²Gregory D. Johnsen, "Welcome to Qaedastan—Yemen's coming explosion will make today's problems seem tame", *Foreign Policy*, January/February 2010.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵"World Oil Transit Chokepoints", Energy Information Administration, December 30, 2011.

The Strait of Bab el-Mandab is the *chokepoint* between Africa and the Middle East and the strategic link between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. The United States wanted to increase the prominence of these regions in its new security strategy, streamlining its armed forces and changing its “*global posture*”,²⁶ emphasizing the role of the Navy and Air Force to contain China in South Asia. President Obama stated that the Pacific region would have “*top priority*” in his foreign policy and ordered 2500 troops to the north of Australia. US military forces continued to advance from Somalia and Kenya to the west coast of the Indian Ocean. By commanding the Strait of Bab el-Mandab and the Strait of Malacca, the United States gained an enormous strategic advantage in the *Great Game*. For the Strait of Malacca links the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean, as well as the economies of East Asia to the Middle East and Europe. And 80% of the crude oil from the Middle East and Africa imported by China pass through the Strait of Bab el-Mandab and Malacca. The United States was therefore set on maintaining a presence in Yemen, in alliance with India, publicly supporting India’s candidacy as a full member of the UN Security Council and the reconciliation with the military in Myanmar (Burma).

17.6 The Rise of Salafists in Tunisia

In Tunisia, elections for the Constituent Assembly were held on October 23, 2011. The Islamic party Mouvement Ennahda, also called *Ḥarakat an-Nahḍah* (*Mouvement de la Renaissance Islamique*), won with 41.47% of the vote, gaining 89 of the 217 seats in Parliament; Moncef Marzouki was elected president and Hamadi Jebali Prime Minister, tasked with forming a government until new elections in mid-2013. The Mouvement Ennahda had emerged in 1981, inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan al-Muslimin) in Egypt and influenced mainly by the radical Salafist thinkers Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) and Abul A’la Maududi (1903–1979), advocates of the Islamic Revival (as-Ṣtheḥwah l-Islāmiyyah) and of the doctrine that the sovereignty of God (Allah) and the sovereignty of the people were mutually exclusive and that Islam was not possible without *Shari’ah*. Ennahda was legalized on March 1, 2011, after the fall of Ben Ali, and presented itself as a moderate Islamic party, but its base was apparently conservative.

The salafists, who previously had no place in Ben Ali’s regime, took advantage of the uprising and expanded their supporter base and proselytism (*da’wa*), especially among the rural masses and the unemployed, manipulating their anger and discontent. In the deserts and crisis-ridden countries of North Africa and the Middle East with no prospect of improvement, Islam could well be what Karl Marx termed the “*expression of real misery*”, the “*sigh of the oppressed creature*”, the “*soul of*

²⁶Leon Panetta, US Secretary of Defense, Speech at the Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, April 25, 2012, author’s archive.

soulless conditions” and even the “*opium of the people*”.²⁷ For many, *Jihad* was the salvation, a way to change the social and political map, to restore the essence and medieval values of the times of the Prophet. Ennahda might have allied itself in government with other parties—the Congress for the Republic and the Democratic Forum for Labour and Liberties—but it didn’t have the strength to curb the Salafist excesses, which were being fanned by the enormous financial resources that continued to flow from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.²⁸ Salafists attacked the festival of al-Aqsa in Bizerte (north west of Tunisia), and frequently struck other—Sufi, Shia—cultural festivals in various regions of the country.²⁹ By the end of August 2012, the situation in Tunisia was still unpredictable due to the growing aggression from Salafists against people of other religions and even against women who dressed leisurely.³⁰ The leader of al-Qa’ida had already urged Tunisians to demand the implementation of *Shari’ah*.

17.7 The Victory of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

In Egypt, in Tahrir Square in Cairo and in other cities, thousands of clashes continued to occur between protesters and the repression forces of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) throughout 2011, even after the fall and arrest of Hosni Mubarak. Conflicts also broke out between Islamic radicals and Coptic Christians, who were also confronted by the repression forces, killing several people. The military had delivered Mubarak to save its own skin, and it was struggling to maintain control over the country. As already expected, the Muslim Brotherhood, made legal under the name Al-Hurriyya wa al’Adala (Freedom and Justice Party), won the elections for both the Popular Assembly, between November 28, 2011, and January 10–11, 2012, and the presidency of Egypt. In May 2012, Muhammad Mursi was elected with 51.7% of the vote, beating Air Marshal Ahmed Shafiq, the former prime minister under Mubarak (31/1/2011–3/3/2011), who obtained 48% of the vote.³¹ The Muslim Brotherhood and its allies won 235 seats in the Popular Assembly (10.1 million votes, 37.5% of the total), and the

²⁷ Marx, 1981a, p. 378.

²⁸ Rob Prince, “Tunisia Culture Wars: Ruling Ennahda Party Refuses to Rein in Salafists”, *Foreign Policy in Focus* (FPF), July 30, 2012. A project of the Institute for Policy Studies. A think tank without walls.

²⁹ Alminji Alsaadany, “Tunisian Ministry of Culture warns of sectarian tensions”, *Asharq Alawsat*, 24/8/2012.

³⁰ Henry Samuel, “Tourists should beware of Islamist mobs in Tunisia, warns French politician”, *Daily Telegraph*, August 23, 2012.

³¹ Matthew Weaver, “Muslim Brotherhood’s Mohammed Mursi wins Egypt’s presidential race”, *The Guardian*, June 24, 2012.

Salafists—now legal under the name Al-Nour (The Light)—came in second with 123 seats (7.5 million votes, 27.8%).³²

But Muhammad Mursi hadn't beaten his opponent, marshal Ahmed Shafiq, with a clear and wide majority. There were suspicions that the Supreme Military Council manipulated the data to prevent violent conflict with the Islamic parties, who had won the majority in the People's Assembly.³³ Faced with the large elected Muslim majority, however, the Supreme Military Council decided to dissolve the assembly on June 14, 2012. A dissolution that was approved by the Supreme Constitutional Court. Tensions rose. When he was sworn in as president of Egypt on July 10, Muhammad Mursi decided to annul the Supreme Court decision that suspended the Constitutional Assembly, and the body continued to work until it could manifest itself about the new constitution. It was a standoff and the contradictions remained, as sharp as ever.

Among the tribes that still lived in the vast Sinai desert, on the border with Israel, and where around 40,000 Bedouins still lived with a herder's culture and no sense of nationality, Islamic radicalism was apparently growing in the midst of illegal activities, such as drug trafficking and arms smuggling.³⁴ Since the fall of Gaddafi, Salafists and al-Qa'ida militants had captured the arsenals in Libya and transformed the Sinai and Gaza Strip into a smuggling route for arms and ammunition, which they spread across the Middle East and North Africa. The Sinai peninsula, outlined by the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba, was of geopolitical and strategic importance to the west. Between 2004 and 2006, three bomb attacks occurred there, resulting in the deaths of 150 people. Many other attacks were not even recorded. The Arish-Ashkelon pipeline, stretching 62 miles beneath the sea and connecting the Arab Gas Pipeline in Egypt with Israel, on the coast of the Sinai, suffered several attacks. In mid-August 2012, Islamic radicals clashed twice with Egyptian forces in the Sinai, killing 16 soldiers.

It is not known for sure who were responsible for the deaths of the 16 soldiers. Maybe the attacks could be attributed to the Salafist extremists of Tawhid wal Jihad and Majlis Shura Al-Mujahidin fi Aknaf al-Quds (Mujahideen Shura Council of Jerusalem), whose leader Hisham Al-Saidni, also known as Abu Walid al-Masri, had his headquarters in Jabaliya, north of Gaza city. Or perhaps the members of al-Qa'ida in Sinai were to blame, or even disgruntled Bedouins, militants of the

³²Omar Ashour, "The unexpected rise of Salafists has complicated Egyptian politics", *The Daily Star* (Lebanon), January 6, 2012.

³³Abdel Amir al-Rekabi, "Is Egypt Replacing a Dictator with an 'Electoral Dictatorship'?", *Al-Haya* (Saudi Arabia), July 27, 2012.

³⁴Günther Lachmann, "Sinai-Wüste—Das blutige Geschäft mit Organen vor Israels Grenze", *Welt Online*, 18/11/2011. See also: The Sinai Desert in: <http://sinaimaps.com/map-of-national-parks-sinai-egypt/9>. Accessed 05.05.2015; updated: <http://discoversinai.net/english/national-parks-protectorates-protected-areas-in-south-sinai-egypt/4189>. Accessed 16.11.2016.

organization Jundallah (soldiers of God, Sunni Iranians, terrorists).³⁵ According to the Mossad, however, everything indicated that the perpetrators were *jihadists* of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, also known as Ansar Jerusalem.

These events gave President Muhammad Mursi the opportunity and pretext to oust the entire high military command—the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces headed by 76 year-old Field Marshal Muhammad Hussein Tantawi—and to dismantle all legislation and the draft constitution that had already been written, in addition to canceling the decree that had taken all prerogatives in matters of defense and security away from the president. Muhammad Mursi confronted the military, took on all executive powers, appointed a new Minister of Defense, the general Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, and sent tanks and planes to clear the border of Sinai with Israel from the militants of the Salafi Jihadi Group and al-Qa’ida.³⁶

In order to establish a truce with the Salafist groups in the Sinai, the Egyptian government freed dozens of militants and negotiated with the Bedouin leaders to give the status of independent militia to 6000 gunmen, equipping them with modern weapons and tasking them with maintaining security in the region, especially in the strip stretching 160 miles along the border between Egypt and Israel. This was known as the *peacekeeper route*, most from the US 82nd Airborne Division, which had been secretly paved by the engineers of the MFO (Multinational Forces and Observers) on the Sheikh Zuweid base in the Mediterranean,³⁷ in the northern Sinai close to Taba on the Gulf of Aqabal.³⁸ President Mursi declared the offensive against the terrorists as finished. But then the Salafists attacked the Egyptian army at Sheikh Zuweid with grenades and automatic weapons³⁹ and the government resumed the repression.

The contradictions within the Muslim majority that dominated the assembly were not resolved, and it would be a tall order to reconcile the market economy with the social justice of the *Shari’ah*, as the Muslim Brotherhood advocated in its

³⁵This terrorist organization, also known as the People’s Resistance Movement of Iran, was established during the George W. Bush administration by Iranian Sunni opponents of the regime who were recruited by agents of the Mossad, with American passports, and funded with resources from the CIA, to carry out acts of terrorism in Iran. A false flag operation. Mark Perry, “False Flag—A series of CIA memos describes how Israeli Mossad agents posed as American spies to recruit members of the terrorist organization Jundallah to fight their covert war against Iran”, *Foreign Policy*, January 13, 2012. Jason Ditz, “Israel Framed CIA in Backing Jundallah Terrorists. Memos: Mossad Agents With US Passports, US Dollars Recruited Terror Group”, *AntiWar News*, January 13, 2012.

³⁶“Egypt to ‘send’ aircraft, tanks into Sinai for first time since 1973 war”, *Al Arabiya News*, August 20, 2012. “Egypt to use aircraft, tanks in Sinai for first time since 1973 war with Israel”, *Reuters—Haaretz*, August 20, 2012. Matthew Levitt, Yoram Cohen and Becca Wasser, “Deterred but Determined: Salafi-Jihadi Groups in the Palestinian Arena”, *Policy Focus* 99, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, January 2010.

³⁷“Egypt to grant 6000 gunmen Sinai militia status”, *DEBKA file Exclusive Report*, September 3, 2012.

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹*Ibid.*

program. On the other hand, the (Salafist) Al-Nour party, the second largest party, wanted art. 2 of the Egyptian Constitution to establish that Islam was the state religion and that the *Shari'ah* was the main source of law and legitimacy of power to implement the sovereignty of Allah. But as the *Sunna* and the *hadith* had determined more than 1000 years ago, Muslims did now owe obedience or any other unconditional political responsibility,⁴⁰ especially if the government presented itself as secular and liberal. Islamic militancy was the biggest threat to the systems modeled on the West in Iraq, Tunisia and Egypt. According to P. J. Vatikiotis, professor at the University of London, the issue was really that a State inhabited and ruled by Muslims and based on *Shari'ah* could not be purely secular, *conditio sine qua non* of a nation-state. For the Islamic militant, the *Umma* comes before the nation-state, and he rejects the mundane and temporal reality.⁴¹

The developing events in Egypt put President Barack Obama in a tight spot. He had to support the measures taken by President Mursi to subordinate the military, which wanted to hold on to power under the guise of a democratic regime. But on the other hand, he had lost the main US ally since President Sadat had distanced Egypt from the Soviet Union and moved it toward the United States, whose military aid (US\$1.3 billion in 2012) played a central role in the political development of Egypt. And the transition of power was not occurring as the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces expected. President Mursi took on full executive powers, while the internal struggle continued and the constitution was not definitively drawn up until September 2012.

17.8 Terror and Chaos in Libya

In Libya, the United States and NATO managed to produce chaos, *fitna*, sedition and anarchy. In the midst of the growing instability and continuing conflicts, militias and tribes filled the political *vacuum* left after the fall of Gaddafi.⁴² In March 2012, the tribal chiefs and militia commanders proclaimed the semi-autonomy of Cyrenaica, the oil-rich province⁴³ where the rebellion had started, and the “federalists” attacked the voting stations for the parliamentary elections of July 2012.⁴⁴ The “federalists” probably wanted to restore the three province system of the time of the Romans: Tripolitania in the West, Fezzan in the southwest, and Cyrenaica/Barga in the east. The president of the National Transitional Council,

⁴⁰Vatikiotis, 1987, p. 9 e 54.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 55.

⁴²Abigail Hauslohner, “Benghazi Breakaway Highlights Libya’s Uncertain Future”, *Time*, March 7, 2012.

⁴³“Semi-autonomous region declared in oil-rich eastern Libya”, *Al Arabiya*, March 6, 2012.

⁴⁴Luke Harding, “Libya elections: polling station raids mar first vote since Gaddafi’s death”, *The Guardian*, July 7, 2012.

Mustafa Abdel-Jalil, accused them of receiving foreign funding from “*Arab sister nations*” that supported the sedition in the east, dividing the country.⁴⁵ These Arab nations, shrouded in veils, were Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the same countries that had provided special forces and mercenaries to NATO in the fight against Gaddafi.

The parliamentary elections had been won by the National Forces Alliance, which united 60 small parties and two dozens of civil society organizations under the leadership of Mahmoud Jibril, a political scientist with a degree from the University of Pittsburgh (United States) and president of the National Transitional Council (CNT). But the fact that the two main Islamic parties—Justice and Construction (Muslim Brotherhood) and *Al-Watan* (Salafist), headed by the former *jihadi* and warlord Abdel Hakim Belhadj, commander of the Tripoli Military Council—didn’t have a majority in the Assembly tasked with drafting the Constitution, meant little. The Salafist leader Ismail Salabi became commander of the Benghazi Brigade and the command of the Tripoli Brigade remained in the hands of the *jihadi* Abdel Hakim Belhadj.

In an interview to the daily *O Estado de S. Paulo*, Mahmoud Jibril refused the labels of liberal or secular leader. He stated that *Shari’ah* had become “*part of our identity*”, adding that “*a part of the Shari’ah is incorporated in our consciousness*” and is “*part of our society*.”⁴⁶ Furthermore, Abdel Hakim Belhadj, whose very expensive election campaign counted with contributions from the countries of the Persian Gulf, particularly from the United Arab Emirates and Qatar,⁴⁷ retained practically all power in Tripoli with his militia, which refused to surrender their weapons, just as in almost all the other regions of the country. The government couldn’t actually do anything, for it had no power.

The militias were the *vis major*, the superior force that had taken the law into its own hands.⁴⁸ And the tensions between the hundreds of tribes and sects were growing, as well as between the cities, resulting in armed conflicts between the militias. After the elections in July, the Salafists used a tractor to demolish a 500 year-old Sufi mosque and the Al-Shaab al-Dahman mausoleum with the complicity of the police forces of the Supreme Security Committee (SSC). They claimed to be fulfilling a *fatwa* (religious decree) issued by the Saudi *mufti* (interpreter of Islamic law) Shaykh Muhammad Al-Madkhali, a preacher of the Wahabi doctrine who ordered the desecration of all sanctuaries erected by the Sufis

⁴⁵“Libyan leader claims Arab nations supporting ‘sedition’ in east. Sheikh Ahmed Zubair al-Sanussi who was elected leader of the region, is a member of the ruling National Transitional Council”, *Al Arabiya*, March 6, 2012.

⁴⁶Andrei Netto, “‘O futuro da Líbia será bem melhor do que muita gente esperava’—entrevista/M. Jibril”, *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 15/7/2012.

⁴⁷“Wahl in Libyen: Islamisten auf dem Vormarsch.—Am Wochenende findet in Libyen die erste Parlamentswahl seit dem Sturz von Diktator Gaddafi statt. Der sogenannte Nationalkongress soll den Übergangsrat ersetzen”, *Badische Zeitung*, July 7, 2012.

⁴⁸Gert Van Langendonck, “Libya militias taking law into own hands”, *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 4, 2011.

in Libya, including the Sidi Abd al-Salam complex. Afterwards, Al-Madkhali congratulated the Salafists for a job well-done.

In a few months, the Salafists destroyed the Sufi *zawiyas* (monasteries) and the Marabout tombs in the center of Tripoli, Benghazi and Zliten, in broad daylight while the security forces stood idly by. These destructions led to the resignation of the Interior Minister, Fawzi Abdel-Al, who was accused of negligence out of fear for the armed men responsible for the vandalism.⁴⁹ Mosques of other branches of Islam that were considered heretic by the Wahhabis/Salafists were also destroyed, not just in Tripoli, but also in Zintan and Misrata, and the tombs were desecrated.⁵⁰

The *Modern Tokyo Times* wrote that the “*bomb democracy*” resulting from the policies of the West and the countries of the Gulf had provoked the massacres of black Africans, the killing of Gaddafi supporters and the creation of a “*new society*” based on disorder, destabilizing the north of Mali and creating problems for Tunisia, by providing Salafists with vast amounts of heavy weaponry and money from Saudi Arabia and Qatar to spread their radical fundamentalist beliefs.⁵¹

Since March 2011, a delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) headed by Georges Comninou, had visited several prisons in Misrata, Tripoli, Khoms, Tarhouna, Zawiyah, Zintan, Misrata and Benghazi, Zintan and the mountains of Nefusa, and found more than 8500 prisoners in 60 sites.⁵² In these cities, including Zintan and others, thousands of former members of the Gaddafi regime were still being held without formal charge, legal assistance or any prospect of a fair trial. The exact number of people detained by the rebels was unknown. And the executions continued. In one single day, August 12, 2012, ten prisoners who rioted in Fernadj prison in Tripoli were shot,⁵³ and the Green Resistance movement continued to operate throughout Libya.

The best description of Libya’s state almost 1 year after the triumph of NATO’s intervention based on the responsibility to protect civilians (R2P) doctrine, was given by the Department of State on August 27, 2012. According to a travel warning of the Department, American citizens who had to travel to Libya should watch out for the “*incidence of violent crime, especially carjacking and robbery*”, which had become a serious problem, and “*political violence in the form of*

⁴⁹Luiz Sanchez, “Libyan Minister resigns after Sufi mosque destroyed”, *Daily News*, Cairo, August 27, 2012. Tom Heneghan, “UNESCO urges end to attacks on Libyan Sufi mosques, graves”, *Reuters*, The United Nations Paris, August 29, 2012.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

⁵¹Murad Makhmudov and Lee Jay Walker, “Libya and Mali: Salafi Islamists destroying shrines courtesy of Saudi Arabia and Qatar”, *Modern Tokyo Times*, August 26, 2012.

⁵²Libya: monitoring the situation of detainees—01-12-2011, Operational Update No 16/2011, International Committee of the Red Cross, <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/update/2011/libya-update-2011-12-01.htm>

⁵³“Libyans will be executed 10 prisoners today”, *Libya Against Super Power Media*, August 11, 2012.

assassinations and vehicle bombs,” which had taken a turn for the worse in Benghazi and Tripoli.⁵⁴

The Bureau of Consular Affairs warned that, “*despite this progress*”, violent crime continued to be a problem in Tripoli, Benghazi and other parts of the country, including carjackings and muggings, bomb attacks in Tripoli and the assassination of soldiers and members of the regime in Benghazi. “*Inter-militia conflict can erupt at any time or any place in the country*”, the warning stated, reporting that seven employees of the Iranian Red Crescent had been kidnapped in Benghazi on July 31 and not yet released by members of the local militia. A fate shared by many other foreigners.⁵⁵ The capacity of the American Embassy to intervene in such cases remained limited, since these groups were neither recognized nor controlled by the government.⁵⁶ This was the progress that was achieved in Libya. The American writer Stephen Lendman quite rightly wrote that “*wherever NATO intervenes, massacres, mass destruction, and unspeakable horrors and human misery follow.*”⁵⁷

⁵⁴Travel Warning—U.S. Department of State—Bureau of Consular Affairs, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_5762.html

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Stephen Lendman, “Libya—Out of Control Violence in Libya”, *IndyBay*, February 17, 2012.

Chapter 18

Terror and Antiterror in North Africa

18.1 The Assault on the American Consulate in Benghazi and Murder of Ambassador Chris Stevens

The United States suffered the direct consequences from the insecurity and climate of terror created in Libya after the murder of Gaddafi and destruction of his regime. In Cairo, thousands of Salafist Muslims climbed the walls of the United States Embassy, adopting al-Qa'ida's battle cries and the *Shahada*, the Islamic profession of faith: "*There is no God except God and Muhammad is His prophet.*" They assaulted the embassy and burned the American flag and the Egyptian police didn't react. On the same night of September 11, 2012, as if to commemorate the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, armed militias of Ansar al-Shari'ah (Defenders of the Islamic Law, the *Shari'ah*) and, probably, militants of al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), attacked the United States consulate in Benghazi¹ with RPG-7 rockets (Russian hand-held anti-tank grenade launchers), set fire to the building and killed the ambassador John Christopher Stevens,² one of the architects of the uprising against Gaddafi, and three other State Department officials.³ A month earlier, in August, he had alerted the State Department that the situation in eastern Libya had deteriorated completely, that there was a "security

¹David D. Kirkpatrick, Suliman Ali Zway and Kareem Fahim, "Attack by Fringe Group Highlights the Problem of Libya's Militias", *The New York Times*, September 15, 2012.

²Since 1968, five ambassadors from the United States have been assassinated: John Gordon Mein in Guatemala (1968), Adolph Dubs in Afghanistan (1979), Cleo A. Noel Jr. in Sudan (1973), Rodger P. Davies in Cyprus (1974), and Francis E. Meloy Jr. in Lebanon (1976).

³David D. Kirkpatrick, "Anger Over a Film Fuels Anti-American Attacks in Libya and Egypt", *The New York Times*, September 11, 2012. Ashraf Khalil, "Cairo and Benghazi Attacks: Two Sets of Fundamentalisms Unleash Havoc. Two attacks on American diplomatic buildings in Cairo and Benghazi, Libya, illustrate the ugly bigotry of two sets of religious fundamentalists in different ends of the world", *Time*, September 11, 2012. David D. Kirkpatrick and Steven Lee Myers, "Libya Attack Brings Challenges for U.S.", *The New York Times*, September 12, 2012.

vacuum” in the city of Benghazi, near which, as all residents knew, Ansar al-Shari’ah, linked to al-Qa’ida in the Maghrib, maintained a training camp for *jihādists*.⁴

Ansar al-Shari’ah was led by Abu Sufyan bin Qumu, who had been a prisoner in Guantanamo Bay since 2003 and extradited (*rendition*) in 2007 to the Gaddafi regime. A regime which he fought against with the support of the NATO bombing campaign in the war of 2011.⁵ One of his militants, carrying a copy of the Qur’an and a Kalashnikov rifle, told the BBC that “*democracy is the human condition where laws are made by people*”. And he added that “*only God has the authority to make law, which is why Islam and the Shari’ah are incompatible with democracy*.”⁶ Hierocracy has always been predominant in Islamic communities, where the law arises from the *fatwā* issued by a *mufti*,⁷ as an interpreter of the *Shari’ah*.⁸ Just as has always been the case in rabbinical orthodox Judaism, where God, one and only, expressed his will for both private and public life through the Torah (Tables of the Law), which Moses received on Mount Sinai (*Her Sinei*) on the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula.

⁴Michael R. Gordon, Eric Schmitt and Michael S. Schmidt, “Libya Warnings Were Plentiful, but Unspecific”, *The New York Times*, October 29, 2012.

⁵“Abu Sufian Ibrahim Ahmed Hamuda Bin Qumu is a 53-year-old citizen of Libya. He was transferred to Libya on Sept. 28, 2007”. SECRET//NOFORN I 20300422 DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, JOINT TASK FORCE GUANTANAMO BAY. CUBA APO AE 09360 JTF GTMO-CG 22 Apr12005 3511NW 91st Avenue, United States Southern Command, MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, Miami. L 33 172.F to Recommendation Transfer the Control of Another Country for to SUBJECT: Update (S) (TRCD) for Guantanamo ISN: US9LY-000557DP Detainee, Detention Continued Assessment JTF GTMO Detainee Information: 1. (FOUO) Personal JDIMSAIDRC Reference Name: Abu Sufian Ibrahim Ahmed Hamouda Aliases and Current/TrueName: Abu Sufian Ibrahim Ahmed Hamuda Bin Oumu. Abu Mariam. Abdul Faris Al Libi. Abu Faris Al Libi. Marwan. Al Hassari.Abdul RazzaqHamad. Ibn Mabrukah Hamad o Place of Birth: Darna.Libya (LY) Date of Birth: 26 June 1959 Citizenship: Libya o Internment Serial Number (ISN): US9LY-000557DP 2. (FOUO) Health: Detainee has a non-specific personality disorder. He has no known drug and refuses allergies and is not on any chronic medications. Detainee has latent Tuberculosis treatment. He has no travel restrictions. 3. (S//NF)JTF GTMO Assessment: to detainee transferred the be a. (S) Recommendation: JTFGTMO recommends (TRCD). Detention Control of Another Country for Continued Retaining DoD (DoD) on assessed detainee b. (S//NF)Summary: JTFGTMO previously previous it is assessment, since detainee’s 23 August 2003. Based upon information obtained CLASSIFIED BY: MULTIPLE SOURCES REASON: E.O. 12958SECTION 1.5(C) DECLASSIFY ON: 20300422 SECRET//NOFORN/ I 20300422 Fonte: Guantánamo Dockt. *The New York Times*, <http://projects.nytimes.com/guantanamo/detainees/557-abu-sufian-ibrahim-ahmed-hamuda-bin-qumu>

⁶David D. Kirkpatrick, Suliman Ali Zway and Kareem Fahim, “Attack by Fringe Group Highlights the Problem of Libya’s Militias”, *The New York Times*, September 15, 2012.

⁷Religious legal expert, cleric.

⁸Weber, 1996, p. 287.

18.2 Riots Because of a Movie About Muhammad

The protests were apparently triggered by a very amateurish film insulting Muhammad, entitled *Innocence of Muslims*. The film was promoted on the Internet by the American pastor Terry Jones of the Christian right in Florida (Dove World Outreach Center) in collusion with the Coptic extremist Nakoula Basseley Nakoula, a business man of Egyptian origin. Terry Jones was already infamous for having publicly burned copies of the *Qur'an* years earlier.⁹ But the FBI didn't rule out the possibility that the armed attack on the United States consulate in Benghazi had been planned, and everything indicated that it was actually ordered by Ayman al-Zawahri, leader of al-Qa'ida,¹⁰ as revenge for the death of his heir apparent, the Libyan Abu Yahya al-Libi, in a drone strike in Waziristan on June 4. The CIA later concluded that the assault had been planned and prepared weeks before September 11.¹¹

Abu Yahya al-Libi, the codename of Muhammad Hassan Qaid, was one of the many *jihaddists* of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group who had fought in Afghanistan, where he was captured by ISAF in 2005 and managed to escape the Bagram prison, near Kabul, in 2008. One of his companions was Abd al-Hakim Belhadj, the military commander of Tripoli. Benghazi was a stronghold of the *jihadists*, a large majority of which had fought against the United States in Iraq; others had been arrested and tortured by the CIA as terrorists and then handed over (*rendition*) to the Gaddafi regime since 2004, when president George W. Bush normalized relations with Libya.¹²

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton admitted that it is possible that al-Qa'ida au Maghrib Islamique (AQMI), which was operating in northern Mali, had participated in the attack on the United States consulate in Benghazi.¹³ But FBI agents on the ground in Benghazi still weren't able to confirm this. It was possible that the perpetrators crossed the porous border in southern Libya. In any case, the assessment was that detaining the leaders or soldiers of Ansar al-Shari'ah or other organizations would result in bloody confrontations. The United States decided therefore to use drones or SOC commandos against the suspects that could be found.

⁹Jill Reilly, "'Death to America' chant protestors as they storm U.S. Embassy in Yemen smashing windows and pelting offices with stones", *Daily Mail*, September 13, 2012.

¹⁰"Al Zawahri personally ordered Al Qaeda to murder US Ambassador Stevens", *DEBKA file Exclusive Report*, September 12, 2012.

¹¹Eric Schmitt, "After Benghazi Attack, Talk Lagged Behind Intelligence", *The New York Times*, October 21, 2012a.

¹²David D. Kirkpatrick, Suliman Ali Zway and Kareem Fahim, "Attack by Fringe Group Highlights the Problem of Libya's Militias", *The New York Times*, September 15, 2012.

¹³Steven Lee Myers, "Clinton Suggests Link to Qaeda Offshoot in Deadly Libya Attack", *The New York Times*, September 26, 2012.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton publicly warned the leaders of Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Tunisia, where the American diplomatic missions had been attacked, that they should restore order and reject “*the tyranny of the mob*.”¹⁴ When Gaddafi tried to repress the “*mob*”, however, she accused him of massacring civilians and devised the NATO intervention. Hillary Clinton must never have read Aristotle’s *Politica*. For he already wrote that democracy has impressive similarities with tyranny, and Edmund Burke, quoting him after the French Revolution, added that, in a democracy, the majority was capable of the most cruel oppression of the minority.¹⁵

18.3 Sectarian Militias as Sources of Power

After Gaddafi’s fall, no center of power remained in Libya. *Fitna* ruled, fragmentation, the constant conflict between the tribal, ethnic and sectarian militias, who disputed power on the streets.¹⁶ The General National Congress and its president, Muhammad al-Magariaf, represented the State and made the law, but no elected government was actually functioning under this law. In October 2012, the Congress removed Mustafa Abushagur from the office of Prime Minister, which vested no power anyway. It had no army or police force to command. Mahmoud Jibril of the National Forces Alliance began to put together an agreement for governance—which was non-existent—with the Muslim Brotherhood. But the truth of the matter was that it appeared to be difficult—nearly impossible—to disarm the militias and take away their source of power. The Ansar al-Shari’ah group, which had attacked the American consulate, had taken de facto power in Benghazi, and it was already providing the people with some social and security services. Like many other militias, it rejected democracy because it was contrary to the *Qur’an* and the *Sunna’h*. In Bani Walid, near Misrata, the dominant militia was formed by Gaddafi supporters opposed to the government established in Libya. By the end of October 2012, the civil war continued. Bani Walid, headquarters of the Warfalla tribe, remained under siege. Islamic militias from Benghazi and Misrata attacked it with rockets, mortars and even poison gas, and didn’t allow medication to enter the city. Khamis Gaddafi died during the fighting, the seventh son of Colonel Gaddafi and head of the elite troops.¹⁷ The population was being massacred. Tawurgha’, which used to be inhabited by 30,000 people, became a ghost town.

¹⁴“Arab Protests: Clinton Urges Countries to Resist Tyranny of Mob”, *Reuters/The Huffington Post*, 15/9/2012.

¹⁵Burke, 1986, pp. 228–229. Aristotle said that the form corresponding to democracy is more absolute and more tyrannical than oligarchy. Aristotle, 1996, p. 298.

¹⁶“Putin: Using Al-Qaeda in Syria like sending Gitmo inmates to fight (Exclusive)”, *Russia Today*—TV-Novosti, September 6, 2012.

¹⁷Pierre Prier, “Libye: combats dans un ex-fief de Kadhafi”, *Le Figaro*, 22/10/2012.

Its people could not return home and hundreds were being detained in secret sites and concentration camps because of their African origins. The Salafist militias were engaging in ethnic cleansing.

In October 2012, one year after the end of NATO's aerial terrorism, the people of Libya lived in fear of the tribal and sectarian militia groups. They were being humiliated, their children were being killed and they were suffering through countless acts of terrorism and other crimes, such as kidnappings and murders, based on their tribal affiliation, just as had happened in Lebanon and Iraq, where people were killed according to their ID card, which recorded their sectarian or ethnic origin.¹⁸ Property was confiscated based on these same criteria; thousands of families were displaced, cemeteries and historic relics were destroyed, and goods and oil were smuggled away.¹⁹ *"Tripoli and other Libyan cities will no longer endure the harm, violations and criminality of the so-called rebels and militias in post-Gadhafi Libya"*, wrote Mohammad Omar Beaiou in *Al Monitor*.²⁰

But the power and security *vacuum* in Libya was a fact. After Gaddafi's overthrow, unemployment reached 40% of the people under 40, the education and health systems were depleted and transnational corporations hesitated to make major investments faced with the volatility and uncertainty surrounding the political destiny of the country. According to Patrick Haimzadeh, former French ambassador in Tripoli and author of the book *Au Coeur de la Libye de Kadhafi*, the Islamic fundamentalists had infiltrated Libya's entire security apparatus, making the boundaries between "loyal" and jihadist militias porous, to say the least.²¹

18.4 Historical Relics Destroyed by Islamic Radicals

Abigail Hauslohner, correspondent of the *Washington Post* in Darna, a city in eastern Libya, wrote that armed *jihadists*, including the powerful Abu Salim Martyrs Brigade linked to al-Qa'ida, continued to operate in the shadows 6 weeks after the assault on the American consulate in Benghazi, terrorizing the population with their religious extremism and carrying out bomb attacks,²² despite the American drone strikes, which were probably being launched from Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti. The *jihadists* built their facilities in homes and farms in the Green Mountains (*Jabal al Akhdar*) in the vicinity of Darna, a region covered with pine

¹⁸Mohammad Omar Beaiou, "Libyan Revolution Continues with Uprising Against Militias", *Al Monitor*, October 1, 2012.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹Patrick Haimzadeh, "After the uprisings—Libyan democracy hijacked", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, October 5, 2012. John Rosenthal, "French Libya Expert: Official Libyan Security Colludes with Ansar al-Sharia", *Transatlantic Intelligencer*, October 28, 2012a.

²²Abigail Hauslohner, "After Benghazi attacks, Islamist extremists akin to al-Qaeda stir fear in eastern Libya", *The Washington Post*, October 27, 2012.

trees, olive trees and other vegetation. Their stated objective was to lead Libya to adopt the *Shari'ah*.

After the attack on the consulate in Benghazi, President Obama realized what kind of democracy he had helped spawn, and promptly sent more CIA agents, marines and drones to Libya in order to speed up the investigations into the death of Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other American officials. This task, however, appeared to be hard and complicated because of the chaos in Libya since the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime and the limited American intelligence resources. The US was feeling the shortage of operatives, which were spread out to monitor conflicts throughout the Middle East, Africa and Asia.²³ The CIA's clandestine operation and paramilitary forces were lacking trained personnel. The clandestine service was roughly 5000 operatives strong and the paramilitary corps, which was sent into war zones, counted with only a couple of hundred.²⁴ The clandestine wars in which the United States had become involved had expanded to the extent that the CIA was overstretched. It had virtually exhausted its human resources.

Maintaining the safety of the American embassies and consulates was also taking a rising financial toll. After al-Qa'ida bombed two US embassies in East Africa in 1998, the State Department hired contractors with experience in building barracks and prisons, and spent billions of dollars to build highly-secure new facilities, which seemed more like fortresses than diplomatic missions. 52 embassies were built according to this model between 2001 and 2010, and others were in construction, often far removed from urban centers.²⁵

The outlook in the Middle East and the Maghrib remained troublesome for Washington. The protests against the embassies and consulates of the US and its allied European powers, as well as against American companies and schools, expanded to more than 19 countries in North Africa and the Middle East, including Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Iran, Iraq, Gaza and Israel, reaching even Sudan and Indonesia and giving expression to the latent spirit of revolt.²⁶ Demonstrations occurred in Casablanca, Tunis, Sudan, Bangladesh, Teheran, Baghdad, and Tel Aviv. Washington was facing an enormous challenge, because the situation in the Middle East was expected to remain turbulent in the foreseeable future and far beyond, assessed Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations.²⁷ Washington sent 106 tanks to Yemen, 12 of which to defend the embassy against new attacks by the *Jihadists*, who had struck it on September 13, shortly after the

²³Kimberly Dozier, "U.S. scrambles to rush spies, drones to Libya", Associated Press, *USA Today*, September 15, 2012.

²⁴*Ibid*.

²⁵James Risen, "After Benghazi Attack, Private Security Hovers as an Issue", *The New York Times*, October 12, 2012.

²⁶"Massenproteste in arabischer Welt—USA fürchten Wut der Muslime—Demonstranten vor der US-Botschaft in Sanaa: Video soll Wut provozieren", Reuters/*Der Spiegel*, 13/9/2012.

²⁷Peter Baker e Mark Landler, "U.S. Is Preparing for a Long Siege of Arab Unrest", *The New York Times*, September 15, 2012.

attack on the American consulate in Benghazi. And along with the tanks, the Pentagon dispatched 50 marines to Sana'a.²⁸

18.5 The Tuareg Uprising in Mali

In addition to the power crisis, sectarian divisions were getting worse in Libya, and the economic situation was equally tough and tended to feed into the social instability and political conflicts. The United States and the International Monetary Fund were imposing *cookie-cutter solutions*, i.e., the standard solutions that they always imposed on all countries, such as the privatization or outsourcing of state companies and the elimination of the basic food and energy subsidies the Gaddafi regime had given to the poorest segments of the population and to African States, including Mali, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Liberia, Chad, Darfur, Sudan, Somalia, Niger, Nigeria, Congo and other countries. In 2010, Gaddafi had offered to invest up to US\$ 97 billion in Africa.²⁹ When the rebels had already occupied 90% of Tripoli by August 2011, *The Christian Science Monitor* wrote that Muammar Gaddafi “*is the man whose impact reaches far beyond his country’s borders,*” as the only major contributor to the budget of the African Union, the largest aid donor to poor Africa and loyal sponsor of pan-African cooperation.³⁰

The toppling of the regime and the murder of Gaddafi did in fact destabilize and disrupt North Africa even more. Mali, with its 15.4 million inhabitants and only 35% of its territory urbanized, was the first and hardest hit country. On March 22, 2012, Captain Amadou Sanogo led a revolt in the Kati barracks,³¹ overthrew President Amadou Toumani Touré (2002–2012) and established a National Committee for the Establishment of Democracy. The pretext for the coup was the uprising of the Tuareg, who had united in the Mouvement National de Libération de L’Azawad (MNLA) in order to emancipate the region they inhabited in Mali, which extended through the Sahara desert and the Sahel in the northern part of Mali.

The Tuareg (approximately 1.5–2 million) were divided into several tribes scattered across various regions of the Sahara, including Mali, Niger, Algeria (the Hoggar/Ahaggar plateau in the Sahara), Mauritania, Burkina Faso and southwestern Libya. They were nomads and never recognized borders, except those established by nature. As Bedouins, they had always lived as sheep and goats herders, driving camels in caravans across the Sahel, moving from place to place

²⁸“About 106 US tanks delivered to Yemen”, *Al-Sahwa Net*, Yemen news site, 14/10/2012.

²⁹“Gaddafi placed \$97 Billion to free Africa from imperialism”, *CounterPsyOps*.

³⁰Scott Baldauf, “Will Africa miss Qaddafi? Even with Muammar Qaddafi’s deep financial ties across Africa, many of the continent’s leaders are ambivalent about his departure”, *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 23, 2011.

³¹Rukmini Callimachi, “Amadou Haya Sanogo, Mali Coup Leader, Derails 20 Years of Democracy”, *Huffington Post*, 7/7/2012.

according to the seasons of the year and the needs of the herd. As such, they also became merchants and established the trans-Saharan connection, the trade routes of such commodities as gold, oil lamps and slaves.³²

The origin of the Tuareg is not very clear, but everything indicates that they emerged from the Berber tribes of North Africa. They fiercely resisted the Muslim armies in the seventh and eighth centuries, and were converted to Islam much later than other people in the region by Sunni Arab traders who came from the Mediterranean to Africa in search of slaves, which they then transported on foot through the Sahara,³³ under extreme temperatures, facing sand storms and thirst to be sold to the West and the Middle East.³⁴ Their route passed through Sidjilmasa, Taghaza, Walata, Ghana, Bamako and Niani before reaching the coast, in the Maghrib.

The Tuareg (“the forsaken by God,” in Arabic) called themselves the *Imohag* (free men). They were nominally Muslims, but didn’t follow orthodoxy, and the islamization took place mostly among the younger generations as they began to replace their native tongue—Tamahak, of Berber origin—by Arabic, especially in Ahaggar in the center of Algeria. But the Tuareg, divided into at least eight groups over five Saharan countries—south Algeria, Niger, Mali, Chad, southwest Libya³⁵—didn’t have their own identity and were not unified. Some of the tribes and clans had settled, but most were nomadic and often in conflict with each other, giving rise to five large confederations. Their social structure was rigid, divided between *Ihaggaren* (nobles)—the warrior aristocracy—and *Imrad* or *Kel Ulli* (vassals).³⁶ The Tuareg held slaves until around 1960.

Mali’s borders were drawn by France between French Algeria and French Sudan with no tribal geographic foundation whatsoever. But until mid-2012, the rebellion of the MNLA and the Islamist organizations proclaiming the independence of Azawad, which includes the cities of Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal in Mali, had not yet spilled over to other countries where the Tuareg lived. It was only in the second half of the twentieth century, after Mali became independent from Sudan and Senegal in 1960, that the Tuareg began to protest, demanding the emancipation of the Azawad region where they lived. Many Tuareg living in Fezzan fought in the war in Libya, where they were trained and heavily armed by the Gaddafi army. When they realized that the rebellion in Benghazi was spreading, they defected, led

³²Moraes Farias, 2003, p. CXV, CXVI–CXVII. Damon de Laszlo, “The Tuareg on the Sahara—The Nomadic Inhabitants of North Africa—Tuareg Merchant Trade Routes across the Sahara”, Bradshaw Foundation. For the Tuareg’s regions: Azawad—The Tuareg region in the Sahara. In: http://s1142.photobucket.com/user/boavista1/media/1144_050412mali_zps30bceb86.gif.html. Accessed 08.04.2015.

³³It is estimated that around 2 million still live in the Sahara.

³⁴Kemper, 2012, p. 23. Damon de Laszlo, “The Tuareg on the Sahara—The Nomadic Inhabitants of North Africa—Tuareg Merchant Trade Routes across the Sahara”, Bradshaw Foundation. Main trade routes of the Tuareg. In: <http://bradshawfoundation.com/tuareg/tuareg.php>. Accessed 08.04.2015.

³⁵Kennan, 2002, p. xxii, 5.

³⁶Ibid., p. 10.

by Colonel Ibrahim Ag Bahanga (killed in car crash, but perhaps murdered) and by other officers of the same tribal origin. They returned to the northeast of Mali, where they joined the Mouvement National de Libération de l’Azawad (MNLA) and the independence of Azawad was declared on April 6, 2012.³⁷

18.6 The Secession of Azawad

The uprising cut Mali’s territory in half. The MNLA separatists seized the cities of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu, and even though they were secular and not orthodox, they could count on the support of the militants of Ansar Eddine (defenders of the faith), led by the Islamic *jihadist* Iyad Ag Ghaly, who had been Consul General of Mali in Saudi Arabia and co-opted by the Wahhabi doctrine. Ghaly wanted to implement the *Shari’ah* in Azawad and throughout Mali, making all women wear veils, cutting off the hands of thieves and stoning adulterers to death. The two organizations eventually broke and the sectarian Salafists of Ansar Eddine established their headquarters, always under cries of *Allahu akbar*, in the historic city of Timbuktu—the city of 333 Saints (Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Unesco).³⁸ They drove out the combatants of the MLNA, destroyed the centuries-old Sufi mosques and mausoleums of the saints Sidi Mahmud, Sidi Moctar and Alpha Moya and other tombs “in the name of Allah”,³⁹ and hoisted the black flag of al-Qa’ida with the *shah’ada* (declaration of faith) in the oneness (*tawhid*) of God: *lā ‘ilāhā ‘illā l-Lāh, Muḥammadur rasūlu l-Lāh* (there is no God except God and Muhammad is his prophet).

Other radical Islamist organizations—al-Qa’ida au Maghrib Islamique (AQMI), which was reportedly created by the Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité (DRS) in Algeria, and the Mouvement pour l’Unité et le Jihad en Afrique de l’Ouest (MUJAO)—joined Ansar Eddine, supporting the implementation of the

³⁷ Lydia Polgreen and Alan Cowell, “Mali Rebels Proclaim Independent State in North”, *The New York Times*, April 6, 2012. See: Algeria—The Ahaggar Massif. In: <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/africa/dznewzz.gif>. Accessed 08.04.2015.

³⁸ Timbuktu, located in the Sahara Desert, was the seat of the Koranic Sankore University and other *madrasas*, as well as of the Djingareyber, Sankore and Sidi Yahia mosques and, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was the cultural center of Islam.

³⁹ Mahmoud Sidibe Qadri, “Destruction of Timbuktu Sufi Shrines Exposes Wahhabi Agenda. CounterPsyOps”, *The Islamic Post*, August 29, 2012. “Protest gegen Unesco. Islamisten zerstören Weltkulturerbe in Timbuktu. Islamistische Kämpfer haben in Timbuktu im Norden Malis jahrhundertealte Gräber zerstört und weitere Verwüstungen angekündigt. Ihren Bildersturm erklären sie als ‘Auftrag Gottes’ gegen die Unesco”, *Welt Online*, 30/6/2012. “Bürgerkrieg in Mali Islamisten zerstören Weltkulturerbe” *Der Spiegel*, 30/6/2012. Andrea Böhm, “Mali Taliban in Timbuktu—Im westafrikanischen Mali spielt sich eine Tragödie ab. Islamisten errichten im Norden des Landes eine Terrorherrschaft. Wer greift ein?”, *Die Zeit*, 30/8/2012.

Shari'ah in Azawad.⁴⁰ They maintained ties with the militants of Boko Haram (*Jamā'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lādda'awatih wal-Jihad*) in northern Nigeria and Niger, where the French exploited two large uranium mines (Arlit and Ku) in the region of Agadez, one of which operating underground (820 ft) near the city of Akohan, contaminating the water with radioactivity, reducing the pastures for the cattle, sheep, goats, horses and camels of the Bedouins, who were also affected by fatal diseases, and leaving nothing except radiation for thousands of years.⁴¹ The French energy group Areva built two cities in the desert and its uranium mines no doubt contributed to the Tuareg uprising in Mali, since their migration routes to Niger passed there.

18.7 War in the Sahara–Sahel Region

The separatist war in Mali took a turn for the worse after the fundamentalist group Ansar Eddine drove out the MNLA forces from Timbuktu and transformed the city into its base, opening up four fronts of battle: the civil government of Bamako, the coup-backing military, the secular separatist Tuareg and the Salafist Tuareg. And the French oil company Total and the Qatar Petroleum Company were no doubt operating in the shadows of this civil war, for they had been heavily involved in the overthrow of Gaddafi and explored oil in northern Mali.

Recovering the territorial integrity of Mali, one of the ten poorest countries in the world with a GDP of around US\$9 billion and a per capita GDP of US\$691 (2010 est.),⁴² proved even more problematic, since foreign interests likely promoted the secession. Rich in gold, phosphate and salt deposits, the north had been parceled in lots and delivered to Total and the Qatar Petroleum Company for the exploitation of oil and gas.⁴³ There was strong evidence to support that Qatar had funded the Salafists and many in Mali believed that the rebellion had been encouraged by France, which had been behind another uprising in the 1950s.⁴⁴

⁴⁰Dianguina Tounkara and Yaya Traore, "Négociations sur le Nord du Mali: Partition, autonomie ou respect de la Constitution de 1992? Entre dissonances constitutionnelles et périls sécessionnistes", *Mali Actualités*, September 22, 2012. About Mali and the territory claimed by the MNLA: http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/04/10/all-hailazawad/?_r=0. Accessed 08.04.2015.

⁴¹Cordula Meyer, "Uranium Mining in Niger—Tuareg Activist Takes on French Nuclear Company", *Spiegel Online*, 4/2/2010.

⁴²U.S. Department of State, Bureau of African Affairs, Background Note: Mali, January 3, 2012.

⁴³"Azawad, Why is the International Community Ignoring this?", *The Moor Next Door*, Maghreb Affairs, Geopolitics, International Relations, in forum Ancient Egypt at EgyptSearch Forums. Assist America—Pre-Trip-Information, <http://assistamerica.countrywatch.com/rcountry.aspx?vcountry=3&topic=CBWIR&uid=5824177>

⁴⁴Andy Morgan, "Mali's Tuareg Rebellion", *The Global Dispatches*, March 27, 2012.

Based on information from the French military intelligence service, the weekly *Le Canard Enchaîné* revealed that the funding of the Islamist groups—al-Qa’ida au Maghrib Islamique (AQMI), Mouvement pour l’Unité et le Jihad en Afrique de l’Ouest (MUJAO), in the north of Mali—came from Qatar. The Algerians Abu Zeid, Mokhtar Belmokhtar and Yahya Abu al-Hammam met with several Imams and with Ghaly, Ansar Eddine’s leader, who was seeking support of the religious to consolidate his power in Azawad.

Despite the lack of concrete evidence, American involvement could not be ruled out in the coup carried out by Captain Amadou Sanogo, an officer trained in the U.S. Marine Corps schools of Fort Benning, Georgia, the intelligence center at Fort Huachuca, Arizona (2007), the Language Institute at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, Quantico, Virginia, and in Camp Pendleton, California.⁴⁵ The United States had an interest in containing the influence of China, which had become Mali’s largest trading partner and continued to expand its presence in Africa.⁴⁶ President George W. Bush had also identified the Sahara as a new theater of the *war on terror*, noted Professor Jeremy Kennan of the University of London, deploying the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI)⁴⁷ in 2002 to protect the borders, monitor the movement of people and fight terrorism.⁴⁸ In January 2004, an American anti-terror team landed in Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania, followed by 400 soldiers and 500 rangers who entered the Chad–Niger region, joining the mercenaries from Pacific Architects & Engineers (PAE), a Pentagon contractor operating in over 60 countries, including Djibouti and Sudan.⁴⁹ In 2007, the Pentagon deployed the U.S. Africa Command (Africom), intensifying the militarization of Africa to ensure and protect the sources of strategic mineral resources and contain the expansion of Chinese investments.

The Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI) was subsequently extended, at a cost of more than US\$500 million, with the launch of the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Program (TSCTP), which sought primarily to increase the local capacity to fight terrorism; strengthen the institutional cooperation between the security forces in the region (Mauritania, Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso and Niger, as well as Nigeria and Senegal); promote democratic governments; and strengthen military ties with the United States.⁵⁰ According to professor Jeremy Kennan, the “*fabrication of a fiction of terrorism*” had created the necessary ideological conditions for the militarization of

⁴⁵“Mali coup leader trained with US military: Pentagon”, *The Times of India*, AFP, March 28, 2012. About the sources of funding in Northern Mali: *Le Canard Enchaîné* l’a révélé hier : Le Qatar finance les terroristes d’Aqmi et du Mujao 2012. 06.06, http://www.cridem.org/C_Info.php?article=630368

⁴⁶Brendan O’Reilly, “China’s Winning Strategy in Africa”, *Asia Times*, August 16, 2012.

⁴⁷Keenan, 2009, p. 2.

⁴⁸Pan Sahel Initiative, Office of Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State Archive, November 7, 2002.

⁴⁹Keenan, 2009, p. 36. “U.S. seeks to block terrorists in Sahara”, *The Washington Times*, January 12, 2004.

⁵⁰The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, U.S. Africa Command, Program Overview, General Carter F. Ham, Commander.

Africa and of the strategic mineral resources of national interest to the United States—especially oil, whose reserves in Nigeria in 2006 were of the order of 51.9 billion barrels, with a capacity to produce 4.94 million bbd.⁵¹

In 2010, president Barack Obama ordered the construction of two strategic secret bases and the concentration of 50,000 soldiers of the air force and navy. One on the islands of the Socotra archipelago, located 50 miles to the east of the Horn of Africa and 240 to the southeast of Yemen, in the Indian Ocean; and another on Masirah, which belonged to Oman, on the south of the Strait of Hormuz, through the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.⁵² These two bases would link up with those existing in Jebel Ali and Al Dahfra in the United Arab Emirates; Arifjan in Kuwait; and Al Udeid in Qatar. At the beginning of 2012, the United States had probably 100,000 soldiers in the region. And to expand its presence, the *USS Abraham Lincoln*, the *USS Carl Vinson* and the *USS Enterprise* were stationed nearby, which were joined by the French nuclear aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle*.

Between 2009 and 2011, advisers of the Special Operations Command—Africa SEAL trained and supervised Mali forces in counter-terrorism operations with armored vehicles close to Gao.⁵³ “*Terrorism in Saara-Sahel, fabricated to justify the GWOT (global war on terrorism), has now become a self-fulfilling prophecy*”, wrote professor Jeremy Kennan, adding that the many rebellions of the Tuareg transformed the Sahara-Sahel from a “*terror zone*” imagined by President George W. Bush and the Pentagon into a “*very real war zone*”.⁵⁴

More than 200,000 people fled the north of the country occupied by fundamentalists because of the violence and food shortages. The Canadian Foreign Minister Rick Roth told the press that he was concerned with “*the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation*” and announced that Canada and its NATO partners were looking into the possibility of intervening in Mali to contain the advance of al-Qa’ida terrorists in the Sahel.⁵⁵ The United States had already put its troops on standby, and it was even expected to carry out drone strikes against the leaders of Ansar Eddine and the other radical groups dominating Azawad, where they had installed the *Shari’ah* in the region of Timbuktu.⁵⁶ Pressured by the neighboring countries of ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), who imposed sanctions, and possibly by the State Department, Captain Sanogo acquiesced, however, and let a civilian, Diaconda Traoré, form a Transitional

⁵¹Keenan, 2009, p. 51 and 124.

⁵²“Massive US Military Buildup on Two Strategic Islands: Socotra and Masirah”, *DEBKA-Net-Weekly*, January 26, 2012.

⁵³Flickr, U.S. Africa Command: GAO, Mali, A U.S. Navy SEAL, advisor watches a Malian special operations, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/africom/4406298566/>

⁵⁴Keenan, 2009, p. 9.

⁵⁵Lee Berthiaume, “Canada could be drawn into Mali civil war. Calls for military intervention grow after al-Qaida insurgents take over country’s north”, *Vancouver Sun*, July 13, 2012.

⁵⁶“Mali: Civil war or peace negotiations?”, *All Voices*, Bamako, Mali, April, 12, 2012.

Government backed by the United States and with the participation of one of the rebel soldiers.

The situation in Mali was unpredictable, divided between the army and armed (secular and salafist) Tuareg, in addition to the Islamic radicals linked to al-Qa'ida. On October 12, 2012, the UNSC unanimously adopted a resolution giving the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) 45 days to prepare a plan for military intervention in order to regain northern Mali (two thirds of the national territory), which was being occupied since March by the Tuareg of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and by the radical Islamic groups Ansar al Dine, Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa and al-Qa'ida au Maghrib Islamique (AQMI).⁵⁷

The terrorists of AQMI had apparently received thousands of dollars from Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as the French and American governments had always known. In southern Libya, an oasis was the location of three training camps for *Jihadists*, Libyan and Egyptian Salafists who would be sent to the region of Timbuktu to join 6000 other very well-trained fighters equipped with weapons transferred from Libya after the death of Muammar Gaddafi.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, still in October 2012, France was trying to pass a political resolution in the UNSC to establish a strategy to deter the *jihadists* in the Sahel from going to Bamako by placing ECOWAS troops in its surroundings. This resolution would allow for a negotiation with the “*non-terrorists*” Tuareg who lived in the Sahel.

But reconquering northern Mali in the region of Azawad seemed to be a very complicated and difficult task, one that would require around 7000–10,000 troops, which the countries of the region, such as Nigeria and Algeria, could not provide. They were fighting terrorists and involved in other fronts, or they did not want to get involved in Mali. And both the United States and France didn't express any willingness to send their own troops. The perception was that an intervention to oust the Salafist insurgents who captured the north of Mali would be no simple operation, but a protracted and very expensive war in which soldiers would have to fight in adverse geographical and climatic conditions that favored guerrilla tactics and to which they were not accustomed. Nevertheless, a military intervention in northern Mali appeared to be inevitable, either with ECOWAS or NATO troops.

The secession of Azawad, the increasingly violent conduct of the *jihadist* group Boko Haram in northern Nigeria, and the rising tide of terrorism in Somalia had completely destabilized the Maghrib and sub-Saharan Africa, where al-Qa'ida and other groups tied to it had established an important base of operations and where the United States expanded its constellation of drone bases from Camp Lemonnier (Djibouti) to monitor and strike against the new generation of *jihadists* in Africa,

⁵⁷Faith Karimi, “U.N. Security Council seeks detailed Mali military intervention plan”, CNN, October 13, 2012. “UN urges military action plan for Mali. Security Council gives West African nations 45 days to provide details of plan for international military intervention”, *Al Jazeera*, October 13, 2012. “El Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU aprueba la intervención militar en Mali”, *El País* (Spain), 13/10/2012.

⁵⁸Gilles Lapouge, “O Hamas e o Catar”, *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 25/10/2012.

from Mali, Libya and Yemen to the Central African Republic. Likewise, small airports in Ethiopia and the Seychelles served as drone launch sites. But Camp Lemonnier operated full-time, launching its *remotely piloted aircraft* (RPA) day and night. In a letter to Congress dated August 20, the Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter wrote that, on average, 16 (MQ-1B Predator) drones and four jets would take off or land in Camp Lemonnier each day.

Chapter 19

The Uprising in Syria

19.1 The Method to the Arab Uprisings

The United States, Great Britain and France toppled the regime of Muammar Gaddafi in about 8 months with the bombings carried out under the mantle of NATO, the participation of al-Qa'ida militants and the special forces of Qatar and other countries. Unlike Libya, it would have been hard to believe that the protests in Syria, which began on January 26, 2011, almost at the same time as the uprising in Benghazi and presented by the international media as peaceful demonstrations, would have transformed into an insurgency by March in four regions of Syria simultaneously, and that the armed struggle would continue for more than a year despite the harsh and bloody repression by the Bashar al-Assad government. But as Polonius remarked on Hamlet's behavior, "*Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't.*"¹

In fact, there was a method to the demonstrations in both Libya and Syria. There were objective and subjective conditions for the upheavals that occurred in the Arab countries, but the United States and its partners of the European Union had nevertheless methodically developed a scheme with a broad economic, geopolitical and strategic dimension in the Middle East and in the Maghrib, especially with respect to the uprisings in Libya and Syria that began in 2011. The "*cold revolutionary war*", including the protests to capitalize on international public opinion, which remained within the bounds of legality, soon evolved into a "*hot revolutionary war*", when protests turned into acts of violence against the government of Syria, with external support. The transition from "*peace*" to "*war*", said Colonel David Galula, could be "*gradual and confusing*."² So it was in Libya and Syria, where the revolts were not only directed against the oligarchic regime, but above all

¹Shakespeare, 1975, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene II, p. 1084.

²Galula, 2010, p. 43.

against the rule of the heretic Alawites, who the Salafists pejoratively called *noseiris*.³

The goal of the United States and the other western powers, however, was to take control of the Mediterranean and to politically isolate Iran, an ally of Syria, in addition to containing and eliminating Russian and Chinese influence in the Middle East and the Maghrib. Russia was operating in the port of Tartus in Syria since 1971, and was planning to reform and expand this naval base in 2012 so it would be able to receive large war ships, ensuring its presence in the Mediterranean. It should be noted that Russia also planned to install naval bases in Libya and Yemen. By funding the opposition in Syria since 2005–2006, the United States sought to destabilize and topple the Bashar al-Assad regime in order to, among other things, stop the country's tightening naval relations with Russia and break the axis Syria formed with Iran, Hizballah in Lebanon, and Hamas in Palestine.

After boasting in his State of the Union address of February 2, 2005, about the results of his policy “*in the spread of democracy*” in Iraq and Afghanistan, President George W. Bush stressed that “*to promote peace in the broader Middle East*”, the United States should confront regimes that continue to harbor terrorists and pursue weapons of mass destruction.⁴ And he explicitly accused Syria of still allowing “*its territory, and parts of Lebanon, to be used by terrorists who seek to destroy every chance of peace in the region*”, adding that he hoped that Assad's government, which was already suffering the sanctions of the Syrian Accountability Act, would end its “*support for terror and open the door to freedom*.”⁵ With US troops at Syria's border after the fall of Saddam Hussein and the occupation of Iraq, the real obsession in Washington was actually to overthrow the regime in Damascus as “*low-hanging fruit*”, particularly among the *neocons* surrounding president Bush,⁶ fulfilling America's ambition of redrawing the Arab world. But when President George W. Bush wanted to invade Syria, as he had done in Iraq, the Prime Minister of Israel at the time, Ariel Sharon (2001–2006), warned him by saying that Bashar al-Assad was the “*devil we know*” and that the alternative, according to conventional wisdom, would be worse, i.e., the Muslim Brotherhood.⁷

³Aron Lund, “Syrian Jihadism”, *Policy Brief*, Swedish Institute of International Affairs, September 14, 2012.

⁴State of the Union Address, The White House—President George W. Bush, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/stateoftheunion/2005/>. Miller Center—University of Virginia—State of the Union Address (February 2, 2005), George W. Bush, <http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/4464>

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ajami, 2012, p. 52.

⁷Itamar Rabinovich, “The Devil We Knew”, *The New York Times*, November 18, 2011.

19.2 In Syria as well as in Libya

The western media wrote daily about the war in Syria as an exercise in brutal violence by the government of Bashar al-Assad, citing the number of dead among the “activists”. The West was trying to obtain a UN Security Council resolution that could serve as cover for a military intervention in Syria with a NATO bombing campaign, just as in Libya. Russia and China, however, vetoed any sanctions. And because of the complexity of the civil war in Syria and its consequences in the Middle East, the United States was unable to intervene militarily, but its intentions remained unchanged. The goal was regime change, the same policy implemented in Libya.

19.3 Strategic Objectives of the West: Full Spectrum Dominance

The fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime, after the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya by NATO forces, would suppress the presence of Russia and its naval bases in Syria (Tartus and Latakia); cut off supply routes for weapons to Hizballah, the Shia stronghold against Israeli ventures into southern Lebanon; contain the Chinese advance on oil resources; and completely isolate and strangle Iran, with the consequent elimination of the (Shia) Islamic government of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. By completely changing the balance of forces in the Middle East, the result of this equation would be the establishment by the United States and its partners in the European Union of *full-spectrum dominance*, i.e., the full command of land, sea, air and space, as well as of all the assets of the Mediterranean, a region of vital strategic importance since the times of the Roman Empire as link between East and West. When the Byzantine Empire controlled it, it could project its influence in all directions.⁸ And before the First World War, the Mediterranean was of crucial importance for the foreign policy of the British empire and the control of the entire Commonwealth, providing maritime and aerial routes, pipelines etc. It is the reason why the British later took Egypt as protectorate.⁹

⁸Pirenne, 1992, p. 74.

⁹Schmitt, 1991, pp. 35–37. All Mediterranean countries in: <http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/infopage/medsea.htm>. Accessed 09.04.2015.

19.4 Control of the Mediterranean and Energy Resources

Washington's desire to control the entire Mediterranean was clearly expressed by the signing of the agreement with Madrid, announced on October 5, 2011, through which the Rota naval base (Cádiz) in Spain would harbor four destroyers equipped with missile defense systems (BMD) of the United States Navy and operated by 1100 soldiers and 100 civilians as part of NATO's missile defense system. The pretext was to prevent ballistic missile attacks from Iran and North Korea, and it would be accompanied by other systems in Romania, Poland and Turkey.

In addition to the geopolitical and strategic aspect, everything points to the fact that securing the energy resources in the Mediterranean was also among the main reasons why the United States and its allies in the European Union were openly trying to encourage regime change in Syria. Although Syria's oil production was modest, around 530,000 bpd, this factor cannot be ruled out as a rationale for the bloody insurgency, concentrated in the city of Homs (also called Hims),¹⁰ where the supposed rebels blew up the largest oil pipeline in the country in December 2011.¹¹ All factors should be considered that led to the West's support of the insurgency through various mechanisms, including intense psychological warfare through the international media, and in alliance with the absolutist monarchies in the Middle East.

Syrian oil reserves were estimated at 2.5 billion barrels, according to the *Oil and Gas Journal* (1/1/2010), located mainly in the eastern part of the country near the border with Iraq, along the Euphrates, with only a small number of fields in the central region. But Syria's location was strategic with respect to the safety of energy transport routes. These routes were integrated even further with the opening of the Arab Gas Pipeline in 2008 and the country's connection with the gas pipeline passing through Turkey, Iraq and Iran. In order to transport crude and refined oil to the port of Baniyas, located 34 miles south of Latakia and 21 miles north of Tartus, the sites of two Russian naval bases, Syria built a system of oil and gas pipelines controlled by the state company Syrian Company for Oil Transportation (SCOT).

¹⁰Homs lies 1400 feet above sea level, 100 miles from Damascus and 120 miles from Aleppo. It is located on the banks of the River Orontes and is the point where the cities of the heartland and of the Mediterranean coast link up. About Syria's geostrategic location on the Mediterranean: U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), https://energy.fanack.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2015/04/Fanack_Syria_Map-01_CS5groot1-1024x784.jpg, Accessed 04.05.2016.

¹¹"Syria unrest: Oil pipeline attacked near Homs", *BBC News*, Middle East, December 8, 2011.

19.5 From “Cold Revolutionary War” to “Hot Revolutionary War”

On March 24, 2011, the Minister of Oil and Mineral Resources and the General Petroleum Corporation (GPC), a Syrian state-owned company, announced the opening of an international bid for the exploitation and production of oil, offering three 1900-square-mile blocks (I, II and III), each along a 5616-square-mile off-shore stretch in Syria’s economic zone in the Mediterranean.¹²

The announcement of the bid excited international oil companies as it opened the prospect of access to hydrocarbons in an under-explored area that was considered to be the true frontier for oil exploration in the Mediterranean. At the heart of this project were 3000 miles determined by “long-offset multi-client 2D seismic data” and acquired by the French company CGGVeritas¹³ in 2005 for deep water exploration between 1600 and 5600 feet.

In February 2012, however, al-Qa’ida terrorists attacked and blew up the largest refinery in Syria in Bab Amro, a district only 4 miles to the west of the center of Homs, the city where the opposition to the Assad regime was concentrated. This refinery with a capacity to process 250,000 bpd, connected the oil fields in eastern Syria to the station of Tel Adas and the port of Tartus via a pipeline inaugurated in 2010. The General Petroleum Corporation (GPC) was responsible for the exploitation of the oil, with the support of the Syrian Petroleum Co. and Gulsands Petroleum Syria Ltd. Royal Dutch Shell and China National Petroleum Corporation were partners of GPC through the joint venture Al-Furat Petroleum Co (AFPC). The Assad government was also planning to build two refineries in Syria: one from CNPC in Deir ez-Zor, with a capacity to process 100,000 bbl/d, and another in the city of Homs, with a capacity of 140,000 bbl/d, which were to be built by a consortium of companies from Venezuela, Syria, Iran and Malaysia.¹⁴

But it wasn’t the oil reserves in Syria, estimated at only 2.5 billion barrels by the *Oil and Gas Journal* on January 1, 2011,¹⁵ nor the 8.5 billion cubic feet of gas that caught the eye of the western powers. Instead, they were particularly interested in the oil assets discovered in the Levantine basin, between Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Israel, Syria and Lebanon.¹⁶ According to Syria’s Minister of Oil and Natural

¹²“Announcement for International Offshore Bid Round 2011”, Syrian Petroleum Co., *Engineer Live*, February 22, 2012. Location of Syria’s three offshore blocks offered in the bid round of 2011: <http://www.energy-pedia.com/news/syria/syria-international-off-shore-bid-round-2011-launched-for-three-off-shore-blocks>. Accessed 09.04.2015.

¹³CGG Veritas is a French geophysical company formed after the merger of the companies Compagnie Générale de Géophysique (CGG) and Veritas DGC Inc. in 2007. Its activity consists in the acquisition of land or maritime areas to monitor reserves, and analyze and interpret electromagnetic studies.

¹⁴“A Barrel Full Oil & Gas Wiki—Country Oil & Gas Profiles”, Syria Oil & Gas Profile.

¹⁵U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=SY>

¹⁶William Engdahl, “Das Becken der Levante und Israel—eine neue geopolitische Situation? Neuer Persischer Golf-Konflikt um Gas und Öl?”, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (NRhZ), September 12, 2012a.

Resources, Sufian Allaw, modern scientific studies had pointed to the existence of huge reserves of natural gas, estimated at 122 trillion cubic feet, and oil, around 107 billion barrels, in the Mediterranean Basin along Syria's maritime platform.¹⁷ Several companies announced that they discovered important oil and gas reserves there, but the exploitation was complicated because of the tensions in the region.¹⁸ These deep water reserves in the sub-salt layers of the eastern Mediterranean near the Levantine Basin¹⁹ extended 120 miles from the coast of Syria to Lebanon and Israel.²⁰

The existence of these huge, undiscovered and technically recoverable deposits of natural gas in the Levantine basin was already known in 2010, or even before.²¹ Since then, the *Great Game* in the region intensified dramatically with the discovery of gigantic natural gas reserves in Israel's exclusive economic zone of the Levantine Basin, aptly named the Leviathan gas field.²² Geologists from the U.S. Geological Survey estimated that this area covering the coast of Israel, Lebanon and Syria also harbored reserves that could be retrieved with the use of currently available technologies.²³

Lebanon questioned the exploitation of these reserves in the UN, since they also extended into its exclusive economic zone, but Israel wasn't willing to give even "one inch", declared its Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman.²⁴ And on February 2012, the American oil company Noble Energy, based in Houston, announced the discovery of another natural gas field in Tanin, 13 miles to the west of the Tamar field, on Israel's maritime platform, prospecting a deposit of approximately 130 feet of natural gas at a depth of 18,212 feet. According to estimates from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the natural gas deposits in the Levantine Basin

¹⁷Sufian Allaw, "Syria' oil fell between 20 and 25% because of the sanctions...No company withdraw", *Syrian Oil & Gas News*—al-Hayat.

¹⁸Eric Fox, "The Mediterranean Sea Oil And Gas Boom", September 7, 2010.

¹⁹The Levantine basin, with its enormous reserves, is situated in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, between Cyprus and the Nile delta, and it contains 33,000 feet of mesozoic and cenozoic sediments.

²⁰"Oil and gas worldwide. Offshore oil treasures in eastern Mediterranean sea", *Neftgaz.RU News*. Location of Syria's three offshore blocks offered in the bid round of 2011: <http://www.energy-pedia.com/news/syria/syria-international-offshore-bid-round-2011-launched-for-three-off-shore-blocks>. Accessed: 09.04.2015.

²¹"Natural Gas Potential Assessed in Eastern Mediterranean", *Science Daily*, April 8, 2010.

²²The Levantine Basin is located in the Mediterranean Sea, between Asia Minor and Egypt. In: Oil & gas prospecting on the borders of Gaza, Israel and Lebanon. <http://www.voltairenet.org/article174744.html>. Accessed 19.01.2015.

²³<http://www.yalibnan.com/2010/04/10/levant-basin-holds-122-trillion-cubic--feet-of-natural-gas/> F. William Engdahl, "The New Mediterranean Oil And Gas Bonanza Part I—Israel's Levant Basin—A New Geopolitical Curse?", *ASEA—RENSE.COM*, 19/2/2012b. F. William Engdahl is the author of *Century of War—Anglo-American Oil Politics*.

²⁴*Ibid*.

were of the order of 3.5 trillion cubic meters. The discoveries of the Marie B, Gaza Marine, Y ½, Leviathan, Dalit and Tamar fields in Israel's exclusive economic zone amounted to 800 billion cubic meters of gas in 2011.²⁵

The exploration of the Leviathan I field had reached a depth of 17,000 feet, where the natural gas deposits were estimated at 16 trillion cubic feet, and it was expected to reach 24,000 feet, where an additional reserve of 600 million cubic meters could be found. The major discoveries by Noble Energy, which exploited Israel's exclusive economic zone in the Mediterranean, were estimated to harbor between 0.9–1.4 trillion cubic feet of gas.²⁶ In addition to these gas reserves, there was the potential existence of 4.2 billion barrels of oil.

In the Nile Delta Basin, the U.S. Geological Survey also estimated reserves of 1.8 billion barrels of recoverable crude oil, in addition to 223 trillion cubic feet of recoverable gas reserves and 6 billion barrels of natural gas.²⁷ The U.S. Geological Survey calculated that, throughout the Mediterranean, oil reserves could reach 3.40 billion barrels and 9 billion cubic meters of gas.²⁸

The oil and gas reserves stretching from Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon and Israel to the Nile Delta, had an extraordinary geopolitical and geostrategic significance, since they could directly supply the United States and Europe while avoiding the threat of interruption in the Persian Gulf, through which millions of barrels of oil were transported in tankers and pipelines. And the dispute of these gas and oil resources in the Levantine Basin constituted a source of geopolitical tension between Turkey and the Republic of Cyprus, as well as between Israel and Lebanon, revealing the strategic importance of this maritime area from Libya to Syria.

19.6 Support from Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia to the Terrorists in Syria

The militarization of the protests in Syria, to the extent that they turned into a *low-level insurgency*, revealed that the democratization of Bashar al-Assad's regime wasn't the objective.²⁹ The opposition protesters, the so-called "activists", were not unarmed. Armed people were marching among them, shooting at civilians and at

²⁵Alain Bruneton, Elias Konafagos and Anthony E. Foscolos, "Economic and Geopolitic Importance of Eastern Mediterranean Gas for Greece and the E.U. Emphasis on the Probable Natural Gas Deposit occurring in the Lybian Sea with the Exclusive Economic Zone of Greece", *Oil Mineral Wealth*, 2011.

²⁶"Noble Energy Announces Another Significant Discovery in the Levant Basin Offshore Israel".

²⁷"Undiscovered Oil and Gas of the Nile Delta Basin, Eastern Mediterranean", [Geology.com](http://geology.com)

²⁸"Assessment of Undiscovered Oil and Gas Resources of the Levant Basin Province, Eastern Mediterranean", U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geo Oil & gas reserves in the Nile Basin: <http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2010/3027/pdf/FS10-3027.pdf>. Accessed 09.04.2015 (logical survey).

²⁹Steven Heydemann, "Managing militarization in Syria", *Foreign Policy*, February 22, 2012.

military personnel.³⁰ And they soon received the most modern war equipment produced in the United States, United Kingdom and France, including night vision and communication systems and information about the movements of government forces.

The Israeli agency DEBKAF^{file} reported that commandos and operatives from the British MI6, Special Forces Support Group (SFSG), Special Air Service (SAS) and Special Boat Service had been training opposition combatants in Syria since 2011, in addition to supplying armaments and SIGINT (collection of intelligence through the interception of communication signals).³¹ In November 2011, the newspapers *Le Canard Enchaîné* and *Milliyet* also revealed that agents of the *Service Action de la Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure* (DGSE) and of the Commandement des Opérations Spéciales (COS) had been in Syria, training defectors from the Syrian army in urban guerrilla warfare and organizing the so-called Free Syrian Army.³² The training camps were located in Tripoli, southern Turkey and north-eastern Lebanon.³³ The Gulf countries were paying the Free Syrian Army, which included many deserters, trying to encourage more defections from Bashar al-Assad's regular army.³⁴

According to sources in the Pentagon, the CIA was operating many unarmed drones over Syrian airspace to monitor Bashar al-Assad's troop movements and the attacks against the insurgents, revealed the American television network NBC.³⁵ Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that the United States "support the opposition's peaceful political plans for change", but that it preferred to work through the Arab League and the United Nations so as to avoid the appearance of involvement in the conflict and not to give any pretext for an intervention by Iran.³⁶

The different shades of rivalries, both political and religious, between countries in the region (Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar) were also a key factor in the *Great Game* played out on Syria's soil, making the overthrow of Assad's regime fundamental to the success of the scheme set up by the United States and its partners in the European Union. Syria has always been a central country the Mediterranean. T. E. Lawrence already wrote in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* that it's been a corridor

³⁰Sophie Shevardnadze, "Assad: Erdogan thinks he's Caliph, new sultan of the Ottoman (EXCLUSIVE)", *Russia Today*, November 9, 2012.

³¹Michel Chossudovsky, "SYRIA: British Special Forces, CIA and MI6 Supporting Armed Insurgency. NATO Intervention Contemplated", *Global Research*, January 7, 2012.

³²Céline Lussato, "La DGSE va-t-elle former les déserteurs syriens? Selon le Canard enchaîné, des agents français actuellement au Liban et en Turquie 'ont pour mission de constituer les premiers contingents de l'Armée syrienne libre", *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 23/11/2011. "France training rebels to fight Syria", *PressTV*, November 26, 2011.

³³Michael Ludwig, "Wollen Niedergang wettmachen "Putin attackiert den Westen", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9/7/2012.

³⁴Starr, 2012, pp. ix–xi.

³⁵World news on [msnbc.com](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/46451682/ns/world_news-the_new_york_times), http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/46451682/ns/world_news-the_new_york_times. "U.S. Drones Fly over Syria", *RIA-Novost*, 20/2/2012.

³⁶Ibid.

between the sea and the desert throughout history, joining Africa with Asia and Arabia with Europe. He added that it has always been a closed region, subordinate to Anatolia, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Arabia or Mesopotamian Persia.³⁷ “*For if Syria was by nature a vassal country it was by habit a country of tireless agitation and incessant revolt*”, T. E. Lawrence wrote.³⁸

Syria suffered through tremendous instability after the Second World War, between 1946 and 1970.³⁹ Itamar Rabinovich, professor of Middle East History at the University of Tel Aviv and former Israeli ambassador in the United States, correctly wrote that in its 25 years of existence, i.e., since it freed itself from France (1947), Syria had been an “*unstable state*”, an arena in which international rivalries manifested themselves, until Hafez al-Assad (1930–2000), Bashar al-Assad’s father, took power (1971–2000) as head of the secular and nationalist Arab Socialist Ba’ath Party (*Hizb Al-Baath Al-Arabi Al-Ishtiraki*).⁴⁰ Afterwards, Syria acquired “*stability, prestige and a leading role in Arab nationalist ‘resistance’ (to the United States and Israel)*” through an unwritten contract between the Alawite minority, running an authoritarian and oligarchic government, and the Sunni Muslim majority (c. 70%) of the population.

Like his father, Bashar al-Assad’s government continued being secular and opposing political Islamism, arresting the *jihadists* who traveled from other Arab countries to fight in Iraq.⁴¹ The situation in Syria was relatively stable, despite an unemployment rate of nearly 20% and approximately 2.2 million, i.e., 11.4% of the population of 21 million, living below the poverty level.⁴² According to Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich, however, the outbreak of the revolt against the regime marked the end of this unwritten contract and made Syria regress to the pre-1970 situation.⁴³

Once again, Syria became the arena of regional and international rivalries, reflecting the political changes occurring in the region. Sunni Arab tribalism became a significant cultural and politically factor in the armed conflict that broke out in 2011, both in favor and against the Assad regime, especially in Dera’a, Deir al-Zor, on the Euphrates, and in the suburbs of Homs and Damascus. The Union of Arab Syrian Clans and Tribes, which claimed to represent more than 50% of the population, announced its existence through YouTube on March 11, 2011. The tribes of Syria’s north and east, such as Shammar, Baggara, Jabbour, Dulaim and Ougaidat, received support—weapons and mobile equipment—to fight the Assad regime because of their ties of kinship in Saudi Arabia. Just as in Libya and other countries of the Middle East and the Maghrib, tribal chains had not

³⁷Lawrence, 1962, p. 344. Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Pipes, 1996, p. 4.

⁴⁰Itamar Rabinovich, “The Devil We Knew”, *The New York Times*, November 18, 2011.

⁴¹Ajami, 2012, p. 61.

⁴²Starr, 2012, p. 113.

⁴³Itamar Rabinovich, “The Devil We Knew”, *The New York Times*, November 18, 2011.

disappeared in Syria,⁴⁴ despite the breakup of Mesopotamia and the Levant through the Sykes-Picot Agreement signed by France and Great Britain in 1916, which artificially drew national borders, creating countries with very different social structures than those in the West.

It is impossible to specify the number of Bedouins in Syria—in the mid-1980s, they were estimated to make up less than 7% of the population—and the number of nomadic tribes was falling—only eight remained, crossing national boundaries. Ties of kinship continued to substantially influence the mentality of Syrians, however, including the Assad family. For them, the past was the present, it was not forgotten. And the revived tribal customs (*ʿurf*) turned the civil war even more violent, including acts of vengeance for massacres inflicted by President Hafez al-Assad when he took power in the country and established a secular regime with his Ba'ath party. Other tribal *shaykhs*, however, remained on the government's side and fought the insurgents. They held a forum of Syrian and Arab Tribes and Clans to stress their resistance to foreign intervention and ensure the sovereignty of the country.⁴⁵

But the goal of the autocratic monarchies in Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which were part of the Arab League and supported the opposition, was to topple the last secular regime still standing in the Middle East, represented by President Bashar al-Assad, an Alawite, a branch of Islam that adopts the *taqiyya*, a practice that allows for the precautionary dissimulation or denial of religious belief in the face of persecution. The Alawites made up only 15.3% of the population, although they had dominated and controlled the entire state apparatus at least since the 1970s, when Hafez al-Assad took power with the support of many liberal Sunni entrepreneurs and traders who didn't want an Islamic State, a caliphate in Syria.

A mission of the Arab League, with 144 members of various nationalities and under the leadership of the Sudanese General Muhammad Ahmad Mustafa Al-Dabi,⁴⁶ had visited Syria between December 2011 and February 2012. This mission witnessed armed opposition groups in Hom's, Idlib, Hama and Dar'ā committing violent acts against the government forces, which had to respond to the attacks in certain circumstances; other groups attacking government forces and civilians with armor-piercing projectiles with tips of depleted uranium, killing and injuring several people; and the bombing of a civilian bus, which also killed women and children.⁴⁷ The observers of the Arab League also saw the destruction by armed

⁴⁴Carole A. O'Leary and Nicholas A. Heras, "Syrian Tribal Networks and their Implications for the Syrian Uprising", The James Town Foundation, *Terrorism Monitor*, Volume 10, Issue 11, June 1, 2012.

⁴⁵"Syrian tribes and clans denounce foreign interference", *Russia Today*, 4/2/2012.

⁴⁶"Arab League Syria mission to continue Initial report by Arab League observers claims monitors were harassed by the Syrian government and its opponents", *Al Jazeera—Middle East*, January 9, 2012.

⁴⁷League of Arab States Observer Mission to Syria, Report of the Head of the League of Arab States Observer Mission to Syria for the period from 24 December 2011 to 18 January 2012, p. 4,

groups of a train carrying diesel, a police bus, an oil pipelines and bridges.⁴⁸ The mission's report clearly pointed out those responsible:

*Such incidents include the bombing of buildings, trains carrying fuel, vehicles carrying diesel oil and explosions targeting the police, members of the media and fuel pipelines. Some of those attacks have been carried out by the Free Syrian Army and some by other armed opposition groups.*⁴⁹

The head of the Arab League mission, General Muhammad Ahmad Mustafa Al-Dabi, reported that many groups had “*falsely reported that explosions or violence had occurred in several locations*”, and that, when observers of the Arab League mission arrived, they saw that “*those reports were unfounded*”. And he stressed that, according to information of the team on site, the media “*exaggerated the nature of the incidents and the number of persons killed in incidents and protests in certain towns.*”⁵⁰

According to the report, the Assad government went out of its way to make the mission a success, removing all obstacles that could hinder it and facilitating the movement of observers and meetings, without restrictions, with all the groups.⁵¹ Since the mission had started its job, however, it had been the target of a “*vicious media campaign*”, with the publication of unfounded statements attributed to its head, and of “*grossly exaggerated events*”, distorting the truth, which contributed to increasing the tensions between the Syrian people and undermined the activities of the observers. “*Some media organizations were exploited in order to defame the Mission and its Head and cause the Mission to fail*”, general Muhammad Ahmad Mustafa Al-Dabi concluded.⁵²

The United States, France and Great Britain, and other forces in the Middle East, had in fact unleashed the same psychological warfare campaign against the Assad regime that they had employed against Gaddafi in Libya. Hypocrisy has always characterized the behavior of the three Western powers. While the two medieval-style Wahhabi autocracies of Qatar and Saudi Arabia funded the recruitment of mercenaries and provided arms to overthrow the regime of Bashar al-Assad, the Western media, always based on information from opposition “activists”, described the war, which was not just a civil war since foreign forces were involved, as a continuous massacre of unarmed civilians who were merely protesting and fighting for democracy in Syria. “*The international narrative on the revolt in Syria has been decidedly one-sided*”, wrote the Irish journalist Stephen Starr, who resided in Syria and accompanied the uprising from the start.⁵³

27/1/2012, 1 McAULEY 259.12D 12-21687 (Signed) Muhammad Ahmad Mustafa Al-Dabi—Head of the Mission.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 8.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 4.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 8.

⁵²Ibid., p. 7.

⁵³Starr, 2012, p. 213.

19.7 Proposal for a “Humanitarian Intervention” Vetoed by Russia and China

The purpose of the massive media campaign was to turn public opinion against the Bashar al-Assad government and make the United Nations Security Council adopt a resolution that would allow the United States, Great Britain and France to use NATO to bomb Syria, just as they did in Libya. And on October 4, 2011, shortly after the fall of Gaddafi, the three powers presented a draft resolution to establish a no-fly zone over Syria. It was based on the same pretext used in Libya: protect civilians. But the draft resolution was vetoed by Russia and China, with the abstention of Brazil, India, South Africa and Lebanon.⁵⁴ The fallacious model based on “*humanitarian intervention*” and the “*responsibility to protect*” had fallen apart, discredited with the intervention in Libya.

NATO itself ruled out the possibility of deploying a no-fly zone over Syria after President Bashar al-Assad warned that a western intervention would cause an “*earthquake*” and “*ignite the entire region*”.⁵⁵ Assad actually had the support of a large part of the population—Alawites, Christians, Shia, Druze, Kurds and other minorities—and Syria was a crucial country that counted on the regional support of Iran and Iraq, where the Shia predominated, and of the Hizballah militias, which, in the 36 days of war between July and August 2005 (*The July War*), showed enormous progress as cohesive force capable of obtaining unprecedented victories against a larger and better equipped enemy, the Israeli Defense Forces.

The BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) were clearly aware that the resolution proposing the establishment of a no-fly zone over Syria, was once again a ruse to deceptively allow for a NATO military intervention under the fraudulent pretext of defending the civilian population and humanitarian protection. The actual goal was regime change, as it had been in Libya. The United States and its allies did not give up, however. During the vote for a new resolution on Syria on February 4, the United States called upon Bashar al-Assad to step down with the support of the Arab League dominated by the Sunni autocracies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and suffered one more scathing defeat. Russia and China vetoed the resolution in the UNSC. The scheme set up by the West, with the support of the Arab League, failed in this calculation. The United States and its partners in the European Union were unable to falsely use the mantle of the UNSC to set up NATO for the destruction of Bashar al-Assad’s regime.

⁵⁴“Russia and China veto UN resolution against Syrian regime. Anger from Europe and US as two security council powers argue implied threat of sanctions will not bring peace”, Associated Press, *The Guardian*, October 5, 2011. George Galloway, “Why NATO ‘no-fly zone’ in Syria would be disastrous. The Syrian opposition is calling for a NATO no-fly zone but, says George Galloway, ‘no-flying’ means lots of flying and bombing by us of the people down below”, *Stop War Coalition*, October 31, 2011.

⁵⁵Luke Harding, “Nato all but rules out Syria no-fly zone. Syrian president warns that intervention could lead to ‘another Afghanistan’ as Nato officials say Libya-like action lacks support”, *The Guardian*, October 30, 2011.

The double veto by Russia and China clearly showed that, after the experience in Libya, the two powers were no longer willing to give any endorsement for an intervention in Syria, a crucial country to demarcate the Iranian sphere of influence in the Middle East and southeast Asia. By vetoing two resolutions against Syria, both Russia and China made clear that they would not allow a change in the regional *status quo* that would give the United States and the western powers command over the Mediterranean. This balance of power was crucial for Chinese national security, a guarantee of the freedom of navigation and of the uninterrupted supply of oil and gas imported from Iran. And the missile defense system deployed by the Pentagon from Spain, suggested that Russia was the actual target and that toppling Assad after Muammar Gaddafi would be yet another step to control the Mediterranean, which would enable a checkmate in Iran.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Advisor to Jimmy Carter (1977–1981), however, told the journalist Claudia Antunes of the Brazilian daily *Folha de S. Paulo* that the United States did not have a clear policy for the conflict in Syria and that it would contribute to a regional explosion, engulfing Iraq and Iran, if it maintained its emotional rhetoric and threats against Russia, an ally of Bashar al-Assad’s regime. *“The truth is that this conflict is not going to end unless there is international cooperation for a proposal that the Assad government can stand behind, and that contains a supervised effort to reach some internal consensus”*, evaluated Brzezinski.⁵⁶

Likewise, Professor Paulo Sergio Pinheiro of the UN Human Rights Council and Chairman of the International Commission of Inquiry for Syria, said that the militarization of the conflict—be it through external intervention or by arming rebel groups—would lead Syria to a civil war with far more victims than the 10,000 who had already died. He predicted that the consequences would be *“absolutely catastrophic”* and determined that *“there is no military solution to the crisis in Syria.”*⁵⁷ In another interview, Professor Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro quite lucidly declared that the rebels *“are not interested in building a democracy in Syria”* and that some of these groups *“want the return of a caliphate.”*⁵⁸ *“Foreign governments need to stop supplying arms to the rebels,”* said Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, reiterating that *“this is only exacerbating the war,”* since there was no prospect of victory for either side and *“the longer the conflict lasts, the worse Syria’s capacity to rebuild will be”*.⁵⁹

The hundreds of—Syrian and foreign *jihadi*—rebel groups that virtually ruled the province of Idlib on the border with Turkey included Jamiat al-Ikhwān

⁵⁶Claudia Antunes, “EUA agravam conflito em Síria, diz ex-assessor de segurança,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 6/6/2012.

⁵⁷Deborah Berlinck, “Intervenção militar na Síria será catastrófica, diz Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro”, *O Globo*, 1/6/2012.

⁵⁸Hwaida Saad and Nick Cumming-Bruce, “Civilian Attacks Rise in Syria, U.N. Says”, *The New York Times*, September 18, 2012. “Os governos precisam parar de fornecer armas para os rebeldes—entrevista de Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro”, *O Globo*, 18 de setembro de 2012.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

al-Muslimun (The Society of Muslim Brothers or Muslim Brotherhood), which participated in the Syrian National Council (SNC) and was supported by Qatar; the Salafist group Ahrar al-Sham, funded by Kuwait; Jabhat al-Nusra, linked to al-Qa'ida; the Farouk Brigades from Homs; and Suqoor al-Sham, led by Ahmed Abu Issa, forming a coalition called Jabhat Tahrir Syria (Syrian Liberation Front). *Time* magazine pointed to Saudi Arabia and Qatar as the “international patrons” of the rebels.⁶⁰

There were at least ten Military Councils throughout Syria, one of which was commanded by Colonel Afif Suleiman in Idlib province, where Ahmed Abu Issa had already implemented *Shari'ah*. The mountainous region of Jebel Zawiya in Idlib province was the center of the insurgency in the northwest of Syria, where Ahmed al-Sheikh and Hamza Fatalah carried out ambushes and guerrilla warfare.⁶¹ Here, three warlords—Abu Issa, Jamal Marouf and Ali Bakran—controlled 26 cities, but neither was capable of imposing his will on the others. They didn't see eye to eye and neither did any of them want to submit to the National Syrian Council, established under the supervision of Turkey. They refused to accept any foreign leadership.⁶² All fought for power and none were interested in a UN peace plan. The Free Syrian Army had begun to set up a “mini state” around the strategic cities and regions over which it assumed control after the capture of Azaz, opening the border of Bab al-Salama with Turkey, and where it implemented *Shari'ah*.⁶³ The situation in the so-called “liberated zones”—parts of Idlib, Aleppo and Hama—was precarious, however, since Assad's army could penetrate whenever it wanted and only didn't do so because it was exhausted.

When their attempts to use the UNSC were foiled, The United States, France and Great Britain, as well as Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, organized a so-called Friends of Syria Group, which went on to fund the recruitment of mercenaries and the supply of weapons to the rebels. In May 2012, the journalists Karen DeYoung and Liz Sly revealed in *The Washington Post* that the Syrian rebels were receiving significantly more and better weapons, paid for by the countries of the Persian Gulf under the coordination of the United States.⁶⁴ The connections were made through

⁶⁰Rania Abouzeid, “Syria's Secular and Islamist Rebels: Who Are the Saudis and the Qataris Arming?”, *Time*, September 18, 2012. Syria with IDLIB province: http://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/624/media/images/57459000/gif/_57459059_syria_idlib_464.gif. Accessed 16.11.2016.

⁶¹Tracey Shelton, “On the front lines of Syria's guerrilla war: Exclusive account of Sham Falcons, a rebel group waging war against the Assad government from their mountain hideouts”, *Al Jazeera*, June 13, 2012.

⁶²Jonathan Spyer, “Behind the Lines: Military councils in Syria Behind the Lines: Military councils in Syria”, *The Jerusalem Post*, 9/7/2012.

⁶³Seamus Mirodan, “Free Syrian army carves out its on ‘mini-state’ at captured border area”, *The Irish Time*, September 17, 2012.

⁶⁴Karen DeYoung e Liz Sly, “Syrian rebels get influx of arms with gulf neighbors' money, U.S. coordination”, *The Washington Post*, May 16, 2012. Tzvi Ben Gedalyahu, “US Helps Gulf States Arm Syrian Rebels: Report. The US is coordinating with Saudi Arabia and Qatar in arming Syrian rebels. Syria's Muslim Brotherhood also is involved”, *Arutz Sheva*, 16/5/2012b.

the Syrian Support Group (SSG), which was made up of exiled Syrians in the United States and Canada and of former NATO officers, and tasked with raising funds for the Syrian army.⁶⁵ This secret group controlled the distribution of vital supplies out of Istanbul: Kalashnikov rifles, BKC machine guns, rocket propelled grenades and ammo from Gaddafi’s arsenals in Libya, from Qatar and Saudi Arabia. The weapons were transported by the Turkish intelligence service to the rebels and mercenaries on the Syrian border.

In addition to supporting the Islamist organizations with arms and money, the United States, Great Britain and France continued the psychological war to promote the creation of a climate that would allow intervention in Syria, even if they couldn’t count on the veneer of legality, just as president George W. Bush had done in Iraq in 2003. But Syria proved to be a much larger and complex problem. It confronted American interests directly with those of Russia, China and Iran. And after the false claim that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction and that NATO’s intervention in Libya was supposed to protect civilians, instead of toppling the regime and killing thousands of civilians, Washington lost virtually all international credibility to take a unilateral initiative, with only the open support from Great Britain and France.

⁶⁵Rania Abouzeid, “Syria’s Secular and Islamist Rebels: Who Are the Saudis and the Qataris Arming?”, *Time*, September 18, 2012.

Chapter 20

Real and Psychological War in Syria as a Pivot Country

20.1 The Failure of the UN Mission

The United States and its western allies realized that they could not apply the same strategy to Syria as in Libya, criminally extrapolating the UNSC resolution through NATO. In April 2012, the UNSC instructed Ambassador Kofi Annan, former Secretary General, to negotiate a truce in Syria that could bring peace to the country. The West's intentions with the mission, however, were no doubt aimed at deceiving, since it was destined to fail from the start. The truce didn't depend solely on Assad, who was unwilling to leave the government as demanded by the opposition and the West. This was a *foreign-sponsored civil war* and any agreement would also depend on dozens of armed opposition factions that continued to receive support from foreign powers that had not abandoned the plan to overthrow the regime of Bashar al-Assad. There was no way to control their provocations, even with the dispatching of UN observers.¹

The emir of Qatar, Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, knew this and said that the Annan plan would not succeed. And it didn't. His mission failed, just as the one from the Arab League, because neither the United States, nor its partners in the European Union, nor the Sunni countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), nor Turkey had any interest in an agreement or in peace. And the concept of negotiating in international politics was alien to the Sunnis who had the upper hand in Syria and in the countries of the Persian Gulf. For these same reasons, the mission of the Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi, who the UNSC had appointed

¹“Annan—Assad agree approach to Syria crisis”, *Al-Akhbar*, July 9, 2012.

as Kofi Annan's successor, was destined to fail, according to Colonel Abdel Jabbar al-Okaidi, commander of the Free Syrian Army in Aleppo, in an interview to France Press.² It was obvious.

20.2 Kofi Annan Accuses Western Powers of Lighting the Cauldron of Hatred and Illegalities of the Rebels

Kofi Annan later told the journalist Jon Snow of the British Channel Four that the "*Assad regime will not be defeated militarily*", and neither would the rebels. And an international military intervention in Syria was not an option. The Western powers, he noted, had "*unwittingly*" contributed to igniting an explosive cauldron of hatred, illegalities, fanaticism and criminality, which was "*now burning in the most tender region on earth*".³ Finally, Kofi Annan praised Russia and China for blocking the West's efforts to internationalize the crisis.⁴

Speaking at the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Syrian Foreign Minister, Walid al-Moallem, accused some members of the Security Council of supporting "*terrorism*", alluding to the United States, Great Britain and France, and he stressed that peace in Syria would require that Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Libya and other countries stopped arming, funding and supporting the opposition.⁵ "*This terrorism, which is externally supported, is accompanied by unprecedented media provocation based on igniting religious extremism sponsored by well-known states in the region that facilitate the flow of arms, money and fighters through the borders of some neighboring countries*", said minister Walid al-Moallem, summarizing the actual situation in his country.⁶

20.3 Massacres Manufactured by the Media

The *hot revolutionary war* in Syria intensified in 2012 as more *Jihadists* infiltrated the country, as did the psychological warfare (*psy-ops*) to manipulate public opinion and induce it to support a military intervention by the West, even without UN backing. In the magazine *Foreign Policy*, the journalist Sultan al Qassemi, a

²Elad Benari, "Syrian Rebels: Peace Envoy Brahimi's Mission is Doomed. UN-Arab League envoy Lakhdar Brahimi ends his first visit to Syria, as a rebel commander says his mission would fail", *Arutz Sheva*—Israel National News, 9/16/2012.

³Jon Snow, "Kofi Annan's dire warning on Syria", *Channel Four Snowblog*, October 8, 2012.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵"Syria tells US and its allies to stop 'interfering' in its civil war", Associated Press in New York, *The Guardian*, October 1, 2012. "Syrian Minister: Assad Is 'Not in a Bunker'", *Al-Monitor*, September 29, 2012.

⁶*Ibid.*

pundit on Arab issues, denounced the coverage of Al Arabiya and Al Jazeera, the two main television channels in the Persian Gulf owned by the autocratic monarchies of Qatar and Saudi Arabia. He wrote that their reporting on the conflict in Syria was biased, distorting the facts against the Bashar al-Assad regime almost as badly as their opponents.⁷ The journalist Fadi Salem, head of the Governance and Innovation Program of the Dubai School of Government, accused both TV channels of paying large sums of money to anonymous callers with information about Syria. The videos were transmitted via Skype and subsequently recycled on YouTube according to their political propaganda needs.⁸ And the journalist Stephen Starr said that Al Jazeera had built *look-a-like* models of Syrian cities, using American, French and Israeli directors to shoot scenes of soldiers beating and killing civilians to be broadcast as news.⁹

One of the rebels in the province of Hama, Qusai Abdel-Razzaq Shaqfeh, confessed in a show of Damascus' state TV that he had acted as an eyewitness and fabricated false stories and videos about events for the Doha-based TV Al Jazeera, and that he had collaborated with foreigners to arm groups and attack the government security forces and civilians, in addition to contacting professionals to shoot footage of fake demonstrations, sending the videos to the Arab TV channels.¹⁰

The TV stations Al Jazeera, from Qatar, and Al Arabiya, from Saudi Arabia, based in Dubai, had lost credibility among the majority of Syrians, however. They saw them as instruments of the United States and Israel and considered their coverage of events to be unbalanced and biased. The results of a survey—the YouGov Siraj poll on Syria held between December 17 and 19, 2011, and funded by the Qatar Foundation for The Doha Debates—revealed that 55% of the population in Syria wanted Bashar al-Assad to stay in government, even if in other countries people wanted his resignation. One of the main reasons was the fear of the future, the fear of a civil war.¹¹ The journalist Jonathan Steele was the only one to publish this news in the British newspaper *The Guardian*. Almost all other western media outlets ignored it, while its governments “called Assad to go”.¹²

According to Jonathan Steele, the media attacks against the Arab League mission headed by the Sudanese General Muhammad Ahmad Mustafa Al-Dabi, who was in Syria at almost the same time as the survey, arose from the fear that the Arab observers would report that violence was no longer confined to the regime's

⁷Sultan Al Qassemi, “Breaking the Arab News. Egypt made al Jazeera—and Syria's destroying it”, *Foreign Policy*, August 2, 2012.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Starr, 2012, p. 213, 60.

¹⁰“Syria's official TV airs confessions of alleged terrorists”, *English.news.cn*, 3/9/2011.

¹¹“Arabs want Syria's President Assad to go—opinion poll”, *The Doha Debates*—Member of Qatar Foundation, January 2, 2012.

¹²Jonathan Steele, “Most Syrians back President Assad, but you'd never know from western media. Assad's popularity, Arab League observers, US military involvement: all distorted in the west's propaganda war”, *The Guardian*, January 17, 2012.

forces and that the image of peaceful protests suppressed by Assad's army and police, was false.¹³ "*Biased media coverage*" continued "*to distort*" the mission of Arab League observers, stressed Steele.¹⁴

The Pontifical Foundation Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) also reported that the information on Syria presented in the Western press should be viewed critically and with "*lots of reservations*". A message sent to the agency Ecclesia by the person responsible for projects in the region, Father Andrzej Halemba, pointed out that the news had caused "*true indignation*" in the Syrian Catholic community and that people were feeling "*manipulated and deceived*" by the international media.¹⁵ "*It seems that the fact is being ignored that this involves an internal struggle for power, religious tensions between various Muslim groups, tribal disputes, acts of revenge and retaliation,*" read the memo from the Catholic foundation ACN.¹⁶

20.4 Christians and Druze Persecuted by the Rebels

Christians in Syria (Greek Orthodox, Catholic Syriac, Orthodox Syriac, some Maronites and protestants) amounted to about 10% of the population. They supported the Bashar al-Assad regime and began to migrate *en masse*. Because of the threats and violence of the Salafist militia rebels, many Christians went to Tartus, where the Russian naval base is located, and others to Turkey and Lebanon. This had happened before in Iraq, where anything between 500,000 and 1 million faithful had fled, many to Damascus,¹⁷ persecuted after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003.¹⁸

In Qatana, Salafists attacked a demonstration of the Druze community in support of the government in July 2011. They then proclaimed an Islamic caliphate and chose an emir.¹⁹ At least 9000 Christians had to abandon their homes in Qusayr, a town in the west of Syria, and seek refuge in Turkey, threatened by the head of the local militia, Abdel Salam Harba.²⁰ In Homs, an armed Salafist group attacked the Catholic church and transformed it into an operations center. In the villages Al-Haidariya and Al-Ghassaniya in the jurisdiction of Homs (*Rif Homs*),

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵"Síria: Fundação católica internacional contesta cobertura dos media ocidentais".

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Philip Giraldi, "NATO vs. Syria", *The American Conservative*, December 19, 2011.

¹⁸Jack Healy, "Exodus From North Signals Iraqi Christians' Slow Decline", *The New York Times*, March 10, 2012. "Mosul Iraq's 'Most Dangerous City' for Christians", *Worthy News*, 20/8/2012.

¹⁹"In Homs, 30 Dead as Communal Factions Fight; Bukamal and Qatana Light Up as Calm Returns to Hama", *Syria Comment*, July 18, 2011. Starr, 2012, p. 79.

²⁰"Syria Christians Targeted by Islamist Rebels amid Massive Exodus", *Worthy Christian News*, Daily Christian News Service, August 23, 2012. "Syrian Islamist opposition casts out Christians", *Russia Today*, June 14, 2012.

17 Christians who supported President Assad were killed by the al-Farouk Brigade of the Free Syrian army.²¹ And insurgents set fire to the forest of Kherbet Sulass north of Latakia, before fleeing to the border with Turkey.

Kidnappings to extort money also became relentlessly common along the roads between Latakia, Jisr al-Shughur and Aleppo, and the hostages in these areas would always return to their families as corpses if they had any religious affiliation or supported President Assad. The motive wasn't always political. Sometimes it was a way to make money in the midst of the chaos that had gripped many parts of the country. In September 2012, between 2000 and 3000 people had been kidnapped since the beginning of the uprising, with their whereabouts unknown, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.²² A list could be found on Facebook that threatened the supporters of the regime, especially military personnel, if they refused to desert. One of several terrorist groups dedicated to kidnappings and other acts of terrorism was the Ossoud Al-Shahba'a brigade in Aleppo, affiliated to the Free Syrian Army. Nobody in Syria was immune to the kidnappings and summary executions perpetrated by the rebels.

20.5 Foreign Jihadists and Al-Qa'ida Terrorists in Syria

The deputy ambassador of Russia in the UN, Mikhail Lebedev, stated that about 15,000 terrorists had infiltrated Syria.²³ And Saudi agents used the Sunnis in Iraq in order to persuade al-Qa'ida terrorists to move to Syria to overthrow the Alawite regime of Bashar al-Assad. Ayman al-Zawahiri himself, the leader of al-Qa'ida, announced that he was supporting the opposition in Syria, where, for all we know, approximately 1000 Jihadists were already present, carrying out bombings in Damascus and Aleppo, assassinating generals, and sabotaging pipelines and other infrastructure in the country.

In addition to al-Qa'ida terrorist, militants of the Iranian Sunni organization Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MEK) were also operating in Syria. The American journalist Seymour Hersh revealed in an article published in the magazine *The New Yorker* (6/4/2012) that they had been trained in various functions (communications jamming, encryption and small-unit tactics) since 2005 by the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) in a secret camp about 65 miles from Las Vegas. The goal was to carry out covert operations in Iran, where they killed five Iranian scientists in recent years with the collaboration of the Mossad. The Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MEK) has been on the State Department's foreign terrorist organization list since 1997.²⁴

²¹Kamel Sakr, "Sectarian cleansing in Rif Homs", *Al-Quds al-Arabi*—MidEast Wire.

²²Marah Mashi, "Kidnapping in Syria: An Economy of War", *Al Akhbar*, September 28, 2012.

²³Tom Miles, "Russia says 15,000 foreign 'terrorists' in Syria", *Reuters*, March 8, 2012.

²⁴Seymour M. Hersh, "Our Men in Iran?", *The New Yorker*, April 6, 2012.

During an UN mission in Damascus, the Russian ambassador in Syria, Azmat Allah Kolmahmedov, mentioned the situation in the Province of Homs to professor Paulo Sergio Pinheiro. He said rebels were driving Christians from the cities of Quasair, Rastan and Talbiseh, and parts of the rural area of Idlib and Deir al-Zour on the Euphrates, promoting a “*religious cleansing*”. The Indian ambassador V. P. Haran, in turn, stressed the assistance that foreign intelligence services were providing to the insurgents, and the Ambassador of South Africa, S. E. Byneveldt, referred to the “policy of massacres,” which was emphasized to promote some kind of intervention by the West. The Syrian National Council in Istanbul was counting on it, added professor Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro.

20.6 Psychological Warfare to Deceive Public Opinion

Through the international media, the “activists” tried to pin the massacre in Houla on the government. This massacre saw more than 100 civilians shot and/or stabbed to death on May 25, 2012, including 25 children. President Assad denied involvement²⁵ and he repeated that the war in Syria was a “*foreign war promoted by internal elements*.”²⁶ The massacre of civilians in Houla and other crimes like it didn’t benefit the government, but rather the opposition, as a *war trick*, a fabricated tragedy to fuel the propaganda against the regime and to encourage an open intervention by the western powers, as had happened in Libya.

Professor Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, the UN representative who was sent to investigate the massacre in Houla, told the press that YouTube images had been manipulated, that it was a myth that the throats of children had been slit, and that nobody has been able to gather evidence of what had occurred.²⁷ He said that he interviewed 20 families who had husbands, fathers and brothers killed by armed groups because they had been loyal to the government,²⁸ i.e., they were apparently executed by the opposition gangs, of which about a hundred were operating in Syria, not all following the same line and with many foreigners among them.²⁹

The editor of *BBC World News* himself, Jon Williams, wrote that no one had the exact details of who carried out the attacks in Houla, nor why, and that nothing was clear yet.³⁰ Whatever the cause, he reflected, the authorities feared that the massacre in Houla would fuel the sectarian aspect of the conflict. The opposition accused

²⁵“Syria crisis: Assad denies role in Houla massacre”, *BBC News World*, June 3, 2012.

²⁶“Em rara aparição, Assad nega massacre e justifica repressão feroz a opositores—Presidente sírio faz pronunciamento surpresa transmitido pela TV estatal síria”, *O Globo*, 3/6/2012.

²⁷“Grupos armados já têm mais poder de fogo”, entrevista de Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, *O Globo*, 26/6/2012.

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰Jon Williams, “Reporting conflict in Syria”, *BBC World News*, June 7, 2012.

the Aka Shabih'a (ghosts) militias, allied to the government, of the massacres in Houla and then in Qubair. But aside from the number of dead, wrote Jon Williams, "it's not clear who ordered the killings—or why."³¹ And after stressing that "*stories are never black and white—often shades of gray*", he noted in an article published on the website of *BBC World News* that President Assad's opponents had an agenda, described as "*brilliant*" by one western authority, who compared it to the "*psy-ops*", the brainwashing techniques used by the military of the United States and other countries "*to convince people of things that may not necessarily be true*".³² A "*healthy skepticism*" was an essential trait of any journalist, concluded Jon Williams, warning that the risks were high and things might not always be what they seemed.³³

In a response to Sevim Dagdelen, a member of parliament for Linke Fraktion (the Left Fraction), the German government admitted to having received a lot of information about the massacre in Houla, which occurred on May 25, but that it could not reveal its contents because it was *VS-Vertraulich* (confidential), given the interests of the State, and because there was no solid information (*belastbare Informationen*).³⁴ Despite the lack of solid information, Germany and other European powers expelled their Syrian ambassadors, accusing the Assad government of committing crimes without presenting any evidence.

Unlike the Christian Democrat and Liberal coalition government (CDU-CSU-FDP) led by *Kanzlerin* Angela Merkel, newspapers like *Die Welt*, *Bild* and others blamed the rebels for the massacre. Jürgen Todenhöfer, former parliament member for the CDU (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands), went to Syria and interviewed President Bashar al-Assad for TV ARD, the most important TV channel in Germany. He also wrote an article for the popular newspaper *Bild*, in which he accused the rebels, al-Qa'ida and radical organizations of promoting the massacre as a marketing strategy (*Massaker-Marketing-Strategie*) against the government so as to force a military intervention by the West.³⁵ This *Massaker-Marketing-Strategie* for *Medienarbeit* (media work) came to light once again with the massacre of 200 people in the village of Tremseh. The opposition, the United States and the western powers promptly accused the Assad government of killing civilians. In fact, the dead were insurgents and they hadn't been executed but shelled by heavy artillery and attack helicopters.³⁶ The spokesman of the U.N. Supervising Mission in Syria, Sausan Ghosheh, told the press that the attack

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴"Gewalt in Syrien Deutschland beteiligt sich an Propaganda", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 16/7/2012. "Tremseh killings targeted rebels—UN monitors", *Russia Today*, July 15, 2012. "Syria: UN probes Tremseh massacre reports", *BBC News*.

³⁵Jürgen Todenhöfer, "Mein Treffen mit Assad", *Bild*, 9/7/2012. "Todenhöfer kritisiert 'Massaker-Marketing-Strategie' syrischer 'Rebellen'", *Mein Parteibuch Zweitblog*, 9/7/2012.

³⁶"Tremseh killings targeted rebels—UN monitors", *Russia Today*, July 15, 2012. "Syria: UN probes Tremseh massacre reports", *BBC Middle East*, July 14, 2012.

had apparently targeted specific groups and houses of deserters and activists.³⁷ Tremseh had been occupied by the opposition for some months.

After several videos were aired showing the atrocities—dozens of tied-up and blindfolded corpses on a carpet of blood—in addition to mass executions in the city of Aleppo that the rebels admittedly committed, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pally warned that the “*opposition forces should be under no illusion that they will be immune from prosecution.*”³⁸ These videos, which were aired by the rebels themselves, revealed that the massacres in Houla and other locations were also committed by the insurgents with the intent of provoking a “*humanitarian intervention*” from the West, just as in Libya.

A report from Human Rights Watch (HRW), headquartered in London, denounced in detail the torture, illegal arrests, extra-legal summary executions, and other war crimes, which could also be considered crimes against humanity, that were extensively and systematically being committed by the militias of the Free Syrian Army.³⁹ The *covert war*, accompanied by the “*psy-ops*”, continued to advance, and it was being supported with weapons and money from the western powers and their allies in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), formed by the six absolutist and most backward kingdoms in the Middle East.

20.7 Qatar and Saudi Arabia as Pivotal Countries for the West

After the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak, who the United States had shouldered for decades before abandoning him, Saudi Arabia gained enormous influence in Egypt with the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists, and it increased the flow of resources to fund Sunni Islamic movements throughout the Middle East. The Muslim World League (*Rabitat al-‘Alam al-Islami*), founded in 1962, connected Wahhabis with Salafists in an international network, which included the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, the International Federation of Students and the Muslim Student Association of North America and Canada.⁴⁰

The professor of Contemporary Islamic Studies at the University of Oxford, Tariq Ramadan, revealed that, according to a Rand Corporation report, Qatar and

³⁷CNN Wire Staff, “U.N. team inspects site of reported Syrian massacre, *CNN*, July 14, 2012.

³⁸Kareem Fahim, “U.N. Official Warns Syrian Rebels About Atrocities”, *The New York Times*, September 10, 2012.

³⁹Damien McElroy, “Syrian rebels accused of war crimes. Human rights groups have accused Syrian rebels of war crimes for carrying out summary executions and imposing arbitrary justice on hundreds of regime detainees consigned to makeshift prisons”, *The Telegraph*, August 10, 2012. Aryn Baker, “Why the Syrian Rebels May Be Guilty of War Crimes. A new Human Rights Watch report details abuses by the Free Syrian Army”, *Time*, September 19, 2012.

⁴⁰John R. Bradley, “Saudi Arabia’s Invisible Hand in the Arab Spring How the Kingdom is Wielding Influence Across the Middle East”, *Foreign Affairs*, October 13, 2011.

Saudi Arabia had provided support to Salafist groups shortly before the election in Egypt, where in 8 months of democracy they won 24% of the seats in the House.⁴¹ In Tunisia, the Salafists also received financial resources from Qatar and Saudi Arabia, just as in Libya. “*The United States are allies of the petro-monarchies of the Persian Gulf, from which the Salafi receive financial and ideological resources,*” wrote Professor Tariq Ramadan, noting that it’s a “*rather complex game,*” “*an unresolved contradiction*”, which varies from one country to another, since the destabilization of the Middle East may be contrary to the interests of the United States, but at the same time it justifies its presence in the region, “*which means control*”.⁴²

Washington’s strategy, accentuated after the collapse of the Soviet Union, focused on virtually preventing stability in any region where another power might arise, even if it was only a regional power. To some extent, this explains the crisis in the Middle East and, particularly, around Iran. The United States, however, are not well regarded nor loved by the majority of Muslims in any country.⁴³ And the Salafists took advantage of the opportunity given to them by the West to try to seize power not only in Libya, but also in Egypt, Tunisia and Syria. The turmoil in the Middle East and North Africa didn’t end. Some of the factors playing into this are Saudi Arabia’s ambitions and its concerns with regional asymmetry because of Iran’s influence on Iraq under the rule of the Shia and its efforts to master nuclear technology.⁴⁴ The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran is based on the sectarian antagonism between the Sunni-Wahhabi sect and the Shia.

According to the British Middle East Specialist John R. Bradley, author of *After the Arab Spring: How Islamists Hijacked the Middle East Revolts*, the Syrian National Council (SNC), organized by the secret services of the West, was dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood and supported by Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The so-called Free Syrian Army was organized and armed with resources from these two Arab countries and with the support from NATO.⁴⁵ It’s ranks were swollen with mercenaries recruited in Libya, Salafists, Wahhabi and al-Qa’ida militants, the most radical Islamic fundamentalists. They came in through Lebanon and Turkey and were intent on massacring *Alawites*, Shia, Christians, Druze and other religious minorities, the supporters of Assad who they considered to be heretics (*kuffār*). The Syrian National Council (SNC) worked from Istanbul. Prime minister Recep

⁴¹Interview with Islamic Scholar Tariq Ramadan on the Growing Mideast Protests and “Islam & the Arab Awakening”, *Jadaliyya—Democracy Now!*. Marcelo Ninio, “Protestos Contra Filme Anti-Islã—Casa Branca apoia petromonarquias que financiam islamitas radicais/Entrevista/Tariq Ramadan”, *Folha de S.Paulo*, 17/9/2012.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³*Ibid.*

⁴⁴Frederic Wehrey, Theodore W. Karasik, Alireza Nader, Jeremy Ghez, Lydia Hansell and Robert A. Guffey, “Saudi-Iranian Relations Since the Fall of Saddam Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for U.S. Policy”, Sponsored by the Smith Richardson Foundation, RAND—National Security Research Division, 2009, p. ix.

⁴⁵James Hider, “Secret deal to supply arms to resistance”, *The Times*, January 26, 2012.

Tayyip Erdogan, who continued to replace secularism by Islamism in Turkey, allowed the Free Syrian Army to use Turkish bases in Iskenderun and Antakya, near the border, facilitated the smuggling of NATO armaments to the insurgents, and authorized the activity of American and other foreign intelligence agents in and around Adana. Turkey became actively involved in the war in Syria as a *pivotal country* of the United States and its partners of the European Union.

Other *pivotal countries*, whose national interests didn't align with the Turkish dream of reviving the Ottoman Empire, were the theocratic tyrannies of King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, in Saudi Arabia, and of Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, in Qatar, who publicly advocated sending troops to Syria. According to intelligence sources, Qatari and British special forces were already engaging in covert operations since 2011 in the city of Homs, 94 miles from Damascus, in support of the rebels, acting as military advisers and managing communications, the supply of arms and ammunition, and the recruitment of mercenaries, who were entering and continue to enter Syria mostly through the border with Turkey. The foreign contingents were stationed in the district of Khaldiya, Bab Amro, to the northeast of Homs, and Bab Derib and Rastan to the north.⁴⁶

Approximately 6000 Syrian militants, but also Libyans who were trained by Qatari Special Forces in Nalut and served in the war against Gaddafi under the command of the *jihadi* Abdel Hakim Belhadj of the Military Council of Tripoli, formed a brigade at the Turkish border—Liwa al-Ummah. This brigade, which even counted with the participation of Irish soldiers, was armed with weapons taken from Libya—12.5 mm and 14.5 mm anti-aircraft rockets, rocket-propelled grenades, and PKC and M16 rifles—to promote the *Jihad* in the land of *al-Sham*,⁴⁷ Great Syria (*Bilad al-Sham al-Kabir*), and to expel the *kuffār*, the western infidels who occupied the region.⁴⁸

In addition to Ireland, more than 100 Islamic *jihadists* came to Syria from Norway. Lieutenant General Kjell Grandhagen, head of Norway's department of military intelligence—*Etterretningstjenesten* (*E-tjenesten*)—told Norwegian Broadcasting (NRK) that he was “*extremely concerned*” with the fact that some Norwegians had gone to Syria and participated in the battles along with *jihadists* linked to al-Qa'ida.⁴⁹ The Minister of Justice Grete Faremo said that they could be prosecuted criminally for their ties and training with al-Qa'ida when they returned to the country. The newspaper *Aftenposten* reported that two of the most radical

⁴⁶“First foreign troops in Syria back Homs rebels. Damascus and Moscow at odds”, *DEBKafle Exclusive Report*, February 8, 2012.

⁴⁷Mary Fitzgerald, “The Syrian Rebels’ Libyan Weapon—Meet the Irish—Libyan commander giving Bashar al-Assad nightmares”, *Foreign Policy*—August 9, 2012.

⁴⁸*Jihad in Islam*, 1429 h? 2008, Hizb ut-Tahrir Publications, pp. 16–18.

⁴⁹“Concerns rise over Norwegians fighting in Syria”, *Newsinenglish.no*. “Up to 100 Norwegians join Syrian war”, *The Norway Post*, October 20, 2012. “Norske politikere advart mot navngitte islamister. I et hemmelig stortingsmøte ble norske toppolitikere nylig orientert om potensielle navngitte islamistiske terrorister i Norge, skriver Dagbladet”, *Aftenposten*, 22/10/2012.

Islamists in Norway, the former gang leader and convicted extortionist Arfan Bhatti and Mohyeldeen Mohammad, of Iraqi origin and a former student of *Shari'ah* at the Islamic University of Madinah, were among the Norwegians who had traveled to Syria, although the TV NRK stated that Bhatti had gone to Pakistan.⁵⁰

The British reporter-photographer John Cantlie crossed to Syria from Turkey in mid-2012 with a Dutch colleague, and was captured by the *jihadists*. He soon realized that some of them, about 10–15, were British and spoke English with a Birmingham accent, but there were also citizens from Chechnya, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bosnia and other nationalities. They were Salafists worried about the infiltration of *takfiri* (apostates) in the movement.⁵¹ One week later, the two journalist-photographers managed to escape, but John Cantlie was shot in the arm.⁵² The Syrian journalist Malik al Abdeh, who lives in England, told the BBC that it was inevitable that these young men in the UK would go to Syria: “*fighting for God and fighting for Islam is one of the pillars of being a Muslim*”. He added that there was an opportunity to fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan, against the Russians in Chechnya, against the Serbs in Bosnia “*and now against the Alawites in Syria*”.⁵³ Despite the insistence of the rebels to the contrary, “*there is evidence*” that the foreign jihadists were commanding the “*holy war*” against the forces of President Bashar al-Assad, wrote the journalist Henry Ridgwell.⁵⁴

According to *The China Post*, Chinese Muslim radicals of the Uighur ethnic minority, secessionists in the northwest region of Xinjiang, were also fighting in Syria at the side al-Qa’ida and other terrorist groups since May 2012. These were militants of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement and the East Turkistan Educational and Solidarity Association.⁵⁵ *Jihadists* from 14 African, Asian and European nationalities were estimated to be active in Syria, i.e., *jihadists* from three continents.

Likewise, more than 10,000 Libyans were being trained in Jordan according to several sources. They were being paid approximately US\$1000 per month, courtesy of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, to get them to participate in the war in Syria.⁵⁶ BBC reporters discovered and photographed three crates with weapons sent to the rebels

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Henry Ridgwell, “Britons Among Foreign Jihadists Fighting in Syria”, *Voice of America*, September 26, 2012. James Longman, “Syria conflict: British fighters seek jihad”, *BBC News*, August 16, 2012.

⁵²“Syria conflict: Photographers’ UK jihadist claim considered. Reports that Britons were among Islamist militants who kidnapped and wounded two photographers in Syria are being taken ‘very seriously’ by ministers, the Foreign Office has said”, *BBC News UK*, August 11, 2012.

⁵³James Longman, “Syria conflict: British fighters seek jihad”, *BBC News*, August 16, 2012.

⁵⁴Henry Ridgwell, “Britons Among Foreign Jihadists Fighting in Syria”, *Voice of America*, September 26, 2012.

⁵⁵Christopher Bodeen, “Beijing report says Chinese Muslims are fighting in Syria”, *The China Post*, October 30, 2012.

⁵⁶“Made in Jordan: Thousands of gunmen preparing to enter Syria?”, *Russia Today*, February 21, 2012.

by Saudi Arabia in a mosque in Aleppo. The crates came from the firm LCW (Lugansk Cartridge Works) and were shipped by Dastan Engineering Company Ltd., a company that specializes in naval weaponry and ballistic complexes from Kiev in the Ukraine.⁵⁷ The weapons in these crates discovered and photographed in the mosque, were originally purchased by the Royal Saudi Arabian Land Forces in February 2010, according to the document attached to them, and then forwarded to the rebels in Aleppo. *The New York Times* confirmed that Saudi Arabia was shipping weapons to the rebels, which, incidentally, the government in Riad never denied, but apparently it had suspended the shipment of heavy weaponry under pressure from the United States, which feared they would fall into the hands of terrorists.⁵⁸

The New York Times later revealed, however, that the shipment of lethal weapons from Saudi Arabia and Qatar were in fact meant for the most radical, *jihadi* rebel groups fighting against the Bashar al-Assad government.⁵⁹ And the White House was weighing if, instead of a strategy of minimal and indirect intervention, it wouldn't be better to help the democratic opposition "*who share our values*", according to the Republican nominee to succeed President Obama, Mitt Romney, showcasing his complete ignorance.⁶⁰ The United States claimed that it only supplied the rebels with intelligence reports and second-hand light weaponry, such as rifles and grenades, through Saudi Arabia and Qatar. But several cities, including Antakya on the border between Turkey and Syria, had turned into *bazaars* for war material, where the rebels bought weapons of *shadowy intermediaries*, arms dealers from Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, in a chaotic atmosphere that made it hard to identify the party to whom they belonged.⁶¹

According to the former CIA analyst Philip Giraldi, NATO aircraft without national insignia or coat of arms had been landing for many months in Turkish military bases close to Iskenderum, on the border with Syria. They carried weapons from Gaddafi's arsenals as well as mercenaries and volunteers from Libya to join the Free Syrian Army. Instructors from the British special forces also continued to cooperate with the rebels, while the CIA and contingents of the U.S. Spec Ops (United States Special Operations Command) were providing and operating telecommunications equipment, guiding the attacks against government troops.⁶²

⁵⁷“‘Saudi weapons’ seen at Syria rebel base. A BBC team has uncovered evidence that could prove that Syrian rebels are getting military assistance from the Gulf region”, *BBC News Middle East*, October 8, 2012. J. Chivers, “What a Crate in Syria Says About Saudi Help to the Rebels”, *The New York Times*, October 11, 2012. <http://dastan-engineering.com/>

⁵⁸Robert F. Worth, “Citing U.S. Fears, Arab Allies Limit Syrian Rebel Aid”, *The New York Times*, October 6, 2012.

⁵⁹David E. Sanger, “Rebel Arms Flow Is Said to Benefit Jihadists in Syria”, *The New York Times*, October 14, 2012.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

⁶¹*Ibid.*

⁶²Philip Giraldi, “NATO vs. Syria”, *The American Conservative*, December 19, 2011.

Philip Giraldi, a very knowledgeable man, also revealed to the Istanbul newspaper *Hürriyet Daily News* that about 50 high-ranking intelligence agents from several countries, including the United States, France, Germany, Great Britain and perhaps Greece, were active on the border between Syria and Turkey.⁶³ US Paramilitaries based in the Consulate in Adana or Incirlik airbase coordinated operations out of Turkey with the cooperation of its intelligence service, Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı (MİT).

When addressing his Parliament in Ankara on February 7, 2012, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan had already referred to the presence of British and Qatari contingents in Syria, and he admitted to the possibility of sending Turkish and Arab forces to Homs and, subsequently, to other cities.⁶⁴ The mission of the Phantom RF-4E fighter of the Turkish Air Force that invaded Syrian airspace and was shot down in June 2012, was exactly to test the route and air defenses of the country. Turkey was playing an obscure game in its rivalry with Iran. It harbored a large number of opposition leaders to Assad, including 300 members of the Free Syrian Army and militia groups of army deserters. According to some sources, it also armed rebels and authorized their supply with arms by Saudi Arabia and Qatar.⁶⁵ Ankara was apparently manifesting its intent of internationalizing the conflict and of establishing Turkish hegemony over Syria and other Arab countries, restoring the Ottoman Empire, albeit informally.⁶⁶

At the same time, the United States, Great Britain, France and Germany were acting out their political theater in the UNSC, blaming President Assad for the ongoing violence, while their respective governments had already authorized special forces of the Special Air Service (SAS) and special agents of MI6 and the BND to monitor the attacks by the militias of the Free Syrian Army against the forces of the regime in Syria, as reported by the newspapers *Bild am Sonntag* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in Germany, and the *Sunday Times* in Britain.⁶⁷ Without a mandate from its Parliament (*Bundestag*) and at the behest of the BND (*Bundesnachrichtendienst*), which had the best intelligence service in Syria, the German navy stationed the spy-ship *Oker* (A53) (*Flottendienstboot KLASSE 423*) in the Mediterranean.⁶⁸ Aboard were 40 commandos specialized in strategic

⁶³“There are 50 senior agents in Turkey, ex-spy says”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, Istanbul, September 18, 2012.

⁶⁴Ibid. Dorian Jones, “Turkey Debates Role in Possible Syria Intervention”, *Voice of America*, February 7, 2012.

⁶⁵Ibid. Jürgen Gottschlich, “Türkei im Syrien-Konflikt. Ankara hadert mit seiner Retterrolle”, *Spiegel*, 9/2/2012.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷“BND-Rolle im Syrien-Konflikt. Opposition fordert Aufklärung über Marineschiff”, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 20/8/2012. “BND spioniert Assads Truppen mit High-Tech-Schiff aus”, *Focus Online*, 19/8/2012. Martin S. Lambeck e Kayhan Özgenc, Assad-Armee Unter Beobachtung Deutsches Spionageschiff kreuzt vor Syrien, *Bild am Sonntag*, 19/8/2012. “Tropas especiais de países da OTAN norteiam a guerra civil na Síria”, *Pravda.ru*, 2/9/2012.

⁶⁸Rüdiger Göbel, “Aufklärung unerwünscht”, *AG Friedensforschung*, August 21, 2012.

intelligence (*Strategische Aufklärung*) under the command of Lieutenant-Commander Omar de Stefano,⁶⁹ equipped with *Fernmelde- und SIGINT-Technik* (*Signals Intelligence*), i.e., with electromagnetic, hydro-acoustic and electro-optic equipment.

The mission of the German ships was to capture and decipher Syrian telecommunications, record messages and communications from the military, members of the government and chiefs of staff, and uncover Syrian troop movements up to a radius of 370 miles off the coast through satellite images. Their point of support was Incirlik air base, operated by the American and British air forces, 7 miles to the east of Adana, where Germany established a permanent listening post to intercept all calls made in Damascus. Other ships—*Alster* (A 50) and *Oste* (A 52)—at the service of the Kommando Strategische Aufklärung (Control of Strategic Intelligence) and the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) operated in the region.⁷⁰ Predictably, the German government denied that the ships were on an intelligence mission. It's the type of activity that no country officially admits to.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton acknowledged in an interview with the journalist Kim Ghattas of the BBC on February 27, 2012, that the Bashar al-Assad regime was being assailed by foreign groups linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, in addition to another “*very dangerous set of actors*” in the armed opposition. Hillary Clinton went on to name these actors: “*al-Qa’ida, Hamas, and others who are on our [United States] list of terrorists*”.⁷¹ Even so, the so-called “Friends of Syria” group, made up of the United States and its allies in Europe and the Persian Gulf, decided to allocate US\$100 million to pay salaries to the insurgents through a fund of the Syrian National Council, and the United States pledged to provide communication equipment, in addition to CIA advisors and dozens of *drones* (remote controlled aircraft), flying over Syria to give logistical information to opposition forces.

Meanwhile, foreign fighters, including al-Qa’ida terrorists,⁷² continued to infiltrate Syria through both Turkey and Lebanon. When Saudi Arabia realized that the Bashar al-Assad government could defeat the opposition, according to the intelligence sources of DEBKAfile, it tried to convince the al-Qa’ida groups that the

⁶⁹Christoph Reuter and Raniah Salloum, “Bürgerkrieg in Syrien. Das Rätsel des deutschen Spionage-Schiffs”, *Der Spiegel*, 20/8/2012.

⁷⁰Thorsten Jungholt, “Wie die Bundesregierung in Syrien spioniert—Aufklärungsschiffe aus Eckernförde, Satellitenbilder und BND-Agenten liefern Deutschland ein eigenes Lagebild des Bürgerkrieges in Nahost. Die Daten könnten über die Türkei weitergereicht werden”, *Die Welt*, 19/8/2012.

⁷¹Elliott Abrams, “America’s Duplicity with the Syrian Opposition”, *National Review Online*, February 27, 2012.

⁷²“Fighters ‘entering Syria from Lebanon’—Al Jazeera’s James Bays reports from northern Lebanon. Armed groups, including al-Qaeda, have allegedly sent fighters across Lebanon’s northern border into crisis-torn Syria”, *Al Jazeera*, February 20, 2012.

Alawites, who had dominated Syria, were the most dangerous enemies.⁷³ The Minister of the Interior in Iraq, Adnan al-Assadi, confirmed that a large number of *Jihadists* had gone to Syria and that the price of weapons had gone up in Mosul because they were being shipped from Baghdad to Nineveh, on the east bank of the Tigris River. The Israeli agency DEBKAFfile estimated that a network of approximately 1500 al-Qa'ida fighters—Syrians, Egyptians, Libyans, Mauritians, Pakistanis, Lebanese and Palestinians—had gone to Syria.⁷⁴ Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told the press that the leader of al-Qa'ida, Ayman al-Zawahiri, successor of bin Ladin, was “supporting the opposition in Syria”, and she admitted that the United States were on the same side.⁷⁵ And in a secret meeting with heads of the Syrian National Council, she promised them that the United States would continue to provide logistical assistance and sophisticated communication tools to coordinate the military efforts on the ground.

In July 2012, a video was aired on YouTube in which masked insurgents standing in front of the black al-Qa'ida flag and carrying AK-47 rifles said that they were forming suicide cells in Syria to unleash the *Jihad*, in the name of God.⁷⁶ The journalist Rod Nordland of the *New York Times* noted that al-Qa'ida had helped change the nature of the conflict, increasingly employing a weapon that they had perfected in Iraq—suicide bombers—in the battle against President Bashar al-Assad.⁷⁷ “The evidence is mounting that Syria has become a magnet for Sunni extremists, including those operating under the banner of Al Qaeda,” wrote the journalist Rod Nordland, adding: “The video (. . .) is one more bit of evidence that Al Qaeda and other Islamic extremists are doing their best to hijack the Syrian revolution.”⁷⁸

The German intelligence service BND reported to the *Bundestag* (Parliament) that from the end of December 2011 to the beginning of July 2012, 90 terrorist attacks in Syria could be attributed to organizations linked to al-Qa'ida or *jihadist* groups.⁷⁹ In May, a terrible terrorist attack took place in Damascus with the explosion of a car bomb near the Idarat al-Mukhabarat al-Amma complex (General

⁷³“Saudis prompt Al Qaeda-Iraq move to Syria: Assad’s ouster top priority”, *DEBKAFfile Special Report*, February 13, 2012. Liz Sly and Greg Miller, “Syrian revolt grows militant. General gunned down in Damascus Bombings add to fears of al-Qaeda influence”, *The Washington Post*, 12/2/2012.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵Wyatt Andrews, “Clinton—Arming Syrian rebels could help al Qaeda”, *The Arab Spring CBS Evening News* (with Scott Pelley), February 27, 2012.

⁷⁶Rod Nordland, “Al Qaeda Taking Deadly New Role in Syria’s Conflict”, *The New York Times*, July 24, 2012.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*

⁷⁸*Ibid.*

⁷⁹“Gewalt in Syrien. Deutschland beteiligt sich an Propaganda”, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 16/7/2012. John Rosenthal, “German intelligence: al-Qaeda all over Syria”, *Asia Times—Middle East*, July 24, 2012. “BND: Al-Qaida in Syrien verantwortlich für etwa 90 Terrorangriffe und Houla-Massaker”.

Intelligence Directorate). About 55 people died and 400 were injured.⁸⁰ It was just one among the more than a hundred terrorist attacks that employed suicide bombers and car bombs, carried out in Damascus, Aleppo, Daraa, Idlib, Deir ez-Zor and other Syrian cities since December 2011, at least. In July 2012, a terrorist attack against the National Security headquarters carried out by a suicide bomber, killed General Dawoud Rajiha, minister of defense and vice minister, General Assef Shawkat, President Assad's brother-in-law, as well as several other officers, and it seriously injured the Interior Minister, Muhammad Ibrahim al-Sha'ar.

These attacks were carried out by the Support Front for the People of the Levant (*Jabhat al-Nusra li-ahl al-Sham*), linked to al-Qa'ida, the Organization of Jihad's Base in Mesopotamia (*Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn*), which was previously operating in Iraq, and several other organizations, whose militias were also fighting amongst each other for the control of streets and blocks. *Jihadists* flocked to Syria from Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Kuwait, Yemen, as well as from non-Arab Muslim countries—Afghanistan and Pakistan. They formed hundreds of autonomous militia groups/brigades (*kataeb*), some loosely affiliated to the Free Syrian Army, but organized locally and only operating in their respective regions. They recruited insurgents from the pockets of poverty, the suburbs of Aleppo and Damascus, where the middle classes generally remained silent.⁸¹

Syria was being torn apart and controlled by rival brigades, which dared not cross over and enter the territory of other brigades without confrontation and bloodshed. Such conflicts were frequent in Idlib and Aleppo, where a struggle for power and influence based on religious and cultural interpretations was taking place, especially between the non-Arab Muslims from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Chechnya, and the Balkans, including with regard to women, especially the widows and daughters of regime loyalists, who were being sexually assaulted, taken as the spoils of war and exploited like slaves.⁸² According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), violence in Aleppo was so intense that around 30 families needed urgent help each day.⁸³

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in an interview to the TV Russia Today—TV Novosti that using al-Qa'ida militants and other radical organizations to fight the Bashar al-Assad regime was dangerous, akin to unlocking the prison in Guantanamo, giving all prisoners weapons and sending them to fight in Syria. They were “*the same kind of people*,” said Putin, describing Washington's actions

⁸⁰Ian Black, “Syria suffers worst terror attack since start of uprising”, *The Guardian*, May 11, 2012.

⁸¹Aron Lund, “Syrian Jihadism”, *Policy Brief*, Swedish Institute of International Affairs, September 14, 2012, p. 9.

⁸²Radwan Mortada, “Jihadis in Syria: The Cracks Start to Show”, *Al-Akhbar English*, October 3, 2012.

⁸³“Number of Syrians displaced by conflict continues to rise, UN refugee agency reports”, UNHCR—UN Refugee Agency.

as short-sighted, just as when the United States gave support to an emerging al-Qa'ida, which then turned against it.⁸⁴

Apart from the religious antagonism between the Sunni and Salafists-Wahhabis of the Persian gulf and the *Alawites* of Bashar al-Assad, supported by the Shia in Iran and, discretely, in Iraq, there were also intertwined economic issues. According to Vijay Prashad, author of *Arab Spring, Libyan Winter*, and the journalist Pepe Escobar, who specializes in the Middle East, one of the goals of Qatar in defending and supporting the *toppling* of Bashar al-Assad by all means, would be to obstruct the construction of the gas pipeline between Iran, Iraq and Syria,⁸⁵ for which a preliminary agreement had been signed between the ministers of energy in July 2011.⁸⁶ This 930 mile-long pipeline would start in Assalouyeh on the coast of the Persian Gulf in Iran, where the largest natural gas field in the world can be found with recoverable reserves of 14 trillion cubic feet, pass through Iraq and end up in Syria. It would have the capacity to transport 360 million cubic feet of natural gas per day, produced by the Iranian South Pars.⁸⁷

The Iranian oil minister Rostam Qasemi announced that Iranian gas production would reach 1.5 million bpd by 2016 with an investment of US\$ 54 billion in 2012.⁸⁸ This would put Iran on equal footing with Qatar, the emirate with which Turkey wanted to build a 1500 mile-long pipeline from Doha to Istanbul, in the Mediterranean, crossing Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria, in addition to potentially linking up with the planned Nabucco pipeline. This project—the Nabucco pipeline—was considered critical by the German government and other European countries so as to reduce their dependence on Russian gas, but apparently it was no longer feasible. In addition to the competition with the Trans-Adriatic pipeline, whose construction continued, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, which were supposed to be the main suppliers, were reluctant to accept any compromise in the Nabucco project due to the pressure from Gazprom and Moscow.

Qatar's emir, Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, who was interested, *inter alia*, in preventing the gas pipeline project through Iran, Iraq and Syria, insisted at the UN General Assembly that the Arab countries, i.e., the Sunni autocracies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), had a "*military duty*" to invade Syria. But neither he nor the rebels, who continued to clamor for foreign intervention, calculated the impact that the attack on the US Consulate in Benghazi would have on Americans when they saw the enraged youth of Libya, Egypt and Yemen attack American

⁸⁴"Putin: Using Al-Qaeda in Syria like sending Gitmo inmates to fight (Exclusive)", *Russia Today*—TV-Novosti, September 6, 2012.

⁸⁵Pepe Escobar, "Why Qatar wants to invade Syria", *Asia Times*, September 28, 2012. Pepe Escobar, "Syria's Pipelineistan war. This is a war on deals, not bullets", *Al Jazeera*, August 6, 2012.

⁸⁶Hassan Hafidh and Benoit Faucon, "Iraq, Iran, Syria Sign \$10 Billion Gas—Pipeline Deal", *The Wall Street Journal*, July 25, 2011.

⁸⁷Ibid. See also: South Pars at the Strait of Hormuz. In: <http://www.eia.gov/countries/regions-topics.cfm?fips=wotc&trk=p3>. Accessed 26.02.2015.

⁸⁸Stephanie Clancy, "Pipeline projects in the Middle East", *Pipelines International*, March 2010.

installations on TV.⁸⁹ This tragic event, which resulted in the deaths of Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other American officials, served as a warning that, ultimately, they were supporting an unilateral intervention in a Syria where the opposition was “*fragmented, radicalized and increasingly well-armed*”, observed Ian Bremmer, president of the Eurasia Group, a firm specializing in *risk management*. He added that the “*conflict will drag on without intervention by outsiders for some time to come.*”⁹⁰ The consequences of the disintegration of the regime of Bashar al-Assad could be much worse than in Libya. Neither the United States nor the powers of the European Union, Turkey or the GCC countries had prepared themselves—nor could they prepare themselves—to face the collapse of the State organized by the Baath Party in Syria.

⁸⁹Tony Karon, “Despite Syria’s Bloodbath, Libya-Style Intervention Remains Unlikely”, *Time*, September 21, 2012.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*

Chapter 21

Great Syria as the End-of-Days Scenario

21.1 Great Syria or *Bilad-Al-Sham*, the End-of-Days Scenario

In addition to the geopolitical, strategic and economic interests that drove the participation of various foreign actors in the *foreign-sponsored civil war* to overthrow Bashar al-Assad's regime, an eschatological factor transformed Syria into a powerful and complex magnet for thousands of *jihadists* from the most distant and diverse Muslim countries. They believed that the battle of the end times was taking place in Syria, in which the Imām al-Mahdi would rise on the Last Day, an event of the utmost importance for both Sunni and Shia Muslims.

Islam evolved from a heterodox branch of Judaism. Around 700 years before the death of Muhammad (c. 570–632 A.D.), Jewish tribes inhabited Arabia. About 20 such tribes lived around Taima, Kahybar, Yathrib (later called Madina/Medina) and also in Hejaz. Before long, the Torah (*tawrat*) was translated into Arabic¹ and Judaism began to penetrate the Arab-speaking tribes of the region.² The spread of Jewish, although still not rabbinical monotheism, no doubt contributed to the development of Islam, which is yet another heterodox branch of the doctrine of Moses and Abraham.³ Both religions—Judaism and Islam (but also Christianity, which has the same monotheistic Hebrew origin)—kept some of the same traits (including mystical asceticism)⁴ and beliefs, such as the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) and the end of days, the Armageddon referred to in the *Ahadiths*, containing the laws and stories related to the Prophet, as *Al-Malhama-tul-Uzma*, *Al-Malhama-tul-Ḥagâya*.

¹Gibbon, 1995, pp. 171–172. An Arab legend attributed the first Jewish settlement in Madina (Medina) to king David; another legend attributes it to Moses. Johnson, 1988, pp. 166–167.

²Sand, 2010, pp. 191–192.

³Ibid., p. 191.

⁴Weber, 1956, p. 443.

21.2 The Eschatological Prophecies of the Great Monotheistic Religions

According to professor Fred Donner of the University of Chicago, Muhammad had started a reform movement around 622 AD. This was the community of believers—*Mu'minūn*—including Jews and Christians, who believed in the one true God and the imminence of the Last Day of Judgement (*yawm al-din*, *yawm al-qiyyamah*), the end of the ages.⁵ One of the essential aspects of this movement was its eschatological orientation, the belief that the Hora, as the end of days was often referred to in the *Qur'an*, would occur. Hence the need for a *Jihad* against the unbelievers and hypocrites. As such, Islam arose from a “community of charismatic warriors” settled in the oasis of Medina, which later conquered Mecca and Ka’bah (630 AD) under the command of the Prophet, who defeated his own tribe Quraysh and represented the expansionist drive of the Arabs, advancing on Persia.⁶

After only two generations, from 680 AD, the believers of the *Qur'an* started calling themselves Muslims (obedient to God), setting themselves apart from the Jews and Christians, who they considered heretics and infidels. To a significant extent, this differentiation was a result of the efforts of the Umayyad dynasty (660–750 A.D.), particularly *Amir al-a'umini* 'Abd al Malik.⁷ But the followers of Judaism, Christianity and Islam alike have always considered the Torah, the *jus divinum*, the *Shari'ah* to be indestructible⁸ and awaited the end of times with the arrival of the Messiah (*Māshiyakh*),⁹ the “anointed”, the descendant of David, or the return of Christ, or the coming of the *Al-Mahdi al-Muntadhar* or *Al-Zaman Sahib* (The Lord of the Ages, the Savior). Despite some differences, the eschatological prophecies of the three great monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—have many similarities.

The Torah and the Bible mention Armageddon, but only the *Ahadiths* establish the location of the *Al-Malhama-tul-Kubra*: Greater Syria or *Bilad-Al-Sham*, the Levant. This region between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean Sea covers Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Sinai, northern Israel (Galilee) as well as the regions of Alexandretta (Iskanderun) and Hatay (Antioch), which were later (until the French Mandate established by the Sykes-Picot Agreement) incorporated into Turkey. As the battle field of the approaching end of times, *al-Sham*, which could mean either the Levant (Greater Syria) or Damascus, has taken on great significance in Muslim eschatology.¹⁰

⁵Donner, 2010, pp. 57–59, 70–71.

⁶Weber, 1996, pp. 286–287, 269–270. Brook, 2010.

⁷Donner, 2010, pp. 195–196.

⁸Weber, 1996, pp. 286–287.

⁹The word *Māshiyakh*, of Hebrew and then Aramaic origin, was transliterated into Greek as *Messias*. The Greek word for the “anointed” is *christos* and it was the Greek title, and not Hebrew one, that was added to the name of Jesus. Johnson, 1988, pp. 124–125.

¹⁰Islam El Shazly, “Syria: Bilad Al-Sham”, *Al Rahalah*, August 24, 2011. For a map of Greater Syrian: http://defense-update.com/20080528_greater-syria-ambition.html#.VStYnZPeJBE. Accessed 06.05.2015.

21.3 The Rise of Imām al-Mahdi as Magnet for the *Jihadists*

Some scholars believe that the word Armageddon, of Greek origin, derived from an important Hebrew city in Palestine, in the mountains of Megiddo (*Har Megiddo*) in Lower Galilee, southwest of Haifa. And when the uprisings struck Libya and Syria, seeping into *Bilad al-Sham*, many Sunni Arabs, the *ulamas* in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other countries, began to instigate the *jihadists*. What the West called the “Arab Spring”, they saw as the beginning of *Al-Malhama-tul-Kubra*. According to the *Ahadiths*, the *Mahdi*, the supreme commander of the *Ummah*, the successor of the Prophet, would arrive in *Bilad al-Sham* to lead the *Jihad* and rebuild the Great Caliphate, clearing the land of the *kuffar*, the apostates (Christians, Jews *et al.*), before reconquering Jerusalem.¹¹ “*The war of the end times has already begun. This is the beginning of Al-Malhama-tul-Kubra*”, declared the president of the Arrahman Qur’an—Learning Center (AQL), the *ulama* Ustadz Bachtiar Natsir, Secretary General of the Ulama Muda Indonesia (MIUMI) in Jakarta, adding that Muslims should go to the arena of the end times, i.e., to Syria.¹² Other Salafist *ulama/muftis* preached and continue to preach this.

21.4 The Beginning of the *Al-Mahlama-tul-Kubra*

The scores of *jihadist* groups that infiltrated Syria included the brigades (*katiba*, pl. *Kataib*) Abdullah Azzam al-Qa’ida, Jabhat al-Nusra li-Bilad al-Sham (Support Front for the Land of Syria,) led by the Mauritanian cleric Abul-Munther al-Shanqiti, and the Doura Fighting Group, followers of the *takfiri* doctrine, even more radical Salafists. These three organizations found inspiration in a text about the return of the Sultan Salāḥ ad-Dīn Yūsuf ibn al-Ayyūb (1138–1193),¹³ who first introduced the *madrassah* in Egypt to suppress the non-orthodox Muslim sects, and who conquered Jerusalem after winning the Second Crusade in the Battle of Hattin (1187).¹⁴ King Richard the Lionheart (Richard I of England, 1157–1199)

¹¹Asif Mohiuddin Farrukh, “The Coming Armageddon”, *Pakistan Observer*, April 10, 2010. Ash-Shayk Muḥadith and Muḥammad Nasir ud-Deen Al-Albaani, “Warning Against the Fitnah of Takfeer”, distributed by Islamic Propagation Office at Rabwah.

¹²“Ustadz Bahctiar Natsir: The issue of Syria, the Perspective of Al Malhamah Kubra”, *Al Hittin*, July 13, 2012. Voa-Islam, <http://www.voaislam.com/news/indonesiana/2012/04/05/18549/bachtiar-nasir-miumi-tak-akan-berangkul-an-terlalu-rapat-dengan-negara/>

¹³Dr. Salih as-Salih—Die Fitna des Takfirs, http://www.alislaam.de/manhadsch/PDF/allgemein/man0024_Die%20Fitna%20des%20Takfir.pdf

¹⁴Salāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyubi (Saladin) took control of Egypt after the death of the Fatimid caliph in 1171. When the Crusaders attacked Egypt, Salah al-Din fortified Cairo, resisted and became one of the great heroes of Islam. The dynasty founded by Salāḥ ad-Dīn—Ayyubids—reigned over Egypt until 1252, over Syria until 1260, and over the western part of Arabia until 1229. Hourani, 1991, p. 4084.

commanded the Third Crusade, captured Acre (Tell Akko), defeated the Saracens (which was how the Christians called Muslims in the Middle Ages) in the battle of Arsuf (1191) near Jaffa, but was unable to regain Jerusalem for the Christians. The Sultan Salāḥ ad-Dīn, who Walter Scott turned into a character in the novel *The Talisman*, in which he told that he wished to marry Lady Edith Plantagenet of the English royal family to make peace with the Christians,¹⁵ and Richard the Lionheart were both remarkable warriors and held each other in mutual esteem. They had no choice but to sign the Treaty of Ramla, through which Jerusalem would remain under the control of the Saracens, but with pilgrimage and trade being allowed for the Christians.

21.5 Brigades from Several Arab Countries in Syria

The flow of *jihadist* brigades to Syria became intense, and near the American base in Incirlik, on the border of Turkey with Syria, they were receiving special training in command, control and communications, and in the most modern war equipment—weapons, anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles, grenade launchers and even Stinger missiles, manufactured in Turkey under license from the United States.¹⁶ The Chief of Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, General Nikolai Makarov, confirmed that the Syrian rebels were using shoulder-fired rocket launchers in several states, especially the American-made Stinger.

The *jihadists* Shaykhs Mahdi al-Harati and Abdul Hakim al-Misri, former commanders of the Tripoli Brigade, led countless Libyan militants to Syria. Standing out among the scores of militia groups that gathered to fight the regime of Bashar al-Assad, were the Suqour al-Sham brigade (Hawks of Syria), led by Ahmad al-Shaykh, known as Abu-Issam, with more than 50 units fighting in the provinces of Idlib, Rif Dimashq, Latakia and Hama, and particularly in Jabal al-Zawiya, Khan Sheikhoun, al-Marah, Saraqeb, Idlib and Sarmin; the Muhammad al-Khalaf, Daoud, Ansar al-Haq, Rashid Abu-Abdu, Dhi Qar, al-Muhajerin wal-Asar, al-Khansa, Martyr Muhammad al-Abdallah and al-Ansar brigades, commanded by Abu-Ali al-Ansari, a former militant of Fatah al-Islam in Lebanon who went to Syria after escaping from prison, fighting in Homs¹⁷; and the organization Jabhat al-Nusra (Front to Protect the Levant), led by Mohammed al-Golani, which was

¹⁵Scott, 1907, p. 161, 191–195, 277–278. See also: The Near East in 1190: http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Crusader_States_1190.svg&page=1, accessed 19.10.2016.

¹⁶John Cherian, “Spillover effect—The Syrian rebels are on the back foot after months of fighting, and the consequences of the conflict are now being felt in the entire neighbourhood”, *Frontline*, Volume 29, Issue 20, October 6–19, 2012. Rebellengruppe lehnt Waffenruhe in Syrien ab, 2012, *Die Welt*, 24.10. <http://www.welt.de/newsticker/news3/article110223069/Rebellengruppe-lehnt-Waffenruhe-in-Syrien-ab.html>. Accessed on: 29.01.2015.

¹⁷Radwan Mortada, “Syria has become a magnet for the world’s jihadis”, *Al-Akhbar*, August 6, 2012.

responsible for countless terrorist bombings in Aleppo and Damascus, two of the most ancient cities in Syria.¹⁸

Violence kept building in Syria with the participation of “foreign-backed” terrorist groups, and the UN special envoy, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, stated that Damascus estimated the number of foreign fighters to be in the thousands.¹⁹ In his report of October 2012 to the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Professor Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro wrote that the presence of hundreds of “*radical Islamists or jihadists*” in Syria was particularly dangerous, dramatically increasing the sectarian tensions, and that they “*were not fighting for democracy and freedom, but for their own agendas.*”²⁰

Moderate Muslims were fighting against the Salafists, jihadists and other Islamist groups of several and conflicting beliefs, and the powerful Farouq brigade, whose center of operations was in Homs, and the Sukour al-Sham brigade, from Idlib, formed the liberation front to intensify the *Jihad* to overthrow the Assad regime and establish an Islamic State, a new caliphate, in *al-Sham*. To the north of Idlib, which the rebels called liberated, the black Islamic flag used by al-Qa’ida terrorists and *jihadists*, was now flying over various rebel checkpoints and municipal buildings. The supreme commander of the Free Syrian Army, General Mustafa al-Sheikh, who held his general headquarters in Turkey, had to pass through Idlib when entering Syria. He did so nervously and heavily armed, with rifles locked and loaded, as witnessed by the reporter for *The Sunday Telegraph*. “*It is not because of the regime that we are carrying weapons. We are afraid of being attacked by jihadists,*” he explained to the journalist.²¹

The armed struggle in Syria had therefore become an increasingly sectarian war, a conflict against the *Alawite* minority (15.3%, supported by Christians and other minorities—Kurds, Ismaili and Druze—and by secular, more educated Sunni). The diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi, UN and the Arab League envoy, successor of Kofi Annan, and a man of great experience, including in Algeria’s war of liberation (1954–1962), expressed his fear that Syria would disintegrate and that the civil conflict would devolve into a “*proxy multi-state war*”,²² i.e., a war of multiple proxy states representing other foreign States, heavily affecting the regional *status quo*. The western powers were not the only ones behind the rebel militias. Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar were also maneuvering against Iran, Russia, China and Assad. In the first week of August 2012, Syrian Special Forces captured 200 soldiers in an Aleppo suburb. Among them, they found Saudi and Turkish officers who were

¹⁸“Profile: Syria’s al-Nusra Front”, *BBC News Middle East*, May 15, 2012.

¹⁹“Syria conflict: UN’s Pinheiro gives jihadist warning”, *BBC News*, October 16, 2012.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹Ruth Sherlock, “Syria despatch: rebel fighters fear the growing influence of their ‘Bin Laden’ faction. The growing strength of Islamists in the fight against President Bashar al-Assad is alarming Syria’s secular opposition, reports Ruth Sherlock”, *The Telegraph*, October 13, 2012.

²²John Cherian, “Spillover effect—The Syrian rebels are on the back foot after months of fighting, and the consequences of the conflict are now being felt in the entire neighbourhood”, *Frontline*, Volume 29, Issue 20, October 6–19, 2012.

commanding the militia.²³ In Bustan al-Qasr, district of Aleppo, Assad's army fought off an armed attack and killed dozens of insurgents who had entered Syria through Turkey. Among them were four Turkish officers.²⁴

21.6 Spillover of the Syrian Conflict to Neighboring Countries

In the fight against the Assad regime, al-Qa'ida allied itself with the United States, France and Great Britain, the three Western powers which, directly or indirectly, encouraged and participated in the insurgency most, along with Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. On February 11, 2012, Ayman al-Zawahiri,²⁵ Usamah bin Ladin's successor as guide and leader of al-Qa'ida, issued his instructions in an eight-minute video entitled "*En avant, les lions de Syrie*" ("Forward, Lions of Syria"), broadcast over the Internet and by other media, urging all *jihadists* from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey to converge in the battle fields of Syria.²⁶ He accused the regime of Bashar al-Assad of committing "*crimes against his citizens*," of being "*pernicious and cancerous*", "*anti-Islamic*", and he called upon the rebels to overthrow him. He added that the *jihadists* should help "*their brothers in Syria with whatever they could, with their lives, money, opinions, as well as with information*."²⁷ At the same time, Ayman al-Zawahiri counseled the Syrians not to trust the West nor the Arab governments, allies of the United States.

The rising violence and terror with the succession of bloody attacks in Aleppo and Damascus, siphoned off the support to the uprising and the number of defections in Assad's armed forces dropped significantly. Most military personnel remained loyal to the government. The terrorist attack that devastated the government district in Aleppo with the explosion of four car-bombs, killing forty people

²³Ibid.

²⁴"Free Syrian Army Fighters Killed on Lebanon's border", *RIA Novosti, Beirut*, October 6, 2012.

²⁵Ayman al-Zawahiri was born in 1951, in Egypt, studied psychology, pharmacology and graduated in medicine at the University of Cairo. When he was 14 years of age, he joined the Muslim Brotherhood. He was one of the founders of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and, in 1980, he traveled to Afghanistan, where he met bin Ladin, who was running the Maktab al-Khadamat (MAK), where the Mujahidin recruited by the CIA and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the intelligence service of Pakistan, were being trained to fight the Soviet troops, which had occupied the country.

²⁶Martina Fuchs, "Al Qaeda Leader Backs Syrian Revolt against Assad", *Current.Mil-Tech News/Reuters*, February 12, 2012.

²⁷Ibid. "Le chef d'Al-Qaïda soutient la rébellion en Syrie dans une vidéo", *Le Monde*, 12/2/2012. Jason Burke, "Al-Qaida leader Zawahiri urges Muslim support for Syrian uprising. Ayman al-Zawahiri calls on Muslims in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey to join fight against 'pernicious, cancerous regime'", *The Guardian*, 12/2/2008.

and injuring more than 100 in early October 2012,²⁸ shocked the population even further and reduced the support to the rebels. The Jabhat al-Nusra militia linked to al-Qa'ida, claimed responsibility for the attack.²⁹

In addition to the participation of Muslims of various nationalities, the fighting in Syria tended to spread beyond its borders, affecting Lebanon. Most Lebanese feared the involvement in another conflict after the devastating civil war that raged for 15 years between 1975 and 1990.³⁰ Conflicts between Sunni and *Alawites* broke out in the city of Tripoli (Trablos) in northern Lebanon, where armed groups clashed in mid-2012 with rifles and grenade launchers in the districts of Jabal Mohsen and Bab al Tabbaneh. The latter was a Salafist stronghold where *jihadi* rested, tended to their wounds in makeshift hospitals, and resupplied.³¹

The Salafists practically built a “*shadow-state*” in Lebanon for the opposition fighters with the support of the Gulf monarchies.³² Shaykh Houssam Sbat, head of the Islamic Department of Donations in Tripoli, informed the imams and Muslim educators in Tripoli and Akkar of Qatar’s decision to pay lifelong salaries to the rebels, and his department went on to fund radio Tariq al-Irtiqaa (Path to the Ascension) in Tripoli, seeking to expand the influence of the Emirates in northern Lebanon. A retired colonel of the Lebanese Army established an office to distribute weapons and recruit young people willing to fight in northern Lebanon and Syria. The office was established in Talat al-Rifaiya in the area of Tripoli.³³ And in October 2012, about six *jihadi* groups were operating in the north and northeast of Lebanon, in the regions of Ersal and in its surrounding mountains, where training camps were set up in Masharih al-Qaa, Bekaa, and especially in Bar Elias, Qab Elias, Fourzol and, certainly, in Aley, Khaldeh and Naameh.³⁴ In October 2012, Lebanon harbored about 100,000 Syrian refugees and the government requested assistance from the United States, France and Britain to retool and modernize its armed forces.

On October 19, however, a powerful bomb devastated the district Achrafieh in the vicinity of Beirut and inhabited by Christians. In addition to injuring 80 people, it killed eight, including the Brigadier General Wissam al-Hassan, head of the

²⁸“Middle East Deadly explosions hit central Aleppo. At least 40 people have been killed and dozens more wounded as several explosions ripped through the centre of Aleppo”, *Al Jazeera*, October 3, 2012. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/middle-east-live/2012/oct/03/syria-aleppo-bomb-attacks-live>

²⁹Kareem Fahim and Hwaïda Saad, “Cajoling, Drugging and More as Rebels Try to Draw Defectors”, *The New York Times*, October 3, 2012.

³⁰“Syria and Lebanon—Spillover”, *The Economist*, August 20, 2012. “Syria fighting shatters unity of Druze in Golan”, *Associated Press, NetMagazine*, Israel News, 8/16/2012.

³¹Stephen Dockery, “Tripoli clashes signal escalation of Syria spillover”, *The Daily Star, Lebanon News*, August 22, 2012.

³²Radwan Mortada, “A Shadow State in Lebanon for the Syrian Opposition”, *Al-Akhbar*, October 9, 2012.

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴*Ibid.*

Internal Security Forces (ISF), a framework set up with resources from the CIA and the GCC countries as a counterweight to the military intelligence service linked to Damascus.³⁵ General Wissam al-Hassan was a Sunni and an enemy of Bashar al-Assad ever since the assassination of Lebanon's Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005. He was involved in a political project that extrapolated Lebanon's borders into the regional conflict against the regime in Syria and in Lebanon, as well as in Iraq, Iran and Russia.³⁶ But in those circumstances, President Bashar al-Assad, who the opposition in Lebanon soon blamed without proof or evidence, had no reason to order a bombing to kill General al-Hassan. On the contrary, Assad condemned the attack, as did Hizballah. Who stood to gain from this crime, the death of General al-Hassan? It was no doubt a great provocation aimed at increasing the internal contradictions between Sunni and Shia Muslims, to turn public opinion against Syria with large protests, as occurred after the burial of General al-Hassan in the great mosque Al Amine, where former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was also buried after being killed by a car bomb in 2005.

The attempt on General al-Hassan's life undoubtedly sought to destabilize the government of Prime Minister Najib Mikati, who was supported by Hizballah, and to cause his resignation. President Michel Suleimán didn't accept it and the ambassadors of various Western countries asked him to remain in office to prevent Lebanon from plunging into chaos.³⁷ But the Cabinet of Prime Minister Najib Mikati ended up effecting his resignation. And bloody clashes erupted between Shia and Sunni on the streets of Beirut and Tripoli after the burial of General al-Hassan. The Lebanese Army had to occupy parts of these cities with tanks and armored vehicles, and the Military Command issued a statement warning the population against the escalation of the conflict and that it would take strong measures to prevent Lebanon from becoming "*once again a battlefield of regional conflicts, and that the assassination of General Wissam al-Hassan would not be used to assassinate the Lebanese nation.*"³⁸

At the same time, during the early hours between October 21 and 22, 2012, groups of *ihadists* attacked army positions on the border of Jordan with Syria. In the two battles that ensued, Corporal Mohamad Abdulla Manaseer Abbadi was killed. The army captured 13 *ihadists*. The Minister of Communications of the Amman Government, Samih Maayta, didn't reveal the nationality of the *ihaddists*, but he described them as Salafist extremists, a sect that was banned in Jordan, who

³⁵ Anne Barnard, "Blast in Beirut Is Seen as an Extension of Syria's War", The New York Times, October 19, 2012. "Who Was Wissam Al-Hassan?!", *Al-Akhbar English*, October 19, 2012. "Libanon: Tausende nehmen Abschied von getötetem Geheimdienstchef", *Der Spiegel*, 21/10/2012.

³⁶ Ibrahim al-Amin, "It's True... There's No Going Back", *Al-Akhbar English*, October 22, 2012.

³⁷ Marlene Khalife, "Western Diplomats Rally around Lebanese Prime Minister", *As-Safir*, October 22, 2012.

³⁸ "de nouveau en champ de bataille de conflits régionaux, et que l'assassinat du général Wissam al-Hassan ne soit utilisé pour assassiner la nation libanaise." Adrien Jaulmes, "Liban: la classe politique appelle au calme", *Le Figaro*, 22/10/2012.

were trying to enter Syria illegally to join the fight against the Assad regime.³⁹ The Jordanian General Intelligence Directorate, or GID (Dairat al-Mukhabarat al-Ammah), also foiled a plot and arrested 11 Jordanians linked to al-Qa'ida, who had obtained weapons and explosives in Syria to attack civilian and government targets, including the US Embassy, shopping malls and American companies.⁴⁰ The attacks, which were previously planned for October 5, should have occurred on November 9, the anniversary of the simultaneous explosions of three hotels in Amman, carried out by al-Qa'ida operatives in 2005.⁴¹

Washington was aware that the continuing crisis in Syria threatened the stability of the entire region, particularly affecting Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. No country within or in the vicinity of al-Sham could avoid the impacts of the war against the Assad regime as the sectarian, religious and tribal antagonisms, and the political, strategic and economic interests became increasingly entangled. The civil war in Syria was taking a direction that threatened the security of Iraq, ruled by the Shia, who supported Assad and feared a victory of radical Sunni Muslims in Syria.⁴² There were indications that the Syrian Sunnis fighting the Assad regime were coordinating their terrorist operations with the Sunni insurgents in Iraq, where the terrorist bombings never ceased, occurring almost every day, and where in September 2012 alone, an attack killed 365 people, including 95 soldiers and 88 police officers. The tribal leader Shaykh Hamid al-Hayes, who had fought against the Americans, declared that the combatants of Anbar province in western Iraq had gone to Syria to support their Sunni brothers.⁴³

The conflicts also threatened to reach the strategic Golan Heights, occupied by Israel since 1967. This area was inhabited by 18,000 or more Israeli settlers, 40,000 Druze, most pro-Assad, and 2000 Sunni. It harbored rich water sources, which could irrigate vineyards, fruit orchards and pastures in the arid lands surrounding it. Major General Aviv Kochavi, Israel's Defense Minister, told the members of the Knesset (Parliament) that "*radical Islam*" was gaining ground in Syria, which was undergoing a process of "*iraqisation*", with militants and tribal factions controlling different parts of the country.⁴⁴ "*We can see an ongoing flow of Al-Qaeda and global jihad activists into Syria,*" General Kochavi said, predicting that with the erosion of the Assad regime, the Golan Heights could "*become an arena of activity*

³⁹David D. Kirkpatrick and Neil Macfarquhar, "Lebanon and Jordan Move Quickly to Contain Syria-Related Violence", *The New York Times*, October 23, 2012. Jodi Rudoren and Ranya Kadri, "War tide awash at Syria borders", *The Boston Globe*, October 23, 2012.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Hani Hazaimah, "Suspected terrorists planned to take advantage of October 5 mass rally—security official", *The Jordan Times*, October 22, 2012.

⁴²Tim Arango, "Syrian War's Spillover Threatens a Fragile Iraq. A Free Syrian Army soldier in Aleppo looks through a mirror that helps him see government troops", *The New York Times*, September 24, 2012.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴"Putin vows support for Annan on Syria", *Al-Akhbar English*, July 17, 2012. "Syria moving troops from Golan to Damascus: Israel", *AFP*, July 17, 2012.

against Israel, similar to the situation in Sinai, as a result of the growing jihad movement in Syria.”⁴⁵

The Israeli government moved troops to secure the Golan Heights, but right from the start, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu made sure Israel wouldn't become involved in Syria, and if it did, it was almost unnoticeable. He based his policy on his predecessor, Ariel Sharon, for whom Bashar al-Assad was the “*devil we know*.” An adversary of Israel, but not one disposed to attack it. The alternative would be much worse: *fitna*, chaos and the rise of the Salafists, as was occurring in Libya. The only time that Netanyahu manifested himself publicly, in the same vein as the rulers of the western powers, was when the massacre in Houla took place, which the rebels attempted to blame on the Assad regime.⁴⁶ But the truth of the matter was that Israel had entered into secret peace talks with Syria in 2010, interrupted by the civil war, according to which Israel would withdraw its troops from the Golan Heights.⁴⁷ Israel also feared that the chemical weapons which Assad supposedly possessed, would fall into the hands of salafi-jihadist terrorist groups and Hizballah with the collapse of the regime.⁴⁸

According to Michael Eisenstadt, head of the military and security studies program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Syria should be in possession of the largest and most advanced chemical and biological weapons stockpile in the Arab world.⁴⁹ And Israel was not alone in its fear. The United States, in particular, worried that the rebels and terrorists, who were already so mixed up that it was difficult to distinguish between them, would get hold of this arsenal, something they would certainly try to do. And so the US sent 150 soldiers of the Special Operations Forces (SOF) to Jordan, on border with Syria. “*We want to ensure that security is maintained and we want to be very sure that those (weapons) do not fall into the wrong hands,*” said Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta after a meeting of the ministers of the NATO countries in Brussels.⁵⁰ The mission of the SOF contingent was to monitor the safety of these stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons and to train Jordan's forces in specific tasks if the war in Syria spilled over and threatened the country.

⁴⁵Ibid. See the map of the Golan Heights in: The Golan Heights. Source: Adapted by the author from: http://mapcarta.com/Golan_Heights. Accessed 06.12.2016.

⁴⁶Barak Ravid, “Netanyahu: Israel ‘appalled’ by Syria massacre; Iran and Hezbollah must also be held responsible”, *Haaretz*, May 27, 2012.

⁴⁷Isabel Kershner, “Secret Israel-Syria Peace Talks Involved Golan Heights Exit”, *The New York Times*, October 13, 2012.

⁴⁸“Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu: Hezbollah may get chemical arms if Assad folds”, *Al Jazeera*, July 23, 2012.

⁴⁹Summary of DEBKA Exclusives, October 10, 2012, Briefs: October 12, 2012. Gul Tuysuz, “Turkey to Syria: Don’t send arms through our air space”, *CNN*, October 12, 2012.

⁵⁰Ibid. Alex Newman 2012, Without Asking Congress, Obama Puts U.S. Troops on Syria Border, *New American*, 12 October. <http://www.thenewamerican.com/usnews/foreign-policy/item/13189-without-asking-congress-obama-puts-us-troops-on-syria-border>

21.7 Humanitarian Crisis and Rising Tensions Between Turkey and Iran

The civil war in Syria, kindled by the West, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other Gulf countries, was causing a vast humanitarian crisis, not only through the internal displacement of the population, but also through a growing number of refugees who were crossing the borders to neighboring countries. Thousands of Syrians fled their homes and sought shelter in schools, mosques and public buildings. In August 2012, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that there were nearly half a million of internally displaced people (IDPs) within the borders of Syria, without work, without education, without a place of business, without access to food, medical care and electricity. This was making the situation unbearable.⁵¹ And according to Ambassador Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary General of the UN, the tragedy was even more serious, since it affected more than 2.5 million people, including refugees from Palestine and Iraq, who needed protection within Syria. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon also stated that the militarization of the conflict would only perpetuate the devastation and suffering, that the sectarian war was affecting two million people and threatening the security and stability of neighboring countries.⁵²

But three of the main architects and sponsors of the tragedy had a seat in the Security Council: the United States, Great Britain and France. They had provided the financial, logistical and military resources to the rebels to overthrow the Assad government, violating the principle of national sovereignty and the Charter of the United Nations. Meanwhile, Turkey ventured to promote an undeclared war against Syria, supplying the rebels with weapons, short-range missiles and rocket launchers mounted on all-terrain vehicles.⁵³ The rebellion that began in 2011 would have lasted only a couple of months and not have turned into a hot revolutionary war if foreign powers had not sustained it by all means.

According to the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, the solution was simple: all it would take was for foreign actors to commit themselves to not interfere in the civil war in Syria.⁵⁴ But the foreign actors had made clear that regime change was the goal, and they were pursuing a NATO intervention to accelerate Assad's fall. This was unlikely to happen, noted Robert A. Pastor, professor of the American University in Washington and former Middle East adviser to President Jimmy Carter, adding that the Syrian army continued relatively strong and capable of recapturing the areas occupied by the rebels. It was being supplied with weapons by Russia and by Iran, and Assad still had the support of

⁵¹Islamic Relief USA, <http://www.irusa.org/emergencies/syrian-humanitarian--relief/>

⁵²"Ban urges end to Syria fighting as number of people affected reaches two million", *UN News Centre*.

⁵³Marah Mashi, "The Threefold Siege on Syria's Harem", *Al-Akhbar English*, October 31, 2012.

⁵⁴"UN report: Syrian govt forces, rebels committed war crimes", *Russia Today*, August 15, 2012.

parts of the population and the security forces, led by the *Alawite* minority, which remained powerful despite the defections.⁵⁵

According to the UNHCR, the number of Syrians seeking refuge in Lebanon, Turkey Jordan and Iraq also grew, jumping from 157,577–170,116 in just 3 days, between August 14 and 16, 2012.⁵⁶ The number of Syrians fleeing the country because of the war was projected to grow to 700,000. In Lebanon there were 34,096 asylum-seekers in places like Akkar, receiving assistance from the government. 15,096 Syrians, mostly Kurds, were estimated to have fled to Iraq, of which 12,073 were registered.⁵⁷ Likewise, approximately 150,000 Syrians entered Jordan, which was already harboring more than 451,700 Iraqi refugees.⁵⁸ They were being housed in Mafraq, Ramtha, Irbid, Zarqa, Maan, Al Karak and Amman, where 38,883 registered refugees were receiving assistance and protection.⁵⁹

In Jordan, however, which was already facing significant turbulence and the threat of an Islamic uprising, King Abdullah II at-tānī bin al-Ḥusayn had accepted (October 12, 2012) the resignation of the government headed by Fayez Tarawneh, appointing Abdullah Nsou to replace him and starting negotiations with the Muslim Brotherhood for the formation of a parliamentary government. Shaykh Zaki Bani Irshed, leader of the Islamic Action Front linked to Hamas in Palestine, was the most popular politician in Jordan.⁶⁰ He told the official Palestinian newspaper *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, edited in London, that the identity of the next prime minister in Jordan would be an important signal to the public and Islamists as to how King Abdullah was thinking about the trajectory of the regime and of the institutions responsible for the decisions in the next stage. But the appointment of Walid Obeidat as new ambassador of Jordan in Tel Aviv created unease within the Muslim Brotherhood, which criticized the government for signaling a normalization of relations with Israel. And in mid-October, more turmoil was expected if the government would implement the decision of raising the price of basic subsidized commodities, including oil and bread.

The situation was worse and more serious along the border with Turkey, whose prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan had taken on the role of the most fervent and

⁵⁵Robert A. Pastor, “A third option in Syria—Forget about overthrowing Assad. Both sides need to avoid a long civil war and agree to meaningful reforms”, *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 2012.

⁵⁶“Number of displaced people grows as Syria violence continues, says UN agency”, *UN News Centre*, August 17, 2012.

⁵⁷“Number of Syrians displaced by conflict continues to rise, UN refugee agency reports”, UNHCR—UN Refugee Agency, July 31, 2012.

⁵⁸“2012 UNHCR country operations profile—Jordan Working environment”, UNHCR—UN Refugee Agency.

⁵⁹“Number of Syrians displaced by conflict continues to rise, UN refugee agency reports”, UNHCR—UN Refugee Agency, July 31, 2012. “2012 UNHCR country operations profile—Jordan Working environment”, UNHCR—UN Refugee Agency.

⁶⁰Jonathan Spyer, “Analysis: Increasingly, Hamas is gaining acceptance in the Arab world. The old view of a closed Israeli-Palestinian system west of the Jordan is fading”, *The Jerusalem Post*, 16/10/2012.

visible supporter of the rebels, to the point of interfering directly in the civil war, with veiled collaboration from NATO. This is why since April 2011, more than 130,000 Syrian citizens crossed the border to Turkey, and 93,576 in the beginning of 2012, according to Ankara's Agency for the Management of Disasters and Emergencies—Afet ve Acyl Durum Yönetimi Başalbanyğı (AFAD). They were being housed in 12 cities and refugee camps in Hatay, Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş, and Edessa.⁶¹ In Aleppo, 145 miles from Latakya in Turkey and where the insurgents had established a stronghold, the population suffered great losses because of the intensity of the fighting.⁶² And the historic mosque of Umayyad, rebuilt three times (1069, 1401 and 1893), became the fifth World Heritage Site to be damaged during the civil war in Syria, among the six others recognized by Unesco.

Everything seems to indicate that Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, after his growing disenchantment with the possibility of Turkey entering the European Union, became directly involved in the war in Syria, supporting the insurgents and terrorists in order to project his influence in the Middle East and to restore, albeit informally, the Ottoman Empire, defeated in the war of 1914 and abolished, along with the Sultanate of Mehmed VI (1861–1926), by General Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), an enlightened military commander who established a democratic and secular republic in Turkey.

Prime Minister Erdogan's intention was probably to invade Syria and numerous provocations occurred. On October 3, a mortar attack struck the Turkish city of Akçakale, near the border with Syria, killing five civilians, all women and children. The Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu immediately contacted UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi to denounce the occurrence as an "*act of Syrian aggression*" and "*a flagrant violation of international law*", asking the UNSC to "*take appropriate measures to put an end to such acts of aggression and to ensure that Syria respects the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of Turkey.*" The cynicism and hypocrisy of such remarks from a country that was openly involved in the armed struggle within Syria, knew no bounds. The truth of the matter is that nobody knew for sure who had launched the mortar attack against the city of Akçakale. No investigation took place. And the Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gennady Gatilov, warned that the Syrian and Turkish authorities should exercise the "*highest possible restraint*," since it was possible that "*radical members*" of the Syrian opposition could be "*deliberately provoking*" conflicts in the border region for their "*own benefit*."

⁶¹ AFAD Press Release: As of today, Republic of Turkey has 93,576 Syrian Citizens. . . , October 1, 2012, Republic of Turkey, Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency. "Number of Syrian Refugees in Turk Camps Exceeds 100,000—Ankara says numbers of Syrian refugees in Turkey who fled the killings in the war-torn Arab country exceeds 100,000", *Al-Ahram Online* (Cairo), Reuters, October 15, 2012.

⁶² "Number of Syrians displaced by conflict continues to rise, UN refugee agency reports", UNHCR—UN Refugee Agency, July 31, 2012.

This was exactly what was happening, so much so that even the commander of the United States Army in Europe and the seventh Army, Lieutenant-General Mark Hertling, subsequently declared to a Turkish private TV network that it wasn't clear who had launched the projectiles against the city of Akçakale, acknowledging that it was possible that they were fired by the rebels in order to provoke a NATO reaction. "*We are not sure if these shells are from the Syrian army, from rebels who want to get Turkey involved in the issue or from the PKK*", Lieutenant-General Mark Hertling stated, adding that neither NATO nor the United States wanted to become involved in the increasingly complex situation in Syria.⁶³

With the support of Turkey, the militia rebels virtually controlled northern Syria, parts of Idlib and Aleppo, with the exception of the region inhabited by the approximately 1.2–1.5 million Kurds living in Syria,⁶⁴ the equivalent of 8–10% of the population, who opted for neutrality.⁶⁵ Assad knew full well that Erdogan was looking for a reason to intervene militarily in Syria, which he was already doing covertly. Facing a war fueled by foreign powers, Bashar al-Assad would not authorize or permit any attack that would give Turkey a pretext to invade Syria, adding his forces to the rebels and terrorists. He couldn't afford a full-scale conflict with Turkey and the inevitable involvement of NATO, of which it was a member.

Nevertheless, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan requested, and the Turkish Parliament granted him the powers to conduct military operations across the border in territories of other countries, and Turkey retaliated.⁶⁶ The mortar strikes against the Turkish territory continued for a few more days, while terrorist attacks shook Aleppo and other cities, carried out by Jabhet al-Nursa, affiliated to al-Qa'ida. The mortar fire that hit Akçakale and other cities on the border were apparently the work of false-flaggers—rebels or Turkish agents dressed as Syrian soldiers—in order to provide Erdogan with the excuse he needed to retaliate against Syrian military facilities or even to declare war. And since the provocation didn't have the intended effect, the attacks soon ceased after a few days. But Turkey bombed Syria 90 times in the first 2 weeks of October 2012.

Erdogan was eager to go to war and project his influence, but he couldn't gather the necessary support to do it, neither internally nor externally. Large protests took place in Ankara and Istanbul against the war and against the militarization of the conflict with Syria. He was facing increasing problems with the population.⁶⁷ According to a survey conducted in Turkey, only 18% of the Turkish population supported the policies of Erdogan and his Islamic Party—Justice and Development

⁶³"Origin of Syrian shells into Turkey unclear, US general says", *Hurriyet Daily News*, October 27, 2012.

⁶⁴Strohmeier and Yalçın-Heckmann, 2000, p. 163.

⁶⁵Andrei Netto, "Revolução na Síria afunda no impasse militar de Aleppo", *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 21/10/2012.

⁶⁶"Syria and Turkey on the brink of war. This week's conflict in Syria has put that country on the brink of a full-scale military confrontation with Turkey", *Voice of Russia*, October 6, 2012.

⁶⁷Andrei Netto, "Turquia se torna peça-chave para insurgentes sírios", *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 21/10/2012.

(AKP)—and the majority was against any kind of intervention in Syria.⁶⁸ Other surveys conducted during the resurgence of tensions between Damascus and Ankara confirmed that the majority of the Turkish people was opposed to any kind of intervention in war-torn Syria.⁶⁹ “*Nobody here supports what Erdogan is doing in Syria,*” a Turkish businessman who preferred to remain anonymous told the Brazilian journalist Andrei Netto of the *Estado de S. Paulo*. And he added: “*To us, it is clear that Erdogan is doing the United States’ bidding, since in the revolutions in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt he acted very differently.*”

According to the journalist Mehmet Ali Birand, UN correspondent for the Turkish daily *Hurriyet Daily News*, Turkey was perceived throughout the world as “*a puppet*” of the United States, operating according to the orders it received from Washington.⁷⁰ And Washington was openly trying to calm Ankara, fearing that Erdogan would lead Turkey into a war because of an accident. And the reason was obvious: the US had no intentions of intervening in Syria and being dragged into another war. The American people had grown weary of international intervention, of seeing its young soldiers returning in body bags, and most of them said: “*It is not our war; why are we sending our children?*”⁷¹

All along the border with Syria, however, Prime Minister Erdogan stationed armored vehicles of the Turkish army and more than 200 cannons pointing toward the south, according to the journalist Andrei Netto.⁷² More than 87 bombing raids were carried out against Syria on the pretext of reprisals, killing more than 12 soldiers and destroying several armored vehicles. Erdogan, however, couldn’t count on the full support of his Armed Forces—Army, Navy and Air Force, which had been demoralized and broken after the arrest of around 326 officers, including high ranking members, who were convicted to 20 years in prison on charges of conspiracy to overthrow the Islamic government.

Erdogan was also facing the guerrilla of the Kurds (8 million, i.e., 20% of the population of Turkey), especially in Afrin and Koban, led by the PKK (Partiye Karkeren Kurdistan).⁷³ A conflict that could well intensify if they were joined by the Kurds in Syria, who were already virtually autonomous, and Iraq, and if it extended to the east of the Caucasus—Armenia and Georgia and the Autonomous Province of Najichevan, in Azerbaijan. Over 30 million Kurds were living in this volatile region, where a war of liberation (*milli mükadele*) could potentially be ignited for the creation of their own country, Kurdistan. This would be a national

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹“Despite tensions, Turks against Syria intervention”, *Hurriyet Daily News*, October 23, 2012.

⁷⁰Mehmet Ali Birand, “US’ Damascus message: Military intervention out of question”, *Hurriyet Daily News*, October 23, 2012.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid. “Diyar: Turkish serious plan to attract the Syrian army to the border and unload the inside”, *Resistant Win*, 7/10/2012.

⁷³Kurdistan Workers’ Party.

State that could count on the oil reserves of Kirkuk, in Iraq, as its economic base. A geopolitical and strategic factor of great significance.⁷⁴

At the international level, Iran announced that the invasion of Syria would be seen as *casus belli*, which would leave Turkey in the position of having to fight along two long border fronts. The UNSC didn't take any initiative, aside from issuing a text strongly condemning the attacks. The United States government merely intensified the intelligence and military aid activities with Turkey, behind the scenes, in the event the confrontation with Syria would escalate to a regional war. The Prime Minister of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki, said on a visit to Moscow that NATO should not use Turkey as a pretext to intervene in Syria.⁷⁵ He showed what side he was on. And General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the NATO commander himself, declared in an interview to the daily *The Guardian* that the alliance would not support a Libya-style military intervention in Syria, which was “a very, very, complex society” and a “foreign military intervention could have broader impacts.”⁷⁶

But soon after the mortar attacks against cities in Turkey, for which nobody could be blamed with certainty, and after the reprisals, which always sought to help the mercenaries, President Erdogan ordered F-16 fighters from the Turkish Air Force to force an Airbus A320 from the Syrian Arab Airlines with 35 passengers on route from Moscow to Damascus, to land in Esenboga Airport in Ankara on October 10, 2012. The allegation was that it was transporting military equipment to Syria.⁷⁷ The airplane didn't carry any weapons, nothing that would violate international law, but rather electronic equipment for a radar station, which wasn't banned by any convention. Prime Minister Erdogan had been informed by the CIA about the cargo of this Airbus A320, and its interception took place at the request of the United States.⁷⁸

The Russian news agency Cihan News reported that the plane was carrying 12 cases with technical equipment for the Syrian air defense bases. The United States and Turkey wanted to know the details of this Russian defense system, which had enabled the detection and shooting down of a Turkish F-4 jet that invaded Syrian airspace in June 2012 to estimate the potential losses if NATO operations against the Assad regime would become necessary, as well as against Iran, whose defenses were also based on the Russian system.⁷⁹ Russia and Turkey, however,

⁷⁴Strohmeier and Yalçın-Heckmann, 2000, pp. 24–25, 138–139.

⁷⁵“Iraqi PM: Turkey not threatened by Syria, don't overblow war or drag in NATO”, *Russia Today*, October 10, 2012.

⁷⁶Martin Chulov, “UN unanimously condemns Syrian shelling of Turkish town. All 15 security council members, including Russia, call on Syria to respect ‘sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbours’”, *The Guardian*, October 5, 2012.

⁷⁷Anne Barnard e Sebnem Arsu, “Turkey, Seeking Weapons, Forces Syrian Jet to Land”, *The New York Times*, October 10, 2012.

⁷⁸Emru Uslu, “Does Intercepted Jet Complete Syria Puzzle for NATO?”, *Taraf e Al Monitor*, October 15, 2012.

⁷⁹Ibid.

resolved the question diplomatically. The Turkish authorities recognized the legitimacy of the cargo transported from Moscow to Damascus in a passenger airplane and retracted the initial allegation that it was carrying arms and ammunition.⁸⁰ But the NATO intelligence services gathered their intelligence, the essential secrets of the electronic defense and communication systems in Syria and Iran.

⁸⁰“Turkey ‘Admits’ Russian Air Cargo Legal”, *RIA Novosti*, October 18, 2012.

Chapter 22

Global Power Shift and Military Outsourcing

22.1 War and Terror by Proxy

According to the intelligence sources of the Israeli DEBKAfile, the French DGSE (Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure) and the CIA estimated the number of rebels fighting the government of President Bashar al-Assad to be about 30,000, and not 70,000, as Washington had previously thought. 10% (3000) of these fighters were *jihadists* linked to al-Qa'ida.¹ The total balance of forces, which included Iranian advisors of the elite Al Quds brigades (*Nirū-ye Quds*—the Jerusalem force), favored the Assad regime, which could count on 70,000 soldiers of the *Alawite* militias and the regular Syrian army. This made an opposition victory unlikely, if not virtually impossible. In addition, the rebels were losing crucial internal support due to their predatory acts, destruction of property without the slightest political sense, criminal behavior, arrogance and cruelty, cold blooded execution of prisoners and regular army soldiers, and the continuing violence in this devastating war of attrition, which by November 2012 had already claimed the lives of around 40,000 people, displaced hundreds of thousands of refugees and forced a million people from their homes.²

In effect, it seems that the United States and the western powers had suspended the supply of financial resources to the Free Syrian Army (FSA) for the payment of mercenaries, and pressed the GCC countries to do the same, not only out of fear of funding al-Qa'ida, but also because of the financial crisis, even if they did continue to provide logistical and intelligence support. “*We had to cut the payments a while ago, but now we have started to receive financial aid again, especially from Qatar, Libya and the United Arab Emirates,*” Khaled Khoja, a representative of the Syrian

¹“New intelligence: Syrian rebels are too few to win”, *DEBKAfile Exclusive Report*, Summary of DEBKA Exclusives, October 19, 2012.

²Anne Barnard, “Missteps by Rebels Erode Their Support Among Syrians”, *The New York Times*, November 8, 2012.

National Council (SNC) in Turkey, told the newspaper *Hürriyet Daily News*. He added that, despite the American promises of aiding the opposition, neither the SNC nor the rebels had received “a cent.”³ “The U.S. government said they have paid millions of dollars to the Syrian opposition, however we haven’t received one cent of this money,” said Khaled Khoja.⁴ And Colonel Abdul Salam Humaidi, a deserter of Assad’s army, reported that the rebels, i.e., the mercenaries, were receiving \$150 per month,⁵ a substantial salary for a Syria in those circumstances.

With good reason, President Bashar al-Assad said in an exclusive interview to the TV Russia Today (RT) that a “new style of war”, “proxy terrorism”, was taking place in Syria, and that although his troops were fighting a “hard and complicated” battle, he could end the fighting within a few weeks if other countries stopped sending weapons to the rebels, providing them with all kinds of political support, including money, in an unprecedented scale: “Without foreign rebel fighters and smuggled weapons, ‘we could finish everything in weeks’.”⁶ It was mostly the external support that was sustaining terrorism in Syria.⁷ And Turkey, more than any other country, was providing support to the entry of terrorists and weapons into Syria.

In Assad’s mind, President Erdogan thought he was a caliph and imagined that if the Muslim Brotherhood could take power in the region, especially in Syria, he could guarantee their political future, becoming a new sultan and controlling the entire Middle East. It would be the Ottoman Empire under another guise.⁸ “We are the last stronghold of secularism and stability in the region,” president Bashar al-Assad told Sophie Shevardnadze in the exclusive interview that aired on November 8, 2012, and if the regime in Syria were to fall, “it will have a domino effect that will affect the world from the Atlantic to the Pacific.” He added that he was not a “puppet”, that he was not made by the West nor for the West. “I am Syrian, I was made in Syria, I have to live in Syria and die in Syria”, Assad concluded.⁹

³İpek Yezdani, “US hasn’t given a cent for wages: Syria rebels. Qatar, Libya and the UAE are footing bills for Syrian militants’ wages, but the US has yet to cough up promised cash, senior dissident Khodja says”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, October 24, 2012.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Sophie Shevardnadze, “Assad: Erdogan thinks he’s Caliph, new sultan of the Ottoman (EXCLUSIVE)”, *Russia Today*, November 9, 2012. “Ditador sírio nega que exista uma guerra civil em seu país”, *Folha de S. Paulo*, 9/11/2012.

⁷Neil MacFarquhar, “Syria Says Foreign Support for Rebels Aids Terrorism”, *The New York Times*, November 18, 2012.

⁸Ibid.

⁹“Assad to RT: ‘I’m not Western puppet—I have to live and die in Syria’”, *Russia Today*, November 8, 2012. “President Bashar Al Assad: Exclusive Interview. ‘I’m not a Western puppet—I have to live and die in Syria’”, *Russia Today*—Global Research, November 8, 2012.

22.2 Assassinated Ambassador Was “Key Contact” to Hire *Jihadists*

In a radio broadcast of 77-WABC Radio, the reporter Aaron Klein, head of the *online* news desk of *WorldNetDaily* in Jerusalem, revealed that, according to sources from the Egyptian security services, Ambassador Christopher Stevens, who was killed in the assault on the United States Consulate in Benghazi, played a central role in the recruitment of *jihadists* to fight against the regime of Bashar al-Assad. He served as “key contact” with the Saudis in order to coordinate the recruitment of Islamic *jihadists* in Saudi Arabia, Libya and North Africa and send them to Syria via Turkey.¹⁰

Bruce Riedel, former CIA agent and advisor to President Obama on terrorism in the AF/Pak, told the *Hindustan Times* that there was no doubt that the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, “*al-Qaida’s Libyan franchise*”, was part of the opposition to Gaddafi and that Benghazi was its stronghold. The United States was therefore also virtually supporting al-Qa’ida and other groups fighting the Assad regime in Syria. The newspaper *WND* reported that, during the month of August, at least 500 hardcore *mujahidin* coming from Afghanistan, where they had fought against the United States, as well as fighters of the Salafia Jihadiya from the Gaza Strip, another al-Qa’ida subsidiary, had been killed in battles by the army of President Assad.¹¹

22.3 The Training of Mercenaries by Blackwater and Other *Military Corporations*

Meanwhile, according to information revealed in Iran and most likely provided by its Ministry of Intelligence and National Security (*Vezerat-e Ettela’at va Amniat-e Keshvar*-VEVAK), the West and the oil monarchies of the Gulf had tasked the American military corporation Blackwater with the mission of occupying the city of Aleppo with mercenaries, and of training the rebels to overthrow Assad, just as had occurred before in Libya from Benghazi.¹² The Turkish newspaper *Idinik* also

¹⁰“Slain U.S. ambassador recruited jihadists. Egyptian officials say. Stevens worked with Saudis against Assad”, *Heavensclimb.blogspot.com*, November 8, 2012. “Slain U.S. Ambassador Recruited Jihadists Egyptian officials say Stevens worked with Saudis against Assad”, *WND Exclusive*, 24/9/2012.

¹¹“Benghazi ‘Consulate’ Actually a Recruiting Center for Weapons Shipments, Militia to Syria”, *News Rescue*. Aaron Klein, “Look Who U.S. Is Supporting. Mujahedeen last fought American troops in Afghanistan Now”, *WND Exclusive*, 8/2/2012.

¹²“Iran Commentary Says Blackwater Given ‘Mission’ From West to Overthrow Al-Asad”, Commentary by Mohammad-Hoseyn Ja’fariyan: “Stateless Armies, a Gift From the Brutal West!”, Qods Online, October 28, 2012. Mashhad *Qods Online* in Persian—Website of conservative Mashhad daily published by the Qods Cultural Foundation of the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza

reported that Blackwater agents were operating on the border and entering Syria through the Turkish province of Hatay. The Egyptian writer Muhammad Husayn Haykal estimated that there were 6000 mercenaries operating inside Syria and he suggested that the Israeli Mossad was cooperating in the field of intelligence.¹³ The Blackwater agents established their headquarters in Adana, a city in southern Turkey about 62 miles from the Syrian border, near the United States air base of Incirlik, where the CIA and the DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency) had established their information center since the beginning of the conflict.¹⁴

Speaking at the London School of Economics, Haytham Manna, a veteran member of the opposition who lived in Paris, in turn confirmed that Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey were infiltrating terrorists in Syria and that the *status quo* would deteriorate further if the world powers didn't find a solution to the crisis.¹⁵ “*Never in the modern history of the region have we seen an example of democracy being built after such an escalation of violence*”, concluded Haytham Manna, head of the Syrian National Coordination Body for Democratic Change.¹⁶

Whatever the outcome of the *foreign-sponsored civil war* in Syria, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to establish a democracy in the country after the bloody sectarian war waged by terrorists and mercenaries against the Assad regime. Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq served as good examples and demonstrated the difficulties of *nation building*, the required next step in the *regime change* policy continued by President Obama. Historically, the nation-state has emerged from an organic, social and political process, and not merely from the pure and simple desire of any foreign power. Former President Bill Clinton was right when he said at the start of the war against the Gaddafi regime that the West was “*shooting at an uncertainty*”.¹⁷ Nation and democracy in Libya were no more than a mirage. The situation the country found itself after the overthrow of Gaddafi configured a resounding defeat of the United States. And the outlook in Syria was that the *foreign-sponsored civil war* to change the regime of Bashar al-Assad would be even more disastrous, not only because of the profound and radical domestic divisions, but also because of the geopolitical and strategic implications in al-Sham.

(Astan-e Qods-e Razavi), <http://www.qudsonline.ir>; http://www.biyokulule.com/view_content.php?articleid=5335.

¹³“Blackwater training anti-Assad terrorists in Turkey: Report”, *Press TV*, August 1, 2012.

¹⁴“US security firm trains anti-Assad mercenaries in Turkish camps”, *The Voice of Russia*, August 2, 2012. “Blackwater training anti-Assad terrorists in Turkey: Report”, *Press TV*, August 1, 2012.

¹⁵“Syrian Opposition: Qatar, S. Arabia, Turkey behind Terrorists’ Infiltration into Syria”, *FARS News Agency*, Iranian news network, October 24, 2012.

¹⁶Haytham Manna’s Lecture at LSE: “Violence and Democratic Perspectives in Syria”, on October 22, Dr Haytham Manna, head of the Syrian National Coordination Body for Democratic Change, delivered a lecture as part of the MEC’s evening lecture series. *London School of Economics blog*, 24 October 2012.

¹⁷Mariana Barbosa, “Bill Clinton diz que aliados ‘atiram contra incerteza’ na Líbia”, *Folha de S. Paulo*, 26/3/2011.

The journalist Peter Hain wrote in the newspaper *The Guardian* that the regime change desired by the United States, Great Britain and France, would never work in Syria because it wasn't simply a conflict between the people and the government. The Shia minority and the *Alawites*, together with the Christians and other minorities supporting Assad, amounted to one third of the population and worried that they would be oppressed and crushed by the Sunni majority, the Salafist fanatics, deserters, *foreign fighters* and looters, all of them armed with weapons by the Gulf countries and Turkey, many of which were smuggled from Libya and Afghanistan.¹⁸ In addition to the Western interest of controlling the Mediterranean to ensure oil sources and routes, the war between Sunni and Shia/*Alawite* Muslims was becoming increasingly sectarian, reflecting and representing political and religious contradictions in Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iran, the latter an ally of President Bashar al-Assad, who also counted on the support of Russia and China.¹⁹ This was a *regional proxy war*. "*The current British-American policy is failing on a monumental scale*," Peter Hain concluded.

If the opposition came out victorious, the expectation was that the state, society and millennial culture in Syria would collapse, and that the conflict would engulf the entire region. This war also signaled the beginning of the war to reconquer Iraq. According to Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, the Sunnis never accepted the loss of Baghdad to the Shia, representatives of the Safavid dynasty that dominated the vast Persian Empire from 1501 to 1722, with a small flare-up between 1729 and 1736.²⁰ A Sunni victory in Syria would inevitably lead to another war to retake Iraq, lost to the Shia after the toppling of Saddam Hussein, and this would represent another serious economic and political setback for the United States.

22.4 America's Shrinking Hegemony

Distrust of the United States deepened throughout the Middle East after the fall of Hosni Mubarak, abandoned by President Obama. This distrust reached such levels that the Prime Minister of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki, agreed to study the possibility of a military agreement with Iran, whose defense minister Ahmad Vahidi visited Baghdad on October 3, 2012. If this deal with Iran were to come into effect, it would nullify any strategic understanding of Iraq with the United States.²¹ And Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki advanced even further in his policy to secure the

¹⁸Peter Hain, "Western policy on Syria is failing on a monumental scale", *The Guardian*, October 21, 2012.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, "This Is Not a Revolution", *New York Review of Books*, November 8, 2012.

²¹Nidal Al-Laythi and Karim Abd Zayer, "Potential Iran-Iraq Deal Worries West, Pressures Turkey", *Al-Monitor*, October 4, 2012.

independence and sovereignty of Iraq. Due to violations of its air space, he asked the Iraqi Parliament to cancel the agreements signed by Saddam Hussein, and extended after his fall, which allowed Turkey to pursue the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) up to nine miles into the Kurdish territory of Iraq, in addition to other measures.

A few days after the talks with the Iranian minister of defense, on October 9, Nouri al-Maliki traveled to Moscow, where he and Russian Prime Minister Dimitri Medvedev signed contracts worth US\$4.2 billion for the purchase of assorted weapons, including Pantsir-S1 ground-to-air missiles for the defense against fighter jets. The joint statement by the two heads of state revealed that the deal had been discussed for five months and that talks were continuing for the purchase by Iraq of MiG-29 jets, heavily armored vehicles and other types of military equipment. Prime Minister Maliki also met with President Vladimir Putin to address the cooperation between the two countries in the field of energy, and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry expected that Russia would make direct investments in Iraq of up to US\$10 billion in the following years.²² The rapprochement of Prime Minister Maliki with Iran and Russia suggested that the United States had lost the battle for Iraq, even if it had won the fight against Saddam's regime.

However, since it had signed the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) and the Security Agreement—also known as the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)—, Baghdad would find it hard to rid itself from the guardianship and the pressures emanating from Washington. A month after signing the agreement with Russia, Iraq canceled the contract claiming suspicions about the armaments' terms of acquisition. Everything indicated, however, that it was canceled under pressure from the United States. Igor Korotchenko of the Center for Analysis of World Arms Trade headquartered in Moscow, told the BBC that the cancellation was “*absolutely unprecedented in the history of the Russian arms trade*” and that as soon as the deal was announced, he predicted that the United States would not allow Iraq to purchase such a quantity of weapons from Russia, which would be “*an absolutely unacceptable scenario*” for Washington.²³ The allegation of suspected corruption was but a smoke screen.

But even after the cancellation of the weapons deal between Russia and Iraq under pressure from the United States, the agreement signed in Moscow between Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and Prime Minister Dimitri Medvedev suggested that the scenario in Baghdad had changed. Since 2001, that fateful year when

²²Vitaly Salnik, “Russia to sign \$5-billion defense contract with Iraq”, *Pravda.Ru*, 5/10/2012. “What is behind Iraq's arms deal with Russia? As both countries sign a multi-billion weapons contract, we ask if it is for purely financial or political reasons”, *Al Jazeera*, October 10, 2012. Moign Khawaja, “Iraq-Russia conclude \$4.2 billion weapons deal—report”, *Arabian Gazette*, October 11, 2012. Haifa Zaiter, “Is Iraq's New Alliance with Russia a Game Changer for Region?”, *As-Safir*, October 12, 2012. M. K. Bhadrakumar, “Russia bridges Middle Eastern divides”, *Asia Times*, October 11, 2012.

²³“Iraq cancels \$4.2bn Russian arms deal over ‘corruption’”, *BBC*, November 10, 2012.

George W. Bush stepped into the White House and the tragic terrorist attacks of September 11 took place, the new Pearl Harbor for the *global war on terrorism*, the United States had suffered serious defeats, signaling the deterioration of the *New World Order*, which George Bush the elder had tried to install after the collapse of the Soviet bloc, imposing the *full-fledged dominance* of the American Empire, the gendarme state before which all other countries should kneel. And although the US retained the *status* of globally dominant power, the holder of the largest coercive force in the world with an unparalleled power of destruction and the capacity to intervene immediately and effectively in any region, the truth of the matter was that, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the United States had started losing world hegemony, i.e., the condition of leading nation. The United States could no longer impose its will on other states as before.

Gone were the days of Richard Olney, secretary of state (1895–1897) of President Grover Cleveland (1893–1897), who boasted the sovereignty of the United States over Latin America by proclaiming that on this continent, its *fiat* was law.²⁴ Most countries of the Western Hemisphere were no longer following its foreign policy. They either diverged or opposed it. Even in the four important countries on which it had counted to ensure its corporate and military interests in the Middle East—Iran, Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia—its influence had been reduced to a greater or lesser extent.²⁵ Not even Israel would submit to the guidelines from Washington, as Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu demonstrated by authorizing new settlements in the West Bank, declaring that Israel would not discuss the possibility of withdrawing to the 1967 borders, as President Obama had publicly urged it to do to resolve the conflict in Palestine. Not even UNSC Resolution 242, the foundation of the weak “peace process”, would be respected by Israel. The American crisis of authority was on display. The economist Paul Craig Roberts, former deputy secretary of the treasury during the Reagan administration and columnist at the *Wall Street Journal*, observed: “*how is a country a superpower when it lacks the power to determine its own foreign policy in the Middle East?*” He added: “*Such a country is not a superpower. It is a puppet state.*”²⁶

With the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the fading of communism, the unifying consensus, the hegemonic apparatus, had gone up in smoke. The *global war on terror* wasn't a factor of international cohesion. On the contrary, the damnable concentration camp in Guantanamo, the torture of prisoners at Abu Graib in Iraq, the kidnapping of people and the secret prisons maintained in several countries by the CIA, the assassinations and other illegal and criminal procedures discredited the United States as the defenders of human rights, an example of democracy. This was a country with a much higher incarceration rate of its citizens than Russia, Cuba, Iran or China.²⁷ And for the Islamists, the US continued to be the Great Satan

²⁴Connell-Smith (1966, p. 45–46).

²⁵Brzezinski (2012, p. 100).

²⁶Paul Craig Roberts, “Puppet State America”, Institute for Political Economy, November 19, 2012.

²⁷Scott Shane, “The Opiate of Exceptionalism”, *The New York Times*, October 19, 2012.

(*Shaytân-e Bozorg*), the epithet Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, gave it in 1979.

In August 2008, Vladimir Putin's tough military strike against Georgian forces, which had invaded the separatist region of South Ossetia, served as a serious warning that this region, the Caucasus, the margins of the Black Sea, were part of the Russian sphere, and that it would not allow greater penetration of the United States and NATO. President George W. Bush declared that the invasion of South Ossetia was unacceptable, and Vice President Dick Cheney stated that Russia's actions would not go unanswered. But they did. Russia recognized the independence of the two separatist regions of Georgia—Abkhazia and South Ossetia—and nothing happened.

The financial crisis triggered in 2007 because of the deregulation of financial markets and the rampant power of credit institutions and multinational corporations, deepened in 2008 with the collapse of Lehmann Brothers, the fourth largest American investment bank, plunging the world economy dramatically into a depression of which it hadn't emerged 4 years later. This was yet another blow to the United States. America was no longer a net exporter of capital, nor did it lead the purchase or the establishment of companies in other countries. Its huge trade, fiscal and balance of payment deficits had transformed it into an indebted power that wasn't able to pay off its foreign debt. The central banks of other countries held more than US\$4 trillion in reserves. The United States was mired in debt because of several factors, but especially because it was producing less than it consumed. They depended on everything, including capital and funding. Bill Bonner and Addison Wiggin rightly observed that "*the world's richest, most powerful country depends on the savings of the world's poorest.*"²⁸ As such, another instrument of ideological domination was eroded: neoliberalism and market fundamentalism, which the multilateral financial organizations had tried to consolidate after the disintegration of the Soviet bloc and the defeat of the Stalinist model of socialism.

22.5 The Economic Reforms of Deng Xiaoping and the Emergence of China

At the same time, the emergence of China as a model of private capitalism under the control of the state, similar to the New Economic Policy (NEP)²⁹ Lenin started implementing in the Soviet Union before Stalin liquidated it in 1927/1928, profoundly changed the global geopolitical and strategic equation. Deng Xiaoping had lived in Moscow in the late 1920s, where he studied the works of Marx and Engels at Sun Yat-sen university, and he saw how independent farmers, private entrepreneurs and foreign capital, authorized by the Communist Party, were able to promote

²⁸Bonner and Wiggin (2006, p. 276).

²⁹For the NEP, see Moniz Bandeira (2009, p. 62–83).

the rapid development of the Soviet Union, whose economy had been devastated by the civil war (1917–1921), by radically reducing industrial production in the midst of terrible food shortages and inflation.³⁰ He had already applied the NEP model when he took on the Department of Southwest China after the victory of the revolution in 1949–1952.³¹ And after the death of Mao Zedong (1893–1976), he tried to reintroduce it in China.³² Together with the other leaders of the Communist Party, Deng Xiaoping had come to realize that he could not maintain the same model of socialism implemented in the Soviet Union by Stalin, with the nationalization of the economy as a whole. Marx and Engels never thought of socialism as a path of development or alternative model to capitalism, but as a consequence of the development of the productive forces of capitalism itself. And they taught that it was only through the increase in the supply of goods and services, both in terms of quantity and quality, that it would be possible to reach a level at which the settlement of class differences through socialism would constitute true progress and be consistent, without bringing with it the stagnation or even decline of a society's mode of production.³³

At the end of the 1970s and under the guidance of Deng Xiaoping, who had discreetly and modestly taken de facto power as vice-chairman of the Communist Party and first vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission, China began to promote economic reforms, allowing the Chinese to endeavor into private businesses and opening the country to foreign investments. The State ceased to be the sole owner of the means of production, while it continued to be the main vector of industrialization. Seeking to revitalize the economy from the rural areas, Deng Xiaoping instituted the establishment of production contracts with individual farmers and the development of rural enterprises, in the same way that he granted management autonomy to state enterprises in the urban sector and promoted regional decentralization, investments and the deregulation of prices.

Jiang Zemin and Li Peng, the successors of Deng Xiaoping, continued to drive the institutional reorganization of the government and the Communist Party in China, and they undertook to reform the financial and fiscal system and to establish a corporate framework. These reforms enabled an extraordinary economic

³⁰Vogel (2011, p. 23–25 and 719).

³¹Ibid., p. 23.

³²Ibid., p. 25.

³³“Eine Gesellschaftsformation geht nie unter, bevor alle Produktivkräfte entwickelt sind, für die sie weit genug ist, und neue höhere Produktionsverhältnisse treten nie an die Stelle, bevor die materiellen Existenzbedingungen derselben im Schoß der alten Gesellschaft selbst ausgebrütet worden sind.” Marx, 1981b, p. 8–9. Erst auf einem gewissen, für unsere Zeitverhältnisse sogar sehr hohen Entwicklungsgrad der gesellschaftlichen Produktivkräfte wird es möglich, die Produktion so hoch zu steigern, daß die Abschaffung der Klassenunterschiede ein wirklicher Fortschritt, daß sie von Dauer sein kann, ohne einen Stillstand oder gar Rückgang in der gesellschaftlichen Produktionsweise herbeizuführen”. Engels (1976, p. 556–559). The same article also appears in Marx and Engels (1976, p. 39).

growth,³⁴ with rates rising from 4.5% between 1960 and 1970 to 5.8% between 1970 and 1980, and jumping to 8.5% between 1980 and 1990. Meanwhile, US growth rate declined from 3.8% between 1960 and 1970 to 2.7% between 1970 and 1980, and 2.8% between 1980 and 1990, declining to -0.7% in 1991, the year in which the Soviet Union disintegrated after the dissolution of the socialist bloc.

In 2011, China was the largest creditor of the United States, with reserves of more than US\$3 trillion, of which only US\$1.145 trillion were invested in U.S. *Treasuries*, just over a third of the total volume. Beijing continued to diversify the profile of its investments in other currencies because of the weakness and insecurity of the American economy.³⁵ China was projected to become the largest world economy by 2020, and the then Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, admitting the “*primary stage of socialism for the next 100 years*”, stated that the Communist Party would continue to pursue reforms and innovations to ensure the enduring vigor and vitality of socialism with Chinese characteristics.³⁶ “*Without the sustained and full development of productive forces, it will be impossible to achieve social fairness and justice, an essential requirement of socialism*”, declared Wen Jiabao,³⁷ restating Karl Marx’ doctrine, according to which a social formation never collapses if the productive forces within it aren’t sufficiently developed, and that the new, superior productive relations will never emerge before the material conditions of their existence are incubated in the bowels of society itself.³⁸ To distribute the wealth, it would be necessary to create it.

As the main creditor of the United States, with its huge market, second to none, and an extraordinary productive capacity, China entered the global *great game* from a position of strength. And by launching the new national defense strategy—*Defense Strategic Guidance*—on January 5, 2012, President Barack Obama emphasized the need to strengthen the presence of the United States with more aerial and naval resources in the Asia Pacific to counterbalance China and contain Iran in the Strait of Hormuz.³⁹ Underlying the *AirSea Battle* concept developed by the Obama administration, was the desire to keep the *full-fledged aerial and naval dominance* of the United States in the Mediterranean and Western Pacific.

³⁴In China, the private sector accounted for 39% of GDP, the public sector for 36%, and the remaining 25% being credited to the production of rural areas and the co-operatives.

³⁵Noronha Goyos (2012, p. 54–55).

³⁶Wen Jiabao, “Our Historical Tasks at the Primary Stage of Socialism and Several Issues Concerning China’s Foreign Policy”, Embassy of The People’s Republic of China in Uganda, ug.china-embassy.org/eng/xwtd/t302141.htm.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸“*Eine Gesellschaftsformation geht nie unter, bevor alle Produktivkräfte entwickelt sind, für die sie weit genug ist, und neue höhere Produktionsverhältnisse treten nie an die Stelle, bevor die materiellen Existenzbedingungen derselben im Schoß der alten Gesellschaft selbst ausgebrütet worden sind.*” Marx (1981b, p. 8–9).

³⁹*Defense Strategic Guidance*—Strategic Guidance: Priorities For 21st Century Defense [Jan. 2012]. United States Department of Defense. January 5, 2012.

22.6 New Regional Powers Through Asymmetric Warfare

The hegemony of the United States, however, was not the only thing to be put into question by the global financial, and later economic and social crisis that expanded to the European Union. The hegemonic apparatus of the United States was also weakening, to the extent that its powerful military machinery couldn't succeed in Afghanistan or establish peace in Iraq after 10 years of war, using the most sophisticated and modern electronic weaponry against forces that only had primitive and technically very inferior resources, but which existed in a perfect symbiosis with nature and their social environment. Like in Vietnam, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq contributed to deflate the American myth of invincibility. The use of military power has always had strict economic, political, military and moral limits, especially in the asymmetric warfare against non-conventional forces that couldn't be dismantled because they had no organic mass, like an army. Instead, these forces constituted an assortment of autonomous groups, organizing themselves especially through the Internet and social media, even if their members lived in the most primitive conditions, such as in the caves of the Hindu Kush.

NATO's intervention in Libya did not result in a democracy, but in chaos. The benefits were reaped not by the West, but by Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani from Qatar, whose diminutive and ultra-rich country sent special forces and hired mercenaries, giving an enormous contribution to the toppling of the Gaddafi regime so as to project its influence in the East and in North Africa. As one of the main financial pillars of Islamic terrorism, Kalifa al-Thani has become one of the main promoters of instability throughout the Middle East. His exploits to project Qatar's influence as a regional power were not limited to Libya and Syria. The terrorists of al-Qa'ida au Maghrib Islamique (AQIM) and *Ansar Diene*, which conquered and imposed the *Shari'ah* in the region of Timbuktu in northern Mali, under the command of [Iyad Ag Ghali](#), were certainly receiving resources from Qatar.

One of the great obstacles to establishing a central government in Tripoli after the destruction of Gaddafi's regime, was the fact that power had shattered, splintered into various radical groups of the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists sponsored by Qatar, and others linked to al-Qa'ida au Maghrib (AQIM), in short, the *thouwar* (the revolutionaries, who fought against Gaddafi) of Tripoli, Misrata, Zintan, Benghazi and other cities, who never recognized the National Transitional Council⁴⁰ nor the authority of President Muhammad al-Magariaf, elected on August 10, 2012, or Prime Minister Ali Zaydan.

The journalist Abigail Hauslohner, correspondent of the *Washington Post* in Libya, reported that, operating in the shadows, the armed Islamic extremist *thouwar* continued to terrorize the city of Darna, revealing the extreme confrontation in progress and how deeply the seeds of fundamentalism had germinated in the

⁴⁰Patrick Haimzadeh, "Multiplication des centres de pouvoir. Qui a gagné la guerre en Libye?", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Décembre 2011.

security *vacuum* left by the fall of Gaddafi in September 2011,⁴¹ with the militarization of society, the conflict between the tribal and religious identities and “*l’intervention d’acteurs étrangers*”.⁴²

⁴¹Abigail Hauslohner, “After Benghazi attacks, Islamist extremists akin to al-Qaeda stir fear in eastern Libya”, *The Washington Post*, October 27, 2012.

⁴²Patrick Haimzadeh, “Multiplication des centres de pouvoir. Qui a gagné la guerre en Libye?”, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Décembre 2011.

Chapter 23

Great Israel, Israel and Palestina

23.1 The Manufacturing of a Problem: Israel

When the Allied Supreme Council decided to partition Mesopotamia from the Ottoman Empire¹ and endorsed the Balfour Declaration at the San Remo Conference on April 24, 1920, the Arab population of about 568,000 dwarfed the number of Christians (74,000) and Jews (58,000) living in Palestine.² And Captain Thomas E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), who was so well acquainted with the region and its peoples, predicted an endless conflict in Palestine, since the Arab peasants would not be willing to give up their land to the Jewish settlers.³ A situation would be created in which “*the Jewish influence in European finance might not be sufficient to deter the Arabs from refusing to quit—or worse!*”⁴ When the Jewish State was created in 1948, about two-thirds of the Arabs living in Palestine were peasants.⁵ And most lost their land.

General George Marshal (1880–1959) was also right when he opposed the creation of the State of Israel as Secretary of State for President Harry S. Truman (1945–1953). He advocated the creation of a single state, with general elections, and wrote to the United Nations, on September 17, 1947, that the United States was

¹The idea of the State of Israel as a national home was born with the Ashkenazi Jew Tivadar Herzl, who sought financial support from the Rothschild family. The Dismemberment of Palestine was consummated with the Treaty of Sèvres (1920).

²In 1919, there were around 65,000 Jews in Palestine in a population estimated at 700,000 inhabitants. Renouvin and Durosell (1967, p. 47), Hourani (1991, p. 323).

³The Arabs had occupied Palestine for more than 1200 years, i.e., since the seventh century. The acquisition of land by Jewish immigrants from Europe began in the nineteenth century and after the First World War it continued with funds from the Jewish National Fund, on behalf of the Jewish people, and these lands could never be sold or leased back to the Arabs. But the Zionist project could already be achieved without the military support of Great Britain.

⁴James (1995, p. 275–391).

⁵Arakie (1973, p. 72).

“reluctant to endorse the partition of Palestine.” Ambassador George F. Kennan, author of the *containment* doctrine of the Soviet Union, stated in an *internal memo* that “supporting the extreme objectives of political Zionism” would be “to the detriment of overall U.S. security” in the Middle East.⁶ It would open greater opportunities for the Soviet Union.

In turn, Ambassador Loy Henderson, director of the State Department’s Office of Near Eastern Affairs, argued in a *memo* against the proposed partition of Palestine between Arabs and Jews, showing that such a measure would ignore the principles of self-determination and majority government, and sanction the principle of an ethnocratic racial state, which would discriminate against people outside Palestine in all instances based on religion and race. “The stress on whether persons are Jews or non-Jews is certain to strengthen feelings among both Jews and Gentiles in the United States and elsewhere that Jewish citizens are not the same as other citizens,” Loy Henderson added.⁷ In his opinion, the partition would not only not work, but also lead to unforeseen problems in the future.

Ambassador Loy Henderson foresaw that the United States would lose prestige among the Arabs if it supported the creation of a Jewish State. This was one of the most important issues for the US State Department, since oil constituted the axis of its relations with the Arab countries. A similar position was taken by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in a *memo* entitled “*The Palestine Problem*.” In it, he argued that the partition of Palestine between Arabs and Jews would allow the Soviet Union to replace the United States and Great Britain in the region, putting the access of the two powers to the oil from the Middle East at risk.⁸ “There are thirty million Arabs on one side and about 600,000 Jews on the other”, Secretary of Defense James V. Forrestal (1947–1949) told Clark Clifford (1906–1998), an advisor to the White House who advocated the creation of the Jewish State, asking: “Why don’t you face up to the realities?”⁹ These were the Arab and Jewish populations at the time.

At first, President Harry Truman hesitated. His State Department and Defense Department had expressed themselves clearly against the partition of Palestine, worrying about the frictions that would arise with the Arab countries, all staunchly opposed to Zionism and the plan of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP).¹⁰ But in order to win the Jewish vote for his reelection in 1948, President Truman ordered Ambassador Herschel Johnson, deputy head of the

⁶Apud Mearsheimer and Walt (2007, p. 51).

⁷Donald Neff, “Truman Overrode Strong State Department Warning Against Partitioning of Palestine in 1947”, Information Clearing House, *Daily News Headlines Digest*. “The United States and the Recognition of Israel: A Chronology”, Harry S. Truman Museum and Library, compiled by Raymond H. Geselbracht from Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel by Michael T. Benson.

⁸Truman (1956, p. 149).

⁹Apud Richard Holbrooke, “Washington’s Battle Over Israel’s Birth”, *The Washington Post*, May 7, 2008.

¹⁰Truman (1956, p. 132–137).

American delegation, to announce in the UNSC that the United States supported the Palestine Partition Plan developed by UNSCOP, which he did on the meeting of October 11, 1947.¹¹

Although the United States had an interest in Palestine, where Zionist extremists exploded eight bridges near the border of Transjordan, the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, and committed several other terrorist attacks between 1946 and 1947,¹² it wasn't any strategic consideration in particular that led to Truman's decision to support the partitioning and subsequent creation of the Jewish State. Instead, it was electoral opportunism to capture the Jewish vote for his 1948 re-election bid. The experts of the State Department were almost without exception against the creation of the Jewish State.¹³ And General George Marshall wrote an unusual *top-secret memo* in which he registered what he had declared to President Truman after the meeting: "*I said bluntly that if the President were to follow Mr. Clifford's advice and if in the elections I were to vote, I would vote against the President.*"¹⁴

On November 29, the UN General Assembly, presided by the Brazilian Ambassador Oswaldo Aranha, adopted the *1947 UN Partition*, which divided Palestine, until then under mandate from the United Kingdom, into three entities: a Jewish state, an Arab state and an international zone around Jerusalem.¹⁵ And in the midst of conflicts that had erupted in the region, David Ben-Gurion, president of the National Council, proclaimed the independence of the new state of Israel on May 14, 1948, of which he became prime minister. The ambassador of the Soviet Union in the UN, Yakov A. Malik (1948–1952), was the first to vote for the recognition of the State of Israel. It was a form of compensation for the holocaust promoted by Adolf Hitler's Nazi tyranny (1933–1945), which exterminated six million Jews (as well as gypsies, communists, German socialists and thousands of other people) in the gas chambers and executions of concentration camps in Germany, Poland and other European countries.

¹¹Ibid., p. 154–155.

¹²Ibid., p. 150–153.

¹³Ibid., p. 162.

¹⁴Apud Richard Holbrooke, "Washington's Battle Over Israel's Birth", *The Washington Post*, May 7, 2008.

¹⁵The General Assembly of the UN didn't approve a partition plan, but only accepted the principle proposed by UNSCOP. See: Israel's borders after the 1947 UN partition plan (UN-RESOLUTION No. 181) in: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3d/UN_Partition_Plan_For_Palestine_1947_de.svg. Accessed 04.02.2015. NB: After 1948, practically all of Palestine, the international zone, the west of Syria (Golan) and southern Lebanon were gradually occupied by Israel and settled by Jewish settlers.

23.2 The Arab-Israeli Wars of 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973 and the Conquest of the Palestinian Territories

Naming the Jewish State “Israel” complicated the situation even further, according to the historian Jacob Neusner. For in Judaism, “Israel” means the holy people who accepted the Torah in the Sinai. In addition, “Israel” stands for God’s protagonist in both written and oral Hebrew tradition, from the Hebrew Scriptures and oral Torah to the liturgy of the synagogue.¹⁶ History, however, never paid reparations to the survivors of Auschwitz, Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, Majdanek, Oranienburg, Treblinka, Ravensbrück and the other factories of death. Immediately following the proclamation of independence, on May 15, the armies of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Syria invaded Palestine and attacked the newly-born state of Israel. The so-called War of Independence ended with a victory for Israel, which signed an armistice in 1949 after appropriating 78% of the territory and 100% of the waters of Palestine, incorporating an additional 2500 square miles to the 5600 square miles granted by the 1947 *UN Partition*.

The population of Israel doubled, but this time it weren’t the *Aliyahs*, the Israelite immigrants, returning to the land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*), the old aspiration and vector of Zionism. It increased with the survivors of the holocaust and the large masses of Jewish refugees from the Arab countries. In Israel, they tried to rebuild the Jewish nation with a territorial foundation, formalizing and restoring Hebrew as the national language¹⁷ and working and fighting hard for their livelihood and survival, but they tried to constrain and restrict the attempts of developing an independent Palestinian State. They had always been inspired by the messianic ideology of Greater Israel, the Promised Land, a state belonging only to them. A discriminatory state, not a multinational or multicultural one like Switzerland or Belgium.¹⁸ The Arabs living there never accepted it.

In July 1956, the president of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser (1956–1970), nationalized the Suez Canal, threatening the interests of Great Britain and France, and the supply of oil and trade in the West. Seeing its transit through the Straits of Tiran, linking the Gulf of Aqaba to the Red Sea, blocked by President Nasser, Israel attacked Egyptian military positions, occupied the Gaza strip, the Sinai Peninsula and, subsequently, the Suez Canal, while France and Britain bombed Egypt. A few

¹⁶Neusner (2002, p. 282).

¹⁷The Jews who emigrated to Palestine spoke several languages, but only those from eastern Europe, the Ashkenazim, saw themselves as a nation and spoke *Yiddish*, a language that developed in the Middle Ages based on the German spoken in the region of the Rhine (*Rheinland*), with the influence of Hebrew, Slavic and other languages. Many Cossack Jews who served in the Imperial army in Russia, said they had their origins in Ashkenazi Jewish families from Kiev, Ladyzhin (a village on the banks of the Bug river) and Odessa. Brook (2010, p. 177). The Sephardi, Jews from the Iberian Peninsula, spoke and continued to speak Ladino (*djudezmo*), derived from the medieval Spanish, with influences from Hebrew, Turkish and Greek. Just as with *Yiddish*, however, Ladino or Judaeo-Spanish is only written in Hebrew characters.

¹⁸Sand (2010, p. 21–22).

days later, on November 5, hostilities ended under pressure from the United States and the Soviet Union, who forced the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Suez. But Israel has achieved its goal, the freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran, the ancient route of the *exodus* through which Moses (Moshe) (1358–1350 BC) had led the Hebrews out of Egypt to cross the Gulf of Aqaba in the Red Sea. According to tradition, Moses was not Hebrew, but an Egyptian priest (*ägyptischer Priester*),¹⁹ probably of noble origin, a theory accepted by Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud.²⁰ According to Freud, Moses was a follower of the doctrine of the monotheistic pharaoh Ikhnaton (1350 BC), husband of Nefertiti (c. 1370 BC–c. 1330 BC), and after his death, he fled Egypt with the Hebrews.²¹ Indeed, Voltaire had already pointed out that the Pentateuch revealed that Moses and all his people were born in Egypt and, possibly, didn't speak any other language except Egyptian.²²

In 1967, Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Iraq advanced to the borders of Israel and once again the Straits of Tiran were blocked to international traffic. After a few weeks, Israel realized the imminent threat and launched a *preemptive* strike against the Arab armies. In 6 days of combat, it conquered the West Bank; took East Jerusalem from Jordan, the site of the Temple Mount (*Haram al-Sharif*), the third most sacred site in Islam, which the Jews call *Har ha-Bayith*; and occupied the Golan Heights in Syria²³ and the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula in Egypt. As a result, an ethnic cleansing took place and 750,000 Arabs, out of a population of 900,000, fled or were displaced from the areas over which Israel won jurisdiction. This was the Palestinian *exodus*.²⁴ Six months later, the UNSC adopted Resolution 242, confirming the inadmissibility of the territory's acquisition by force, urging Israel to withdraw its forces from the occupied territories and reaffirming the right of people to live in safety within their borders.

¹⁹“Marx an Engels in Manchester, London, 10 Mai 1861 & Marx an Engels in Manchester, London, 30 Juli 1862”, in Marx and Engels (1974, p. 165 and 259).

²⁰Freud (1967, p. 13–17).

²¹Ikhnaton or Amen-hotep IV of the 18th dynasty in Egypt, established a monotheistic religion in Egypt, represented by the god Aton, in order to take away the political power from the priests, especially those of the god Amon in the city of Thebes, and concentrate it in his own hands. (Freud 1967, p. 31–32.) After his death, the cult of Ikhnaton was banned in Egypt. The German Egyptologist Jan Assmann of the University of Heidelberg suggested that the cult of Ikhnaton caused an anti-monotheistic trauma in Egyptian cultural memory, which then led to anti-Hebrew sentiment in ancient Egypt (Assmann 2000, p. 77). The figure of Moses, therefore, was identified with the cult of Ikhnaton early on by the historian Manetho in the third century BC. However, Assmann denies that there is a causal relationship between the cult of Ikhnaton and Judaism (Assmann 2011, p. 47–48).

²²Voltaire (1964, p. 295). See a map of Greater Israel in: Greater Israel—The Promised Land. <https://lupocattivoblog.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/eretz-israel.png>. Accessed 05.02.2015.

²³In 1981, Israel incorporated the Golan Heights to its territory by law. See also: Israel after the Six-Day War (1967). In: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiran_Island#/media/File:Strait_tiran_83.jpg. Accessed 05.02.2015.

²⁴Gordon (2008, p. 5).

On October 6, 1973, when the Jews were celebrating Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), their most sacred religious holiday, Egyptian and Syrian troops attacked Israel to regain the lands occupied in the war of 1967. When the Arab troops advanced, General Moshe Dayan, minister of defense, sounded the alert and placed 24 B-52 bombers in readiness. On board were 13 atomic bombs.²⁵ In effect, it seems that his objective was not to launch them, but to induce the United States to take a more decisive attitude with regard to the Soviet Union and force it to contain Syria and Egypt.²⁶

23.3 Israel's Nuclear Bombs

Israel has already been secretly manufacturing some atomic bombs based on the Isotope Separation technology, the uranium enrichment using the heavy water process.²⁷ It received assistance from the French Atomic Energy Commission in Dimona, located in the Negev desert south of Jerusalem, circumventing the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United States government itself.²⁸

Israel had probably started the construction of the Dimona nuclear power plant well before 1958, but it took the CIA 3 years to discover the site, if it really didn't know about it before. And the final proof was supplied by the physicist and professor Henry Gomberg of the University of Michigan, who was invited to be a consultant of the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC). Through his discussions with Israeli authorities and scientists, he became convinced that Israel was engaged in a vast, classified nuclear project besides its Soreq Nuclear Research Center project, operated by the Israel Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC) with reactors supplied by the United States in the 1950s under the Atoms for Peace program.²⁹ And so the State Department and the White House received the news of the existence of the Negev Nuclear Research Center in Dimona. The fact that this project could go unnoticed was considered a huge failure of the American intelligence community.

According to Carl Ducketts, a senior employee of the CIA, Israel had three atomic bombs in 1968, manufactured with 200 pounds of enriched uranium

²⁵Ben-Menashe (1992, p. 208).

²⁶Hersh (1991, p. 223–231).

²⁷With the support of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and Shimon Peres, then director-general of the Ministry of Defense, the scientist Ernst David Berman, the son of a rabbi who had fled Nazi Germany, developed the program in the mid-1950s of the twentieth century. The first nuclear reactor in Israel was established near the Mediterranean, in Nahal Sorek, and Israel counted on the cooperation of France, which ceded nuclear material and scientists to collaborate in the construction of reactors. Hersh (1991, p. 19–46), Ben-Menashe (1992, p. 199–211).

²⁸Hersh (1991, p. 11, 20–25, 60–61, 68–70).

²⁹“Post-Mortem on SNIE 100–8–60: Implications of the Acquisition by Israel of a Nuclear Weapons Capability”, United States National Archives—Israel and the Bomb, p. 81–85.

smuggled from the United States by the American Jew Zalman Shapiro.³⁰ The Mossad agent Ari Ben-Menashe revealed in his memoirs that Israel had manufactured 13 nuclear bombs between 1968 and 1973, each with a destructive power three times greater than the bombs that wiped out Hiroshima and Nagasaki.³¹ But the government in Tel Aviv would not admit to possessing thermonuclear capabilities out of fear that the Jewish community in the United States and other parts of the world would condemn this effort and reduce their financial support.

After 16 days of war, the UNSC adopted Resolution 338, confirming Resolution 242, and calling on the countries to engage in peace talks. Israel had once again won on the field of battle. After the meeting of the Arab summit in Rabat (Morocco), Israel recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), created in 1964, as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, agreed to withdraw its troops from Syria, with the exception of the Golan Heights, and retained all the territories captured in 1967.

The Arab countries associated to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)³² used the war to compensate for the losses with the 10% devaluation of the dollar promoted by President Richard Nixon (1969–1974),³³ and resorted to oil as an instrument to pressure the West. They suspended supplies to the countries that supported Israel, and the price per barrel jumped from US\$2.90 in September 1973, to US\$11.65 in December of the same year. The world economy was jolted, hitting Western Europe, Japan, and especially the United States, where consumption had increased from 3.2 million barrels a day in 1970 to 6.2 million a day in 1973. Saudi Arabia had increased its share in world exports from 13% in 1970, to 21% in 1972.³⁴

As former president Jimmy Carter noted, Israel, by necessity, maintained one of the most powerful military forces to contain its enemies, but neither of the many wars resolved the underlying causes of the conflict.³⁵ These ultimate causes have always been deep and complex, rooted in religious beliefs and historical myths that went back for centuries with the peoples of the region. It was only in 1977 that a president of an Arab nation first visited Israel, when President Anwar as-Sādāt

³⁰Ibid., p. 241–242.

³¹Ben-Menashe (1992, p. 208).

³²OPEC was created in 1960 as a cartel to coordinate the oil production policies of its members, most of which from the Middle East, such as Iran, Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. African states, such as Libya, Algeria and Nigeria, as well as Venezuela, also participated in OPEC.

³³In 1973, President Richard Nixon, facing the deterioration of the fiscal crisis in the United States, had to devalue the dollar by 10%, breaking both the Smithsonian Agreement and the European Joint Float, and paving the way for the free floating currencies. The dollar, which only the United States could produce, became the international reserve currency. General Charles de Gaulle, President of France (1959–1969), then accused the United States of taking on an “exorbitant privilege”, to the extent that it could continue financing its deficits by issuing more dollars and putting them into circulation. Brandt (1980, p. 305).

³⁴Unger (2004, p. 36).

³⁵Carter (2006, p. 67).

paved the way for Egypt's recognition of Israel and the signing of a peace treaty between the two countries after the Camp David Accords, mediated by President Jimmy Carter (1977–1981). Israel withdrew its troops from Sinai and Egypt opened the Suez Canal to it. Not one other Arab ruler followed President Anwar as-Sādāt's example at the time, an initiative that cost him his life. In 1981, he was assassinated by a Salafist, Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Ahmed Showky Al-Islambouli.

In 1993, the PLO concluded the Oslo Accords with Israel, through which it renounced violence, the Palestinian Authority was established under the presidency of Yasser Arafat, and Jordan, which had given it the West Bank, i.e., the areas of Judea and Samaria (*Yehuda ve-Shomron*) and East Jerusalem, recognized the State of Israel. Antagonisms worsened, however. In 1995, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who had signed the Oslo Accords, was murdered by a Zionist fundamentalist and the Palestinian groups opposed to the Oslo Accords intensified their attacks against Israel. In 2001, Ariel Sharon of the Likud was elected prime minister in Israel and confined Yasser Arafat to Ramallah, where he died in 2004. Ariel Sharon was against the peace process set in motion with the Oslo Accords.

Hamas, a Sunni Palestinian party and an opponent of the PLO, never renounced its goal of destroying Israel. Israel had become a historical and political reality, however, and only a fanatic completely detached from reality could actually think about destroying it. But in the Middle East, where the main monotheistic religions and sects had flourished, faith had always prevailed. And faith begins where reason ends, it lies beyond reason, it is the paradox, the belief in the absurd, as Søren Kierkegaard teaches us.³⁶ Neither the Muslims nor the Jews, fundamentalist in their beliefs, were prepared to renounce their faith.

23.4 The Illegal Occupation of the West Bank

The ultra-orthodox, integrationist Zionists, for who the will of the one true God as manifested in the Torah ruled, according to rabbinical teaching,³⁷ continued to expand settlements in Judea, Samaria, West Bank, and the occupied territories in the war of 1967. Occupying the heart of biblical Greater Israel—Judea and Samaria—where by mid-2012 more than 500,000 Israelis were living illegally³⁸—had been the dream of Golda Meir, one of the founders of the state of Israel and prime minister between 1969 and 1974. She said that Israel's borders were not outlined on maps, but by the space where Jews lived, i.e., all of Palestine or Canaan, the Promised Land, the Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*). This, however,

³⁶Kierkegaard (1993, p. 49, 58–60).

³⁷Neusner (2002, p. 162).

³⁸Jodi Rudoren and Mark Landler, "Housing Move in Israel Seen as Setback for a Two-State Plan", *The New York Times*, November 30, 2012. Dani Dayan, "Israel's Settlers Are Here to Stay", *The New York Times*, July 25, 2012.

created a “*tragic paradox*,” according to the great Jewish writer Arthur Koestler. For the Jewish religion, unlike Christianity, Buddhism or Islam, involved the condition that it belonged to the historical Jewish nationality, the “*chosen people*.”³⁹ The remarkable philosopher Baruch de Spinoza, who was Jewish, understood the contradictions of Judaism: the contradiction of monotheism, the existence of only one universal god, but tied to one people, a “*chosen people*”, the Jewish people.⁴⁰ The question of ethnic origin, while fascinating, was irrelevant, however. Because who founded the state of Israel? Were it the European Jews, the *Ashkenazim* with their blue eyes, pale skin and red hair,⁴¹ descendants of the ancient peoples of the Khanate of Khazar in southern Russia, or the Semites, *mizrahim* and *sephardim* of the Iberian Peninsula, of Palestine, of the—Maghrib, or the eastern people from Yemen or other countries in the Middle East? Whether their roots lay in the steppes between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea or in Babylon and in Egypt didn’t actually matter. It didn’t take away Israel’s right to exist *de jure* and *de facto*, not because of its mythological aura or because the Jews had historically lived there for thousands of years, but because it was created by a decision of the UN and, like it or not, it was already populated and existed as a legal entity of international law.⁴²

On May 22, 2012, Barack Obama gave a speech to the Israeli lobby group American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which has always exercised a lot of influence in the domestic politics of the United States by funding both Democratic and Republican candidates, and which consequently had a powerful influence on US international policy. In his talk, Obama said that a Palestinian State should be recognized according to the borders of 1967, before the Six Day War, warning that the isolation of Israel would grow without a reliable peace process in the Middle East.⁴³

³⁹The Ashkenazim Jews, according to the writer Arthur Koestler and various scholars, were not ethnically of Hebrew origin. They were descended from the *khazars*, a people that adopted Judaism as the official religion probably around 740, during the reign of the *bek* Bulan Sabriel, perhaps due to the influence of his wife Serakh, who was Jewish, and/or his descendant Obadiah, due to contacts with the Jews of Persian origin persecuted by the Byzantine Empire, ancestors of the Mountain Jews, known as *Juhuros*, who lived in the East and North Caucasus, especially in Dagestan, Chechnya and Azerbaijan. According to Arthur Koestler, these Jews were ethnically closer related to the Hungarian, Magyar and Uighur tribes than with the seeds of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Khanate of Khazar occupied a strategic position between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, and was destroyed by the Arabs between the seventh and eighth centuries. This led to a diaspora. A substantial part of the Khazar Jews fled to Poland, and another established itself in the region of the Rhine, Palatinate, Freiburg, Ulm and Heidelberg, in Germany, as well as in France. Brook (2010, pp. xi, 3, 126–127, 200–201), Koestler (1976, p. 13–19, 154–166, 223–226).

⁴⁰Deutscher (1970, p. 30).

⁴¹Brook (2010, p. 3).

⁴²Koestler (1976, p. 223–226).

⁴³Natasha Mozgovaya, “Obama to AIPAC: 1967 borders reflect long-standing U.S. policy. U.S. president clarifies his Mideast vision for Israel, Palestine borders not identical to June 4, 1967 lines”, *Haaretz*, May 22, 2011. “Obama AIPAC address: 1967 borders reflect long-standing policy”, *The Washington Post*, May 22, 2011.

A return to the 1967 borders was objectively and practically unfeasible. Israel wouldn't even accept the return of the expelled Palestinians, since the regions occupied in the wars of 1947, 1967 and 1973 already had towns with luxurious neighborhoods, hospitals and universities. The Israelis wouldn't give up these areas. And an agreement through a *swap*, an exchange of lands, as suggested by President Obama, also didn't seem feasible. Additionally, the return of the Palestinians would mean the end of the ethnocratic, nationalist state with its religious and mystical *ethos*. In 2012, Israel had an estimated population of 7.6 million citizens, 5.7 million of which were Jews and almost 2 million Palestinians. It was surrounded by another 1.3 million Palestinians, 33% of which living with UN aid in refugee camps in the Gaza Strip (under the command of Hamas), and almost two million or more in the West Bank, administered by the Palestinian Authority, but also populated by more than 350,000 Israeli settlers, who controlled a vast area.

Former President Jimmy Carter and the social democrat Gro Harlem Brundtland, former prime minister of Norway (1990–1996), visited the Augusta Victoria Hospital next to the Mount of Olives on October 2012, where they had a view “*over vast Israeli settlements spreading across the West Bank, as well as the wire fences, high walls and roads that increasingly separate the Jewish and Arab populations.*” The scattered settlements in East Jerusalem (East-1) followed a line to integrate with Ma’ale Adummim, another Israeli settlement in the West Bank beyond the Green Line, violating international law and isolating the Arabs with tall walls, wired fences and roads.^{44,45}

The number of settlements “*have doubled since the Oslo peace accords of 1993,*” Jimmy Carter and Gro Harlem Brundtland wrote in an article published in the *New York Times*, adding that thousands of houses were already planned or under construction.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, approximately 500,000 Palestinians lived in Lebanon and around 8 million spread across other countries, living as stateless people in the Middle East and in other regions, a significant portion of them in refugee camps, including in Gaza.

Israel feared that if it allowed the Palestinians to return and be part of its society, they would elect the government and end the Jewish state, since they would constitute the majority of the population. In one way or another, the demographic explosion could threaten the existence of Israel as a predominantly ethnocratic state

⁴⁴Gro Harlem Brundtland and Jimmy Carter, “Two-State Solution on the Line”, *The New York Times*, November 25, 2012. See also: Israeli E1 settlement plan in West Jordan. In: *New York Times*, 30.11.2012 <http://www.nytimes.com/imagepages/2012/12/01/world/middleeast/01israel-map.html?ref=middleeast>. Accessed 06.02.2015

⁴⁵Jodi Rudoren and Mark Landler, “Housing Move in Israel Seen as Setback for a Two-State Plan”, *The New York Times*, November 30, 2012.

⁴⁶Gro Harlem Brundtland and Jimmy Carter, “Two-State Solution on the Line”, *The New York Times*, November 25, 2012. See also: Areas temporarily occupied by Israel. In: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/42/Cia-is-map2.png>. Accessed 14.04.2015.

according to the Zionist aspirations. In any case, within the whole of Palestine (including Israel), the number of Arabs was approximately 5.5 million, almost equal to the number of Jews in Israel. And the fact that the government of Binyamin Netanyahu continued to authorize the construction of settlements in the West Bank (another 700 were green lighted in February 2012), disrespecting the two-state solution and making it unfeasible, also implied the possibility of a violent explosion in the circumstances of a war against Iran. In a not too distant future, Predicted Isaac Deutscher, the easy victory in the Six Day War could actually turn into a real disaster for Israel, an earthly creation and not a holy biblical place, a nation-state chosen by God.

23.5 The Rise of Hamas in Gaza and Israel's Reaction

The sectarian divisions between Hamas and the PLO, which grew larger after the death (murder?) of Yasser Arafat, worsened and complicated the crisis in Palestine, started with its partition to create a national home for the Jews (*Eretz Israel*),⁴⁷ according to the Balfour Declaration,⁴⁸ issued by Great Britain and endorsed by President Woodrow Wilson (1913–1921), whose Presbyterian faith led him to support Zionism.⁴⁹

In 2011, after the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria, backed militarily and financially by the Sunni-Salafi Gulf Monarchies and the West, the political equilibrium in the Middle East tipped in favor of Hamas. It was aided, in this respect, by the advance of Jewish settlers in the West Bank under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, chaired by Maḥmūd “Abbās, known as Abu Mazen, and whose admission to the UN, even if only as an observer, Israel never admitted, threatening even to destroy it.

In October 2012, Emir Shaikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani visited the Gaza Strip ruled by Hamas. He was received by Prime Minister Ismail Haniya and offered US \$450 million for the reconstruction of the civil infrastructure that the Israeli armed forces wiped out during Operation Cast Lead, the invasion it carried out between December 2008 and January 2009. And shortly after his reception by the people, tensions in the Gaza Strip flared up again, showing how problematic the restoration of normality was.

The bombings restarted and escalated with intensive *raids*, killing militants from Hamas and the *Islamic Jihad*, while Palestinians launched Qassam rockets against

⁴⁷For more details, see Moniz Bandeira (2006, p. 77–81).

⁴⁸The Balfour Declaration was issued on November 2, 1917, by the Foreign Minister of Great Britain, Arthur James Balfour, to Baron Rothschild, the leader of the British Jewish Community, to be transmitted to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland.

⁴⁹In 1916, the General Presbyterian Assembly, the faith President Woodrow Wilson professed, adopted a resolution in favor of the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine. This resolution was endorsed by the American Federation of Labor.

towns like Sderot in Israel from Gaza. The truth of the matter, however, was that Khalifa al-Thani's visit further undermined the Palestinian Authority under the presidency of Maḥmūd 'Abbās. In effect, it seemed like the Arab States who had supported the PLO (*Al-Fatah*) were now supporting Hamas, the acronym for *Ḥarakat al-muqāwama al-islāmiyya* (Islamic Resistance Movement), as a result of an understanding between the president of Egypt, Muhammad Mursi, and the emir of Qatar.⁵⁰ President Erdogan from Turkey also announced a visit to the Gaza Strip, ruled by Hamas, which didn't recognize Israel and included the objective to destroy it in its program. An even more difficult situation had been created for Tel Aviv.

A short time later, in mid-November, the Israeli Defense Forces assassinated (*targeted killing*) Ahmad Said Khalil al-Jaabari, the operational commander of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, and who, according to the newspaper *Haaretz*, was a "*subcontractor*" of Tel Aviv, responsible for maintaining the security of Israel in Gaza, even though he was described as a "*terrorist*", responsible for the kidnapping and then the release of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in exchange for the release of 1000 Palestinian detainees.⁵¹ The soldier Shalit was released in October, but by fulfilling the contract, Al-Jaabari lost his life insurance.⁵² Hours before his extrajudicial execution with a missile, however, he received the draft of a permanent cease fire agreement sent by the government of Tel Aviv. It included the cease-fire mechanisms if clashes erupted between Israel and the factions in Gaza.⁵³ The negotiations had been mediated by Gershon Baskin, Co-Chair of the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI), and by the Deputy Foreign Minister of Hamas, Ghazi Hamad.

Some circles within the Israeli government believed, however, that *deterrence* would only be achieved if the political leaders of Hamas were eliminated and if its military infrastructure in Gaza was destroyed. This policy never worked, neither in the short-term nor the long-term. It was ineffective even when Israel employed it to assassinate Hamas' founder and hierocrat Shaykh Ahmed Yassin with a missile.⁵⁴ It didn't dissuade the attacks from Gaza, where the people were effectively living

⁵⁰Danny Rubinstein, "Qatar's Hamas Ties Undermine Fatah's Palestinian Authority Rule", *Al Monitor*, October 29, 2012.

⁵¹Aluf Benn, "Israel killed its subcontractor in Gaza. The political outcome of the operation will become clear on January 22, but the strategic ramifications are more complex: Israel will have to find a new subcontractor to replace Ahmed Jabari as its border guard in the south", *Haaretz*, 14/11/2012.

⁵²Gershon Baskin, "Israel's Shortsighted Assassination", *The New York Times*, November 16, 2012.

⁵³Nir Hasson, "Israeli peace activist: Hamas leader Jabari killed amid talks on long-term truce. Gershon Baskin, who helped mediate between Israel and Hamas in the deal to release Gilad Shalit, says Israel made a mistake that will cost the lives of 'innocent people on both sides', *Haaretz*, 15/11/2012. For a map of Gaza Strip: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gazastreifen#/media/File:Karte_Gazastreifen.png. Accessed 14.04.2015

⁵⁴Gershon Baskin, "Israel's Shortsighted Assassination", *The New York Times*, November 16, 2012.

under siege. The execution of al-Jaabari, which wasn't accidental but planned, didn't have any effect. It only served as a provocation to escalate the conflict. The vicious cycle of killings and civilian massacres continued. According to Aluf Benn, a commentator of the newspaper *Haaretz*, the assassination of al-Jaabari conveyed a simple and clear message: You failed—you're dead. Where he failed exactly, is not known. The minister of Defense Ehud Barak used to say himself: "*In the Middle East there is no second chance for the weak.*"⁵⁵ But Hamas wasn't the usual suspect for firing of Qassam rockets against Israel. The culprits were usually the *Islamic Jihad*, the Popular Resistance Committees or Salafist groups that didn't abide by the truce.⁵⁶ And al-Jaabari, who Tel Aviv classified as an "*unlawful combatant*" following the example of former president George W. Bush, was just driving his car through a Gaza street when he was hit by the missile.

For various reasons, the escalation of the conflict in Gaza was probably convenient for the *ultra-hawkish* Netanyahu-Lieberman duo. It strengthened their parties, Likud-Ysrael Beiteinu, for the January elections to the Knesset, for example, diverting the people's attention from the serious economic and social problems. The same had happened when Ariel Sharon ordered the bombing of the reactor in Iraq in 1981; when Israel invaded Lebanon in 1996, through Operation Grapes of Wrath; and Gaza to carry out Operation Cast Lead on the eve of elections in January 2009.

At the time, the notable historian Eric Hobsbawm, who was Jewish, very rightly pointed out that "*criticism of Israel does not imply anti-Semitism, but the actions of the government of Israel occasion shame among Jews and, more than anything else, they give rise to anti-Semitism today.*"⁵⁷ The Israel in action in Gaza, he added, was not "*not the victim people of history, nor even the 'brave little Israel' of 1948–67 mythology,*" as a David defeating a siege of Goliaths. Israel was rapidly losing goodwill, just as the United States under the George W. Bush administration, and for similar reasons: "*nationalist blindness and the megalomania of military power.*"⁵⁸

With its Operation Cast Lead and invasion of Gaza between December 2008 and February 2009, Israel had razed everything to the ground and returned the region to its conditions of backwardness, depending almost exclusively on international aid. During 2 months, the Israeli army killed more than 1400 Palestinians and destroyed 10,000 small properties and farms, uprooting half a million trees and killing over one million chickens and hens, in addition to sheep, cattle and goats. Approximately 60% of agricultural production in Gaza was disrupted and 75% of the population

⁵⁵Aluf Benn, *Haaretz*, 14/11/2012. Jonathan Freedland, "The battle between Israel and Gaza solves nothing. All the violence in Gaza and Israel will do is sow hatred in the hearts of yet another generation", *The Guardian*, November 15, 2012.

⁵⁶Gershon Baskin, "Israel's Shortsighted Assassination", *The New York Times*, November 16, 2012.

⁵⁷"Responses to the War in Gaza", *London Review on Books*, vol. 31, n. 2, January 29, 2009, p. 5–6.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

now faced the prospect of permanent food insecurity. Without access to drinking water, many inhabitants of Gaza survived on 20 l/day/person. In Israel, the average consumption of water was 300 l/day/person. In 2010, the unemployment rate had risen to 45.2% with the destruction of the productive infrastructure in Gaza.⁵⁹

The military operations against Hamas in the Gaza Strip never actually constituted a war, in the sense of a duel (*erweiterter Zweikampf*) on a grander scale, as defined by Carl von Clausewitz. But they did represent the continuation of politics through acts of extreme violence in order to submit the Palestinians to Israel's will.⁶⁰ Hamas was a simple religious party. The Gaza Strip has never been a sovereign Palestinian State. It was never really autonomous, it has always been controlled from the outside in, by a foreign government, i.e., by the government of Israel, of which it has always depended. Especially after 2005, the Israeli Armed Forces started controlling Gaza's borders, deciding who could enter or leave, its coastline, including the activities of fishermen, and its air space; they destroyed Yasser Arafat International Airport and raised a 7 mile-long wall separating the Gaza Strip from Egypt, with only five crossing points: Erez Crossing, Rafah Crossing, Karni Crossing, Kerem Shalom Crossing and Sufa Crossing.

Rightly so, the President of Egypt, Muhammad Mursi, accused Israel of being "an occupying country, and international laws oblige occupiers with many things that Israel doesn't abide by."⁶¹ He added that the escalation of the situation and the invasion by land were unacceptable, and that Israel would have to face the consequences in the region.⁶² Israel had created an illegal and unjust situation in the Gaza Strip as an occupied territory, and *ex injuria non oritur ius*. In other words, Israel could not rely on any international law that justified its actions as the right of defense. As in previous occasions, Israel violated the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention as the *de facto* occupying power.⁶³

The asymmetry between the military power of Israel and the Palestinian resistance organizations has always been out of proportion; the dimensions were incomparable. The Qassam rockets, which were developed by Nidal Fat'hi Rabah Farahat and Adnan al-Ghoul and Hamas started using at the beginning of the 1980s, were homemade artifacts, manufactured with TNT and urea bombs at the head of lead pipes, without control systems and propelled by a solid mix of sugar

⁵⁹Rami Zurayk and Anne Gough, "Behind the pillars of cloud", *Al-Jazeera*, Qatar, 22/11/2012.

⁶⁰Clausewitz (1998, p. 17–20).

⁶¹David D. Kirkpatrick and Mayy El Sheikh, "An Outgunned Hamas Tries to Tap Islamists' Growing Clout", *The New York Times*, November 18, 2012.

⁶²*Ibid.*

⁶³Title I—General provisions—Art. 4: Persons protected by the Convention are those who, at a given moment and in any manner whatsoever, find themselves, in case of a conflict or occupation, in the hands of a Party to the conflict or Occupying Power of which they are not nationals. Convention IV, Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, August 12, 1949. Adopted on August 12, 1949, by the Diplomatic Conference seeking to develop the international conventions for the protection of war victims, which met in Geneva from April 21 to August 12, 1949. It entered into effect in the international order on October 21, 1950.

and potassium nitrate. Because of these rockets, the Palestinians had to face the reprisals from Israel during Operation Pillar of Cloud (an allusion to the pillar of cloud—ענן עמוד—that God used to guide the people, e.g., Exodus 13:21),⁶⁴ later changed to the codename Pillar of Defense, with its F-16 jets, Apache helicopters and *drones* manufactured in the United States.

In only 2 days—November 14 and 15, 2012—Israel's air defense system—Iron Dome—intercepted approximately 105 of the 274 Qassam rockets launched by Hamas, but Israel spent US\$5.2 million using the Iron Dome missiles, each worth US\$50,000, while each Qassam rocket didn't cost more than a few hundred dollars.⁶⁵ And on November 16, the US House and Senate immediately approved resolutions recognizing Israel's right of defense,⁶⁶ drawn up by the AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) lobby, the only foreign agent that operates in the United States without having to register as a foreign agent.⁶⁷

Operation Pillar of Defense enabled the biggest trial run of the Iron Dome system, whose construction had been funded by the United States through the Anglo-Jewish consortium Raytheon Co.-Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd. In 5 days of war, from November 14 to 19, a total of 737 rockets were fired from Gaza, and the Iron Dome was penetrated by more than two-thirds of them, since it only intercepted 245. The others struck Israel, revealing the vulnerability of its territory.⁶⁸ However, the strikes of the Israeli air force were reported to have eliminated 90% of Hamas' rocket stockpiles, including the missiles with a range of over 70 km (31 miles), the Fajr-5 missiles.⁶⁹

In effect, it seems that the premeditated murder of al-Jaabari was a provocation to which Hamas responded with a barrage of rockets, saying that Israel had opened the “*gates of hell*.”⁷⁰ Israel's goal, among others, was to actually open the gates of

⁶⁴“By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.” *Torah*, Exodus 13:21, Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, editio quinta emendata, p. 108.

⁶⁵Tzvi Ben Gedalyahu, “Iron Dome Foils 90 Percent of Missiles—The Iron Dome system has intercepted 90 percent of missile attacks on urban centers during the latest rocket bombardment from Gaza”, *Arutz Sheva Israel National News Com*, 3/11/2012.

⁶⁶Paul Craig Roberts, “Puppet State America”, Institute for Political Economy, November 19, 2012.

⁶⁷“Senate, House resolutions back Israel's actions in Gaza”, *The Global News Service of the Jewish People*, November 16, 2012.

⁶⁸Tony Capucci, “Israel's U.S.-Financed ‘Iron Dome’ Effective Against Rockets”, *The Washington Post*, November 17, 2012.

⁶⁹Efraim Halevy, “Israel needs a Gaza strategy more than war”, *Financial Times*, November 18, 2012.

⁷⁰Harriet Sherwood, “Hamas says ‘gates of hell opened’ as Israel kills military leader in Gaza. Ahmed al-Jabari's assassination in missile strike marks ‘start of broader operation’ that may involve ground troops, says Israel”, *The Guardian*, November 15, 2012. Phoebe Greenwood, “Israel has ‘opened the gates of hell’: Hamas warning as leader is killed in strike. Dispatch: As Israel and Gaza teeter on the brink of war, with Hamas warning that an air strike that killed Ahmad Jabari, the head of its military wing, has ‘opened the gates of hell’”, *The Telegraph*, November 14, 2012.

hell, but only for the Palestinians, justifying its large operation, not only by air, but also over land if necessary, by stating it had to destroy the deposits of long-range Iranian missiles—Fajr-3 and Fajr-5—in the hands of Hamas. This is why when a short range rocket fired from Gaza reached the south of Israel in the beginning of October, the government in Tel Aviv began to prepare public opinion for an “*inevitable*” intervention, putting 75,000 reservists on standby on November 16. It was the *status quo ante bellum*.

Israel’s 8-day offensive devastated the Gaza strip. It flattened the building of the prime minister of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh, and local and international media centers. It pulverized Gaza’s service infrastructure, which was yet to be fully restored after the 2008–2009 invasion. It killed more than 160 Palestinian civilians, two thirds of which women and children, and injured more than 1230 Palestinians.⁷¹ And it destroyed the stockpiles of Iranian-made Fajr-5 anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles, with a range of more than 43 miles, capable of reaching Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, which were supposedly stored in Gaza. And according to some sources, the reports of the existence of Iranian Farj-3 and Farj-5 missiles were presumably one of the reasons why the Israeli air force bombed the Yarmouk weapons factory south of Khartoum in the Sudan on October 23, which was owned by the Military Industry Corporation, one of the largest war equipment manufacturers in Africa. The Sudan has always been a sanctuary for al-Qa’ida militants and a smuggling and trafficking route. The Israeli authorities believed that the Iranian weapons were being shipped from the port of Bandar Abbas, crossing the Sinai and reaching Gaza through tunnels. By attacking the military installations of Yarmouk and the military Farj-3 and Farj-5 missile arsenals in Gaza, Israel sought to degrade the offensive capabilities of Iran’s allies—Hamas and Hizballah—, prevent their resupply with second generation missiles and test its Iron Dome defense system. It was a trial run of a potential war against the Islamic republic, which Prime Minister Netanyahu never removed from the agenda.

23.6 Elevating the Status of the Palestinian Authority in the UN

Israel’s Interior Minister, Eli Yishai, openly declared that the goal of the operation against Gaza was to “*send it back to the Middle Ages*”, because only then would Israel be calm for 40 years.⁷² Hamas was just one of the pawns in the game against Iran. On November 21, however, Egypt’s president Muhammad Mursi and his

⁷¹Robert Fisk, “What was it all for? The murder of Palestinians and Israelis is just a prelude to the next Gaza war”, *The Independent*, November 23, 2012. “Palestinians: Gaza situation is very fragile and cease-fire violations threaten calm”, *Associated Press/The Washington Post*, November 23, 2012.

⁷²Karin Brilliard and Abigail Hauslohner, “Israel pounds Gaza from air as troops assemble”, *The Independent*, November 18, 2012. “IDF prepares for ground invasion as Gaza offensive enters fourth day”, *Haaretz*, November 17, 2012.

minister of Foreign Affairs, Muhammad Kamel-Amr, managed to get a ceasefire signed in Cairo, with the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, representing Israel (but the role of the United States was ineffective), through which Hamas and Israel would put an end to hostilities and the blockade of Gaza would be eased to facilitate the movement of people, the free movement of residents in border areas and the transit of goods and products and to end all restrictions.⁷³ The United States only promised to send troops to the Sinai to monitor and prevent the smuggling of weapons into Gaza. And the negotiations continued.

Ultimately, Hamas and Israel's militaristic right came out victorious in this vicious cycle, *ad continuum*, of the *lex talionis*, the law of "an eye for an eye."⁷⁴ The Arabs adopted the same doctrine of the Code of Hammurabi (c. 1700 BC) as the Jews (עין תחת עין), endorsed by the Torah (Exodus 21:22–25),⁷⁵ i.e., the Pentateuch, the Jewish part of the Bible, and the Qur'an (Surah 5: 45).⁷⁶ Peace and security were absolutely not the expectation. The truce was extremely fragile and Israel continued to break it, committing illegalities and arresting more than a hundred Palestinians in the West Bank. And although it very well might have momentarily lost parts of its military capability (how much this is the case has not yet been determined), Hamas emerged victorious politically by putting the lifting of the Gaza blockade on the agenda of the ceasefire negotiations, and it acquired a status similar to that of Hizballah in Lebanon. The missiles and rockets eventually ceased to fly. *Quo usque tandem?* The Violence against Gaza, however, allowed Maḥmūd 'Abbās to obtain another victory: approximately 138 countries passed (41 abstained) the elevation of the Palestinian Authority to the status of non-Member observer at the UN. The General Assembly vote was held on November 28, 2012, and it represented a setback for the United States and Israel.⁷⁷ As a retaliation, prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu authorized the construction of 3000 more homes in the illegally occupied territories of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. Dani Seidemann, a lawyer in Jerusalem and peace activist, denounced

⁷³"1. a. Israel should stop all hostilities in the Gaza Strip land, sea and air including incursions and targeting of individuals. b. All Palestinian factions shall stop all hostilities from the Gaza Strip against Israel including rocket attacks and all attacks along the border. c. Opening the crossings and facilitating the movements of people and transfer of goods and refraining from restricting residents' free movements and targeting residents in border areas and procedures of implementation shall be dealt with after 24 hours from the start of the ceasefire." Anup Kaphle, "Terms of Israel-Palestinian cease-fire", *The Washington Post*, November 21, 2012.

⁷⁴The principle of "an eye for an eye", actually restricts vengeance, limiting the punishment to the proportion of the damage.

⁷⁵Exodus, 21.22–25, in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, editio quinta emendata, p. 121.

⁷⁶*Der Koran* (Arabisch-Deutsch), Aus dem Arabischen von Max Henning, Teil 6—Sure 5—Die Reue, 45.

⁷⁷Ethan Bronner e Christine Hauser, "U.N. Assembly, in Blow to U.S., Elevates Status of Palestine", *The New York Times*, November 29, 2012.

that the advance on area E1, with the construction of more than 3000 houses, represented “*the fatal heart attack of the two-state solution*,” adding that prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu was employing “*the doomsday weapon*.”⁷⁸ *Impunitas peccandi illecebra*.

⁷⁸Jodi Rudoren and Mark Landler, “Housing Move in Israel Seen as Setback for a Two-State Plan”, *The New York Times*, November 30, 2012.

Chapter 24

Israel's Vulnerability and Iran's Nuclear Program

24.1 Crisis, the Unraveling of Israel's Social Structure and the Privatization of the *Kibbutzim*

The internal situation in Israel in 2012 wasn't quite comfortable, and since 1980 its economic and social structure, which was essentially based on the *kibbutzim* according to the collectivist ideals of the first settlers, had increasingly unraveled in the midst of the serious financial crisis that hit the country, with inflation reaching 450% in 1984. This crisis got worse after the government deployed a monetary stabilization plan in 1985 following the model of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Under the influence of neoliberalism, which then prevailed, the privatization process and the adoption of non-cooperative standards in Israel after 2004, modified the moral structure of the *kibbutzim*, as advocated by the MAPAI (acronym for *Mifletet Poalei erez yisrael*), a moderate socialist party that was integrated into the Labor Party of the Socialist International after 1968.

Because of the financial crisis, the increasing immigration and the need to expand agricultural production, the *Kibbutzim* were forced to hire labor. This, Isaac Deutscher pointed out, meant they would become capitalist employers, “*abandoning and betraying their basic principles.*”¹ After a century, when the first *kibbutz* in Palestine was established in Deganya Aleph (1910), still under Ottoman Rule, those that still existed in 2012 scarcely resembled the cooperative ideal similar to that of the *phalanstères*, conceived by the French socialist Charles Fourier (1772–1837). Only one fourth of the *kibbutzim* functioned as equalized cooperatives, while the rest had begun paying salaries to its members, according to a study conducted by the Institute for Research on the Kibbutz of the University of Haifa.² “*There have been great changes to the kibbutz way of life during the crisis,*

¹Deutscher (1970, p. 95).

²Eli Ashkenazi, “After 100 years, the kibbutz movement has completely changed. Only a quarter of kibbutzim still function as equalized cooperatives, while the rest have begun paying salaries to

but even those kibbutzim operating privatized salaries, products and certain services still retain the solidarity and mutual assistance that is the DNA of the kibbutz" the secretary of the Kibbutz Movement, Ze'ev Shor, told *Haaretz*.

It was mere sophistry. The *kibbutz*, which projected an image of Israel as a social welfare state inspired on European social-democracy, had virtually disappeared. It no longer provided health care, education, social support and communal solidarity, even within the constraints of ethnic nationalism.³ Of the 256–265 *kibbutzim* (including 16 religious ones) existing in 2012, 188 were organized according to the *new model of kibbutz*, that is, privatized, which included different levels of wages for their members; 65 *kibbutzim* were managed communally; and nine were managed as integrated *kibbutzim*. Most were located in areas of the periphery, to the north and the extreme south (Arava), with a total registered population of 106,000 people, of which more than 20,000 children under 18.⁴

24.2 Russian Immigration and the Changing Cultural Profile and Racism in Israel

In the 1990s, a time when neoliberalism ruled as the triumphant doctrine with the collapse of the socialist bloc, immigration from Eastern Europe also contributed to deepen the economic and social crisis, changing the cultural nature and profile of the Israeli people, with profound internal and external political consequences. During the British Mandate, most immigrants were of Western European origin, with social democratic tendencies. Then came the Jews from Asia and Africa, with another culture. And of the 3,075,229 Jews who emigrated to Israel from 1948 until 2010, approximately 1,209,264 were Russian Israelites or Russians of Jewish origin from the Soviet Union,⁵ of which about 1 million arrived between 1989 and 1991 after the disintegration of the socialist bloc. They now constitute almost one sixth of the Jewish population (about 5.7 million), most of them leaning right on the political spectrum, still holding on firm to Cold War and anticommunist mentality. And the ultra-orthodox, fundamentalist Zionists predominated among the 350,000 to 400,000 settlers who expanded their settlements in biblical Judea and Samaria, i.e., the West Bank, the territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 war. They wanted to take over all of Palestine or Canaan, the Promised Land, the Land of

their members", *Haaretz*, January 7, 2010. Mordecai Naor, "The Kibbutz at 100/But does it have a future?", *Haaretz*, January 23, 2011.

³Tony Karon, "Massive Protests Raise the Question: Should Israel be More European or American?", *Time*, August 10, 2010.

⁴Kibbutzim Site: <http://www.kibbutz.org.il/eng/>. See also: Palestine's land losses 1946–2010:// auphr.org/images/stories/maps/palminimuralfinal.pdf. Accessed 09.02.2015

⁵Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, Jewish Virtual Library, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Immigration/immigration_by_country2.html.

Table 24.1 Distribution of the Israel's population

Population per area, 2009		
	Population (thousands)	% of Israel population pre-1967
Golan Heights	40.8	0.6%
East Jerusalem	444.3	6.6%
Israeli settlements in the West Bank	289.2	4.3%
Total post-1967 areas	774.4	11.5%
North Region	1209.4	18%
Center Region	4425.2	65.9%
South Region	1076.6	16%
Pre-1967 Israel	6711.2	100%
Total Economic Territory	7485.6	111.5

Source: OECD (Study on Geographic Coverage of Israeli Data—Statistic Directorate—OECD—Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, p. 25. <http://www.oecd.org/social/family/48442642.pdf>. Accessed 15.05.2015)

Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*) and were an increasing influence on the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

By 2010, Israel had already occupied 50% of the territory allocated to Palestine by the United Nations partition 1947. Only 22% remained to make a Palestinian State viable. The expansion of the settlements gradually gobbled up the small space left to the Palestinians, further hindering a resolution of the problem through a two-state solution: one Jewish and another Palestinian. The powerful Israeli *lobby* in the United States, which contributed to leading the George W. Bush administration to its disastrous war in Iraq and to encourage the attack on Lebanon in 2006, also influenced Bush to support, indirectly, the settlement of the Occupied Territories in Palestine on the pretext of Israel's security and defense (Table 24.1).⁶

The ideal of the early settlers of building Israel as an egalitarian society had faded. In 2011, Israel had the second highest poverty rate among the OECD Countries (OECD 2011): 1.7 million Jews were living below the poverty line, and 850,300 children went to bed hungry every night. Working class families made up 49% of the total population living below the poverty line (National Insurance Institute data, 2009). The hardest hit groups were the ultra-orthodox Jews (56.9% of all households) and the Arab population (53.5% of all households). The level of unemployment stood at 6.7%, but average wages were relatively low. Approximately 60% of employees earned less than 75% of the average national wages, and 40% received less than half the national average (National Insurance Institute data, 2008).⁷ In 2010, about 100,000 orthodox *Ashkenazim* Jews protested in Jerusalem against the Supreme Court of Israel, which banned the segregation of

⁶Mearsheimer and Walt (2007, p. 333–334).

⁷Israel Central Bureau of Statistics—Jewish Virtual Library, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Immigration/immigration_by_country2.html. “Social and Economic Rights in Israel 2011”, ACRI's Social and Economic Rights Department, May 14, 2011.

the *Sephardi/Sephardim* in girls' schools and in the settlements in the West Bank.⁸ Racism also manifested itself against Ethiopian Jews (Beta Israel), the *Falashas* who lived in *Habesh*/Abyssinia and emigrated to Israel after the Law of Return of 1950.⁹ They always said they considered themselves descendants of Menelik I, the son of king Solomon with Makeda/Bilqis (*Malkat*) Šəbā), the queen of Sheba, belonging to one of the lost tribes, the tribe of Dan.

24.3 Economic Inequality and Protests in Tel Aviv

In 2002, Israel was already occupying second place, below the United States, on the list of western countries with the worst social inequality regarding income, property, capital, education and spending.¹⁰ Since then, the *gap* has only increased. A 2011 OECD study as well as the Adva-2009-10 Annual Social Report revealed that almost 40% of Israelis “*find it difficult or very difficult to live on their current income.*”¹¹ The newspaper *Haaretz* calculated that the 500 richest Israelis possessed US\$75 billion in a country whose GDP was only \$205 billion, while the 24 richest families controlled almost half of the stock market.¹² The fortune of the Wertheimer family, estimated to be between US\$6.5 billion and US\$7.5 billion, increased with US\$1 billion from 2010 to 2011. The fortune of the Sammy Ofer family, estimated between US\$4.8 billion and US\$5.3 billion, grew by US\$1.3 billion since 2010.¹³ And the combined fortunes of the wealthiest households was 25% higher than Israel's budget for 2011.¹⁴ This class, enriched through a predatory capitalism according to the American model, constituted the major support of the coalition government between the Likud and Ysrael Beiteinu, an extreme right party, composed for the most part by Russian immigrants, including its leader, Avigdor Lieberman, whose first job in Israel was nightclub bouncer.

⁸Ferenc Cser, “Racism in Israel: they would not be managed in common with Jews of color”, June 23, 2010.

⁹Gideon Levy, “Ethiopian students affair shows prevalent racism in Israel—When the children of Petah Tikva have all found schools to attend, society will not stop being racist”, *Haaretz*, September 3, 2009. See also: Map of the twelve tribes of Israel in: http://images.google.de/imgres?imgurl=https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c2/12_Tribes_of_Israel_Map.svg&imgrefurl=https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:12_Tribes_of_Israel_Map.svg&h=3300&w=2168&tbnid=_JUlhD_CrNILGM:&vet=1&tbnh=93&tbnw=61&docid=derijJEQ7cXqsM&usg=__kzuR8I2Fg8EPz7g_G-22NhHE0jI=&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi706TFkq3QAhXJCMAKHcGiDQgQ9QEILzAD. Accessed 16.11.2016.

¹⁰Ruth Sinai, “Israel No. 2 in West in social inequality”, *Haaretz*, December 3, 2002.

¹¹Clement Daly, “Arab-Jewish goal?”, *The Eastern Echo*, October 5, 2011.

¹²Nathan Lipson e Rony Gabay, “And the rich grew richer”, *Haaretz*, 7/6/2011.

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴*Ibid.*

The government of Likud and its allies of the extreme right, led by Binyamin Netanyahu, remained in sync for two decades with conservative mentality in the West, embodied by the free market economy, deregulation of the financial system, tax cuts for the wealthy, and based on social Darwinism, in which those who were poor were not fit enough to survive economically.¹⁵ The situation reached such a point that several protests against the government took place after 2011, demanding social justice in face of the decline of living standards, the rising cost of food and housing, and the decay of the health care and education services. These protests were similar to those that occurred in other countries in the Middle East, which the West called the “Arab Spring”.

The massive protests culminated in September 2011 with the march of 430,000 people (the largest in Israeli history) in Tel Aviv. They revealed that the major contradictions in the country were not only ethnic or religious, but also social. More than 60 years after its founding, Israel faced a huge level of inequality, with an economy entirely dependent on the United States, of which it had received US\$3 billion per year since 1985,¹⁶ most of it as military aid, even though it didn’t cover all expenses of the Israel Defense Forces’ (IDF) budget, estimated to be at least US\$13 billion or approximately 7–8% of GDP, one of the highest rates in the world.¹⁷

The costs of the United States with the instability in the Middle East, whose epicenter was the Israel-Palestine conflict, had already reached almost US\$3 trillion by 2002, more than the cost of the war in Vietnam.¹⁸ And they continued to climb. According to the Congressional Research Service, since Israel’s founding in 1948, the United States had given it a total of US\$121 billion in aid; in the 2000s this aid was of the order of US\$3 billion per year, and in 2011 it had reached the value of more than \$8.2 million every day.¹⁹

When he visited Washington in 1981, Prime Minister Menachem Begin sought to expand cooperation with the United States, turning Israel into a *strategic asset*. He asked president Ronald Reagan to supply weapons and ammunition in their military bases in Palestine for emergency situations in the event of war in the Middle East.²⁰ Washington later consented to this arrangement through the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) of the War Reserves Stock Allies-Israel (WRSA-I) program, storing missiles, armored vehicles and artillery ammunition

¹⁵Tony Karon, “Massive Protests Raise the Question: Should Israel be More European or American?”, *Time*, August 10, 2010.

¹⁶Jeremy M. Sharp, U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel, Congressional Research Center, September 16, 2010.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸Thomas R. Stauffer, “The Costs to American Taxpayers of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: \$3 Trillion”, The Council for National Interest, July 31, 2011.

¹⁹Jeremy M. Sharp, U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel. CRS Report for Congress Prepared for Members and Committees of Congress, March 12, 2012, Congressional Research Service 7-5700, www.crs.gov/RL33222.

²⁰David K. Shipler, “U.S.-Israel Strategic Link: Both Sides Take Stock”, *The New York Times*, October 2, 1981.

in Israel, which could be used by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) with the approval of Washington, as occurred in 2006, during the war against Hizballah in Lebanon that killed 1200 people, most of them civilians.

The value of the United States' weapon stockpiles in Israel increased to US\$800 million in 2010. Congress also passed the P.L. 111–266, the Security Cooperation Act of 2010,²¹ raising the value of armaments to US\$1 billion in 2011, and an additional US\$200 million in 2012.²² And it subsequently approved a donation of over US\$205 million to develop the effective short range missile defense system, which in April 2012 alone managed to prevent 93 rockets from hitting Israeli soil, launched from the Gaza Strip by the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam brigades, the armed wing of Hamas.

The lethal war of attrition between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip had its lulls, but it never ceased. Similar to what President Obama did in the United States, the *constantly warmongering* Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu set up a database with the names of Palestinians and leaders of various organizations (among them Khalil al-Jaabari) who should be assassinated through surgical attacks, assessing time and the political advantages, without trial, without judgment, and officially recognizing the use of *extrajudicial executions*,²³ a practice established in Israel by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon since the intifada of Al Aqsa on September 29, 2000, when he made a provocative visit as prime minister to the Temple Mount/Haram al Sharif in Jerusalem. This intifada increased the intensity of the Palestinian resistance to Israel's occupation.

Several intifadas followed and conflicts became constant. The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and Environment (Law) estimated that between September 29, 2000, and January 14, 2001, 799 Palestinians were killed, including 194 children, and 17,000 were injured. On the other hand, the Israeli NGO B'Tselem calculated that 236 were killed, including 36 children, in addition to hundreds of wounded.²⁴ The Israelis, who still remembered their tragedies, from the Catholic Inquisition to the Nazi holocaust, were no doubt unnerved by the threats of the Islamic radicals, "*the characteristic Arab verbal excesses*" of "*wiping Israel off the map*." Such cries were perpetually repeated by Hamas and the Palestinian Jihad, among others, and the warmongers took advantage, evoking biblical myths to instill the "*frantic belligerency, arrogance and fanaticism of which the Israelis gave a taste by invading the Sinai, reaching the Wailing Wall and the walls of Jericho*."²⁵ According to Isaac Deutscher, the Arabs "*don't forgive and will never forget the blow that Israel inflicted on them: the taking of their land,*

²¹Yaakov Katz, "US may give Israel Iraq ammo", *The Jerusalem Post*, 2/11/2010.

²²"US to boost weapons stockpile in Israel: report", AFP, November 11, 2010.

²³Gordon (2008, p. 202).

²⁴Renata Capella and Michael Sfard, *The Assassination Policy of the State of Israel, November 2000–January 2002*, The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI) & The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and Environment (LAW).

²⁵Deutscher (1970, p. 117).

*the fate of millions of refugees and the repeated military defeats and humiliations.”*²⁶

24.4 Iran's Nuclear Program

The Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad wasn't Arab, but Persian, a Shia Muslim and anti-Zionist. When he declared “*Marg bar Esraeel*” (Death to Israel) and denied that the holocaust had occurred, he crossed a line. Although he was anti-Zionist, however, nothing indicated that he really wanted to exterminate the Jews from the face of the earth, but rather to end the ethnocratic Zionist state that promoted the *exodus* of millions of Palestinians. It was empty rhetoric, and it served as a pretext for Israel to arm itself even further and divert attention from the fact that it continued to expand settlements in the occupied territories, especially those obtained in the wars of 1967 and 1973, in breach of UN resolutions.

For quite some time, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has said that Iran does not intend to build nuclear weapons. On August 9, 2005, he issued a *fatwâ* (a legal pronouncement of a religious authority in Islam) prohibiting the production, storage and use of nuclear weapons. This text was read as an official declaration at a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna. And in March 2012, as leader of the Principlists, who won the elections for the Parliament (*Majlis Shora Eslami*), and hierocrat, the Supreme Guardian of their religious laws (*Velayat-e Faqih*), Khomeini reiterated that Iran was not looking for “*nuclear*” weapons and that it would be “*useless and dangerous*” to store them.²⁷

According to the journalist Roger Cohen of *The New York Times*, the modern nuclear program in Iran was the equivalent to the nationalization of the oil industry by Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddeq—an affirmation of Persian pride against the West's tutelage.²⁸ And Tehran was determined not to allow its venture to end in humiliation, like the one it suffered with the toppling of Mosaddeq in a coup orchestrated by the United States and Britain in 1953.²⁹

At the time, the CIA and MI6, the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) in Britain, used General Fazlollah Zahedi to overthrow the Mosaddeq government, which was being supported by the Tudeh (Communist party). The *covert action* codenamed TP-Ajax consisted in promoting the spread of false news stories and attacks against Iranian leaders, perpetrated by CIA agents disguised as communists, followed by “spontaneous” popular protests clamoring for the return of Shah Muhammad Reza

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷M.K. Bhadrakumar, “Obama gets Iran right, finally”, *Asia Times*, March 6, 2012.

²⁸Roger Cohen, “The False Iran Debate”, *The New York Times*, March 22, 2012.

²⁹Ibid.

Pahlavi, who had exiled himself in Rome.³⁰ With US\$ 11,000, the CIA bought the cooperation of one third of parliament members to collude against and kill Mosaddeq, given that they had parliamentary immunity.³¹ They didn't kill him, but he was overthrown and arrested and the militants of Tudeh were executed. Few interventions in the Middle East were as “*ignoble*” as the 1953 coup against Prime Minister Mosaddeq, wrote Christopher de Bellaigue, professor at St. Antony's College in Oxford.³² The Iranians never forgot this event, which resulted in the ferocious dictatorship of Shah Reza Pahlavi for a quarter of a century, until 1979, nor did they forget that the United States provided chemical weapons to Iraq in the war against Iran, from 1980 to 1988.³³

The conflict because of the uranium enrichment program, which Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and other leaders began to instigate, presenting Iran as an existential threat, was never more than *fumum pro fulgore dare*, a ploy to cover up the contradictions of power and dominance in the region. After the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, the Shia had taken power in Iraq, which led to a potential imbalance of forces to the extent that Iraq obviously tended to align itself with Iran. This situation rekindled the regional rivalry, involving the United States and the Western powers, which wouldn't tolerate the intention of Iran and the ayatollahs of the Islamic Revolution to develop uranium enrichment technology, enabling it to produce nuclear weapons. The fear was even greater because such a feat would certainly instigate Saudi Arabia, the Sunni-Wahhabi oil power with ambitions to restore the Caliphate, to follow suit and antagonize Iran, since it was Shia, and therefore a rival oil power. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger left no doubt about this fear when he predicted “*the apocalyptic strain in the Iranian theocracy and the near-certainty that several regional powers will go nuclear if Iran does.*”³⁴

³⁰The coup was initially suggested by the British MI6, and orchestrated by the CIA agent Kermit (Kim) Roosevelt, who also served in Egypt and aided in the military overthrow of King Farouk. He later wrote a book telling the story under the title *Countercoup: Struggle for Control of Iran*, published in 1979 by the New York McGraw-Hill Book Company. In 2000, The New York Times obtained and published a copy of a still classified document, written in March 1954 by Dr. Donald N. Wilber, “*the CIA's chief coup planner*”, revealing the details of the plot. Reza Pahlavi resisted in dismissing Mosaddeq, afraid of losing the throne. The princess Ashraf Pahlavi, the shah's sister, and General H. Norman Schwarzkopf served as intermediaries of the CIA to keep him under pressure and prevent him from backing out. James Risen, “Secrets of History: The CIA in Iran”, *The New York Times*, April 16, 2000.

³¹Bellaigue (2012, p. 228).

³²*Ibid.*, p. 273.

³³U.S. Department of State. Washington, DC 20,520—1983, Nov—1 P5:23. Information Memorandum. To: The Secretary of State; From: PM—Jonathan T. Howe. Subject: Iraq Use of Chemical Weapons; Department of State. 8335709. Nov—21—1983. Action Memorandum. To Lawrence S. Ragleburger; From: PM—Jonathan T. Howe; NEA—Richard W. Murphy. Subject: Iraqi Use of Chemical Weapons. Issue for decision: Whether to instruct USINT Baghdad to raise issue of Iraqi CW use and urge cessation. National Security Archive, <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/>.

³⁴Henry A. Kissinger, “Iran must be President Obama's immediate priority”, *The Washington Post*, November 17, 2012.

Despite the fact that he went as far as to deny the Nazi Holocaust, it was never credible that the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad wanted in fact to exterminate the Jewish people. In his mind, ending Israel meant extinguishing the Zionist state that parted Palestine and marginalized millions of Muslims. It was pure rhetoric. There was an ancient Jewish community in Iran in 2012. It has existed since the time of the Diaspora, with 25,000 to 30,000 people, officially recognized as a religious minority, with a place in Parliament, and its representative, elected in 2008, was Dr. Ciamak Moresadeq, director of the Dr. Sapir Hospital and Charity Center. Tehran harbors the tomb of Daniel and many other prophets, in addition to more than a dozen synagogues which never stopped operating. The same is the case for Isfahan, where 1200 Jews lived, many of them with Hebrew schools, Jewish restaurants, nursing homes, a graveyard and a bookstore with 20,000 titles. Ayatollah Khomeini distinguished the Jews from the Zionists and protected them.

The Iranian Jews published the newspaper *Ofogh-e-Bina* and maintained a research center with *Jewish scholars* at the Central Library of Jewish Association without suffering any repression. On February 23, 2009, Roger Cohen published an article in the *New York Times* entitled “What Iran’s Jews Say.” In it, he reported that he, himself a Jew, had never been received so warmly as in Tehran, where there was a Jewish community that worked and worshiped in relative peace.³⁵ That year, 2009, he saw a synagogue in Palestine Square in front of the al-Aqsa Mosque in Isfahan, another big city. Over the synagogue’s entrance was a banner reading: “*Congratulations on the 30th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution from the Jewish community of Esfahan.*” And Morris Motamed, who was a Jewish member of the *Majlis* (parliament), told him that he did in fact feel a “*profound tolerance toward the Jews*” in Iran.³⁶

The journalist [Samy Adghirni](#) of the Brazilian newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* recounted that 1 day he was in a taxi to the center of Tehran, when he saw, “*passing in front of the Abrishami synagogue, a group of young Jews calmly talking, Kippah on the head, in the middle of the street.*”³⁷ And he added that he remembered that Iran had the second largest Jewish community in the Middle East after Israel, and that despite some restrictions, the Iranian Jews practiced their faith without major trouble. “*This reality, like so many others regarding Iran, remains unknown to most Brazilians,*” [Samy Adghirni](#) wrote, stressing that the external image of Iran was “*shaped in large part by the tensions between Tehran and the Western powers. And its external image could not be worse.*”³⁸

Since the State of Israel was a reality, it had every right to exist, to be respected and to defend itself. Iran, on the other hand, had every right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, including as a signatory of the NPT. And it was

³⁵Roger Cohen, “What Iran’s Jews Say”, *The New York Times*, February 23, 2009.

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷Samy Adghirni, “Um brasileiro no Irã—Fotos de um Irã surpreendente”, *Folha de S. Paulo*, 31/10/2012.

³⁸*Ibid.*

unacceptable that the major Western powers applied a double standard, a discriminatory policy that allowed Israel, Pakistan and India to possess nuclear weapons, while preventing Iran, as a sovereign nation, to produce enriched uranium.

The IAEA expressed its concern with both the threat of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and the “*Israeli nuclear capabilities*” in Resolution GC(53)/RES/17, adopted by the 53rd General Conference on September 18, 2009. The agency called on Israel to ratify the NPT and to put all its “*nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards*.”³⁹ Israel had nuclear facilities and it was no secret to the IAEA. In a letter to all Member States of the IAEA, Director-General Yukiya Amano communicated the terms of the resolution entitled “*Israeli nuclear capabilities*.”⁴⁰ But Israel’s Minister of Foreign Relations, Avigdor Lieberman, said that the IAEA resolution was “*clearly incompatible with the basic principles and standards of international law*”; that it was the sovereign right of any State to decide whether to sign any treaty; and that this was clearly expressed in the Vienna Convention of Laws and Treaties and in Art. III (D) of the IAEA’s statute to perform its activities “*with the due observance of the sovereign rights of States*.”⁴¹ But the pressure put the Zionist state in an uncomfortable position, given that it wanted the international community to take a hard stance to prevent Iran’s nuclear program, while it rejected all requests to monitor its own, secretly developed and maintained nuclear capabilities.⁴² The truth of the matter was that not only Israel, but also the United States and the European powers refused to recognize Iran’s sovereign right to develop its nuclear program, even though it kept declaring it would be developed for peaceful purposes.

The West has always acted hypocritically *vis-à-vis* Iran since 1979, when the Islamic Revolution put an end to the country’s subordination to the United States. Iran’s nuclear program was started by Shah Reza Pahlavi in the mid-1960s, and the first 5 mW reactor was installed in the University of Tehran at the Teheran Nuclear Research Center (TNRC), supplied by the United States, together with auxiliary laboratories and 6.5 kg of the highest-grade uranium. Later, Iran bought ten more reactors to produce electricity and the German Siemens started the construction of four reactors—Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant—⁴³ on the coast, between the villages

³⁹Board of Governors General Conference—GOV/2010/49-GC(54)/14, Date: September 3, 2010—General Distribution—Original: English—For official use only. Item 8(b) of the Board’s provisional agenda (GOV/2010/38). Item 20 of the Conference’s provisional agenda (GC(54)/1) Israeli nuclear capabilities. Report by the Director General—Yukiya Amano.

⁴⁰Text of the Director General’s letter to IAEA Member States. (Dispatched on 7 April 2010). A) Director General—Yukiya Amano.

⁴¹Letter of the Deputy Prime Minister Avigdor Lieberman to the Director General of the IAEA Yukiya Amano, July 26, 2010.

⁴²The Associated Press, “Report: IAEA to discuss Israel’s nuclear activities for first time. Israeli nuclear capabilities are on the provisional agenda for the International Atomic Energy Agency’s”, *Haaretz*, May 8, 2010.

⁴³The Bushehr reactor-1 began operating commercially on January 1, 2012.

of Halileh and Bandargeh.⁴⁴ Although Shah Reza Pahlavi had signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), he was apparently interested in the military application of nuclear energy.

After the Islamic Revolution, however, the supreme leader and hierocrat of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khomeini, referred to the bombs dropped by the United States on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing innocent civilians, as “*diabolical actions*”, opposed to the spirit of Islam, and he issued a *fatwa* canceling the entire project and banning the production of nuclear weapons or any other weapons of mass destruction by Iran.⁴⁵ It was only after Khomeini's death in 1989 that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei resumed the nuclear program, although he always denied that Iran wanted to produce atomic weapons, claiming that Iran wanted to reach an agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Ambassador Seyed Hossein Mousavian, a member of Iran's Foreign Relations Committee and Supreme National Security Council, and a former spokesman of Tehran's team in the negotiations of the nuclear program, released an important work in 2012—*The Iranian Nuclear Crisis: A Memoir*—in which he didactically exposed the ten reasons why Iran did not want to produce nuclear weapons.⁴⁶ As he explained, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad evaluated that the possession of nuclear weapons would only provide a small and short term regional advantage to Iran. In the long term, it would turn into a vulnerability, unleashing an arms race in the Middle East with the participation of Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

In addition, Mr. Mousavian stressed that the technical configurations chosen by Iran for its enrichment plant, demonstrated its clear preference for strengthening its capability of producing *low enriched uranium* (LEU), which would not allow for a quick transition to the production of the weapons-grade uranium required for nuclear bombs.⁴⁷ The November 2011 report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regarding the nuclear activities in Iran didn't refer to any specific weapon.⁴⁸ And the report of the Arms Control Association (ACA) confirmed that Iran was many years removed from producing atomic weapons.⁴⁹

⁴⁴Bergman (2008, p. 316–317).

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 317.

⁴⁶Mousavian (2012).

⁴⁷On this subject, see Leonam of Santos Guimarães, “10 razões para Irã não querer a bomba”, *Época*, 19/12/2012.

⁴⁸“Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran”, Report by the Director General AIEA—Board of Governors—GOV/2011/65—Date: 8 November 2011—Original: English—For official use only—Item 5(c) of the provisional agenda—(GOV/2011/63).

⁴⁹Mark Fitzpatrick, *Iran Nuclear Brief*, Analysis from the “Solving the Iranian Nuclear Puzzle”, The Arms Control Association (ACA)—Briefing Series, October 3, 2011.

24.5 Negotiations with Brazil and Turkey and Obama's Betrayal

President Obama continued to declare that all options were on the table to prevent Iran from acquiring military nuclear capabilities, including the “*military component*.” But in the midst of toughening sanctions and covert sabotage and assassination operations,⁵⁰ a war in the shadows, Obama insisted on the settlement of the impasse through diplomatic means. And during the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington between April 12 and 13, 2010, President Obama addressed the issue of Iran's nuclear program when talking with Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–2011) and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Brazil had always resisted the United States and managed to secretly gain command of the full uranium enrichment cycle since at least 1987, when it was announced by President José Sarney (1985–1990).⁵¹ It had already refused to sign the Additional Protocol to the NPT, which would give greater access to the entire infrastructure of its industry, and it defended Iran's right of having a peaceful nuclear program. President Lula da Silva offered to mediate the negotiations, in conjunction with President Erdogan. And 1 week after the meeting in Washington, on April 20, President Obama, knowing that President Lula da Silva was going to Iran with an entourage of entrepreneurs, on May 15, 2010, wrote him a letter requesting that he encourage President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to negotiate the suspension of the nuclear program.

In the letter to President Lula, dated April 20, 2010, he explained the conditions acceptable to the United States in detail. Another letter was also written to President Erdogan, with the same date, a week after the conversation between the three presidents (Brazil, the United States and Turkey). According to President Obama, the United States “*strongly*” supported the proposal presented to Iran by the then Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Muhammad El Baradei. And from the start, he considered “*the Iranian request a clear and tangible opportunity to start building mutual trust and, therefore, to create the time and space for a constructive diplomatic process.*” Based on the IAEA proposal, Iran

⁵⁰About five Iranian nuclear scientists were murdered since 2007, either by the CIA or the Mossad, which funded Sunni terrorists of the Majahidin-e Khalq Organization (MOC or MeK), opponents of the Shia regime in Iran.

⁵¹Since 1987, Brazil had command of the full uranium enrichment technology cycle, with a higher proportion of the isotope 235 than occurs in natural uranium. It didn't achieve this success without facing the relentless and systematic opposition of the United States for four decades. The Armed Forces didn't agree with the safeguards imposed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). That is why they started the Parallel Nuclear Program in 1979, outside of its control, so that it could develop technologies for the separation of isotopes. And while the unclassified text on the Nuclear Agreement read that the uranium enrichment process would follow the crossed beam method, Brazil imported the ultracentrifugation technology through Brazilian scientists and technicians who were training in the research centers of Jülich and Karlsruhe, as well as at Siemens itself, in Germany. They were not subject to IAEA safeguards.

would have to transfer the 1200 kilos of *low enriched uranium* (LEU) that it had produced to outside the country, specifically to Turkey, which “*would build confidence and reduce regional tensions*” by substantially reducing its *stockpile*, and it would receive nuclear fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR) from Russia. “*This element is of fundamental importance to the United States*”, Obama stressed.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had already rejected the proposal in January, since he wanted to keep the LEU in Iran itself. But after intense, obstinate and extraordinary diplomatic work, the Brazilian Minister of Foreign Relations, Celso Amorim, accompanied by the Turkish Minister of Foreign Relations, Ahmet Davutoglu, took direct control of the negotiations, which lasted for 18 h, after weeks of consultation. And on May 16, they achieved a remarkable success, an agreement in which Iran voluntarily made difficult concessions by accepting that the LEU would be brought to Turkey, as a deposit, while Russia would produce nuclear fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR).⁵²

During the negotiations, the three fundamental issues raised by President Obama were met: (1) Iran accepted the *swap* of 1200 kg of LEU for 120 kg of nuclear fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR); (2) it agreed that the exchange would take place on the territory of a neutral country, in this case Turkey; (3) it agreed to transfer the LEU, even if the nuclear fuel didn't arrive 1 year before the deadline. And Iran agreed to send a letter to the IAEA committing itself to the terms of the *swap*.⁵³ The Declaration of Tehran answered in full all of Obama's requirements laid out in the letter to President Lula of April 20, and it established new provisions for cooperation with Iran, which restated its commitments to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The nuclear fuel swap agreement was a significant diplomatic success resulting from the previously conducted negotiations by Ambassador Celso Amorim, considered the “*world's best foreign minister*” by David Rothkopf, member of the United States Council on Foreign Relations.⁵⁴ As soon as the IAEA was notified in writing,⁵⁵ as per President Obama's request, the agreement would be the “*starting point, the beginning of cooperation and a positive and constructive step (. . .) in the field of peaceful nuclear activities, replacing and avoiding any type of confrontation, refraining from rhetorical measures, actions and statements*” that could adversely affect the rights and obligations of Iran under the NPT. The LEU in Turkey would continue to be owned by Iran and as soon as the Vienna Group (United States, Russia, France and IAEA) gave a positive response, “*other details of the swap*” would be drawn up through a written agreement and the appropriate

⁵²Nota n° 310, Declaração Conjunta de Irã, Turquia e Brasil, 17 de maio de 2010. Itamaraty Archive.

⁵³Celso Amorim, “A Política Externa Brasileira no governo do Presidente Lula (2003–2010): uma visão geral”, *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, vol. 53, no. spe., Brasília, Dec. 2010. Parsi (2012, p. 171–176).

⁵⁴David Rothkopf, “The world's best foreign minister”, *Foreign Policy*, October 7, 2009.

⁵⁵Iran: A Letter to the IAEA—Iranian Ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency. Ali Asghar Soltanieh at IAEA headquarters in Vienna. Stratfor Global Intelligence, May 24, 2010.

arrangements in order to deliver the 120 kilos of fuel needed for the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR).

The *swap* negotiated by Brazil and Turkey would pave the way for more comprehensive talks about Iran's nuclear program, avoid the sanctions, which affected Iran's commercial activities, and consolidate international law regarding the development of peaceful nuclear technology, embodied in the NPT, but not acknowledged by the United States and by the great powers.⁵⁶ An understanding was reached because both sides started from the premise that Iran's nuclear program had a civilian, peaceful purpose, and that the *swap*, based on trust, would dissipate the last reservations of the West. Finally, the LEU would serve as a security deposit, held in *escrow* by Turkey, a NATO member, as President Obama had suggested. The limit of uranium enrichment up to 20% and the amount held by Iran would be negotiated and established later, once trust had been created.⁵⁷

Apparently, the desire of President Obama at the time was not to reach an agreement with Iran with respect to the enrichment of uranium, but to destroy the Islamic republic, which had nationalized oil production and refused to bow to US tutelage since 1979. Since the military option seemed unfeasible, he wanted to overthrow President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the Shia regime through new sanctions, among other measures which could hinder the economic development of Iran, preventing it from representing any threat against Israel and/or Saudi Arabia and exerting greater influence over the government of Iraq, where the United States were withdrawing its forces.

And although he had requested the collaboration of President Lula da Silva in writing, President Obama also couldn't accept that Brazil and Turkey had triumphed diplomatically, resolving an impasse that he had been unable to resolve with successive sanctions and threats with the intent of bending Iran and making it accept his conditions. Perhaps he did not believe the efforts of Brazil and Turkey would be successful, and this failure would serve to harden his attitude to break Iran through new and more sanctions, which his Secretary of State, the bellicose Hillary Clinton, was already orchestrating in the UNSC. And so, when he saw that the diplomatic initiatives from Brazil and Turkey were bearing fruit, President Obama betrayed them. He backpedaled.

Ambassador Celso Amorim wrote in the *New York Times* that the American insistence on sanctions against Iran, effectively ignoring the Declaration of Tehran and not even giving Iran the time to respond to the Vienna group (United States, France and Russia), confirmed the view of many analysts that the traditional centers of power "will not share gladly their privileged status."⁵⁸ In fact, President Obama

⁵⁶Diego Santos Vieira de Jesus, "Building Trust and Flexibility: A Brazilian View of the Fuel Swap with Iran", Center for Strategic and International Studies, *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2011, p. 61–75.

⁵⁷Celso Amorim, "A Política Externa Brasileira no governo do Presidente Lula (2003–2010): uma visão geral", *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, vol. 53, no. spe., Brasília, Dec. 2010.

⁵⁸Celso Amorim, "Let's Hear from the New Kids on the Block", *The New York Times*, June 14, 2010.

didn't even consider the Declaration of Tehran and recklessly authorized Hillary Clinton to present the new set of sanctions for approval by the UNSC. He virtually sabotaged any chance of an understanding, since resolving the impasse through negotiations did not meet the interests of neither the United States nor Israel, whose interests Washington was reflecting. Instead, the goal was to devastate the Islamic Republic of Iran economically, as happened with Iraq, and then to attack it. Ambassador Celso Amorim himself said—and he was right—that sanctions affected mostly common people, who were more vulnerable, instead of rulers. This is what happened in Iraq, where according to an UN official, the sanctions contributed to the extermination of 500,000 children between 1990 and 2000, before the illegitimate and illegal invasion in 2003, which violated the principle of collective security.⁵⁹ And this is what was happening with Iran, whose economy was in a stranglehold, with a shortage of foreign currency, a devaluation of its currency, out-of-control inflation, a stagnation in trade and unemployment.

Since then, however, the new sanctions adopted through resolution 9948 of the UNSC didn't prevent Iran from continuing its nuclear program, although they affected its economy.⁶⁰ According to an IAEA report, its production of 20% enriched uranium jumped from 159 to 255 pounds, but it was converted only for use in the nuclear reactor for medical research, not for nuclear armaments. And 1000 additional centrifuges were installed underground, near the city of Qom, although not all were working.⁶¹ Before the Heads of State and Government of the 120 nations gathered at the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Tehran, in late August 2012, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei declared that acquiring nuclear weapons was a “*great and unforgettable sin*” and that the “*Republic of Iran has never been after nuclear weapons and it will never abandon its right for peaceful use of nuclear energy*”.⁶² “*Iran would never succumb to Western pressure,*” he insisted.

⁵⁹Parsi (2012, p. 175).

⁶⁰Resolution SC/9948—Security Council 6335th Meeting* (AM)—Security Council Imposes Additional Sanctions on Iran, Voting 12 in Favour to 2 Against, with 1 Abstention: Brazil, Turkey, Lebanon Say Tehran Declaration Could Boost Diplomatic Efforts, While Sanctions Represent Failure of Diplomacy, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/sc9948.doc.htm>.

⁶¹Joby Warrick, “U.N.: Iran speeding up uranium enrichment at underground plant”, *The Washington Post*, August 30, 2012.

⁶²*Ibid.*

Chapter 25

Israel on the Eve of Apocalypse?

25.1 Netanyahu's Threat Against Iran

Binyamin Netanyahu's threat of attacking Iran during the election campaign in the United States in 2012, was apparently aimed at pressuring President Barack Obama to grant Israel even more sophisticated and advanced weaponry by pitting him against the extremists of the Republican party. During his administration, President George W. Bush had refused to sell bunker-busting bombs and refueling aircraft to Israel because of fears that Israel might use them to attack Iran's nuclear facilities.¹ President Barack Obama, however, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, answered the calls of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and authorized his Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta, to negotiate the sale of refueling planes and GBU-28 bunker-busters with Israel's Minister of Defense Ehud Barak.²

[Ma'ariv Israeli News Service](#) reported that the supply of such weapons to Israel was conditional on an agreement with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu that he would delay any attack on Iran until 2013.³ Political sources in Israel, however, reported that most cabinet members were in favor of a military strike against Iran, even without US approval, and Prime Minister Netanyahu gave a very clear and resolute speech in the Knesset (Parliament) declaring that he would not hesitate to take any initiative, even without the agreement of President Barack Obama. He cited Prime Minister Menachem Begin (1977–1983) as precedent, who had bombed the Iraqi reactor against Washington's wishes and contrary to the opinion of Yitzhak Hafi, of the Mossad, and Yehoshua Saguy, head of intelligence at the

¹Barak Ravid, "Netanyahu asked Panetta to approve sale of bunker-busting bombs, U.S. official says", *Ha'aretz*, March 7, 2012.

²Ibid.

³Michael Kelley, "US Offers Israel Advanced Weapons In Exchange for Not Attacking Iran", *Business Insider—Military & Defense*, March 8, 2012. AFP, "US 'offered Israel new arms to delay Iran attack'", 8/3/2012.

IDF.⁴ To prepare public opinion for war, he accused Iran of being the “*dominant force*” behind the Gaza attacks, stating that the “*terror groups*” lived under its umbrella and that the Israelis could imagine what would happen if they got their hands on nuclear bombs.

More than half the population of Israel was against an attack on Iran, according to a survey published by the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, in addition to believing that it should not go about such an attack alone if it proved necessary.⁵ But Netanyahu’s government of the Likud, closely allied to the Yisrael Beitenu party led by the Russian Israelite Avigdor Lieberman, was a reflection of the extreme right trend that had come to influence a great part of Israel’s population. Aluf Benn, editor in chief of the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, observed that ever since Prime Minister Netanyahu had returned from his visit to Washington in early March 2012, he had committed himself to warmongering, preparing public opinion for a war against Iran, trying to convince it that the threat to Israel was tangible and existential and should be suppressed in order to avoid a “*second Holocaust*.”⁶ It was hard to believe, however, that Iran would attack Israel with nuclear warheads, even if had produced or possessed them. Such an attack would also massacre the Palestinian population inside and outside Israel, in addition to much of Lebanon’s population, etc. The “*second Holocaust*,” to which Prime Minister Netanyahu schizophrenically referred, would not hit only the Jews, but also Christian and Muslim Arabs (including Shia Muslims), among others.

25.2 Günter Grass and Israel’s Secret Nuclear Arsenal

Unlike Iran, which in one way or another had always been monitored by IAEA inspectors, Israel, with its growing nuclear potential—between 300 and 400 nuclear warheads—never submitted itself to any inspection and never signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). And Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu’s bellicosity, with his terrorist, warmongering rhetoric, meant someone had to say the obvious: that Israel would threaten world peace as a *rogue state* if it attacked Iran. This is exactly what the renowned German writer Günter Grass had

⁴Ben Caspit, “Assessment: Security Cabinet Majority Is Pro Attack”, *Ma’ariv*, March 15, 2012. Dan Margalit, “The Prime Minister’s Verbal Poker Is Beginning to Be Successful”, *Israel Hayom*, March 15, 2012.

⁵“Ha’aretz poll: Most of the public opposes an Israeli strike on Iran—Support for Netanyahu’s Likud party is at all-time high, but Israelis still skeptical regarding attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities without U.S. backing”, *Haaretz*, 8/3/2012.

⁶Aluf Benn, “Netanyahu is preparing Israeli public opinion for a war on Iran”, *Ha’aretz*, 15/3/2012.

the courage to do.⁷ The consequences of such an attack would be disastrous, even for its own population.⁸

In the late 1990s, the US intelligence community calculated that Israel possessed between 75 and 130 nuclear weapons, based on production estimates.⁹ The arsenal included warheads for Jericho-1 and Jericho-2 missiles, in addition to bombs for airplanes and other tactical weapons. According to other estimates at that time, Israel could have around 400 nuclear weapons, but this figure seemed exaggerated and its last inventory included less than 100 artifacts.

As former President Jimmy Carter revealed in an interview to the press, in 2008 Israel had a nuclear arsenal of about 150 warheads.¹⁰ In February 2012, Patrick “Pat” Buchanan, a “paleoconservative” of the Republican party and former political commentator of the American cable network MSNBC, estimated that Israel had about 300 nuclear warheads. He warned that a war in the Middle East would be disastrous for the United States and the global economy.¹¹ Jimmy Carter’s former national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, later said that the problem of Iran advancing its program “*paled in comparison*” to what he called “*an act of utter irresponsibility and potential immorality*,” given the number of civilian casualties that would ensue from an attack on its facilities.¹² Brzezinski had been against the attack on Tehran in 1979, when revolutionary students took the American Embassy staff hostage. As a geopolitical thinker, he was well aware of the predicament that such a measure would cause. He argued that the bombing of the nuclear installations would inflame the entire region, harming US interests from Afghanistan to Syria, and generating a “*widespread, long-lasting hatred*” against the United States among the Iranian people.¹³

Israel’s arsenal could contain between 150–300 nuclear warheads and the Israel Defense Force—Air Force (IDF/AF) had 1000 aircraft, about 350 fighter jets, with 125 advanced F-15 and F-16 squadrons specifically modified to undertake strategic

⁷“Grass’ Gedicht im Wortlaut—Das Gedicht von Günter Grass, ‘Was gesagt werden muß’”, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 4/4/2012. “Im Wortlaut ‘Was gesagt werden muss’ von Günter Grass”, *Der Spiegel*, 4/4/2012.

⁸Ibid.

⁹The American intelligence community estimated, in 1999, that Israel had something between 75 and 150 nuclear warheads, according to the newsletter of the Federation of American Scientists (FAS). Scarborough, 2004, p. 194–223. See also: Estimated nuclear armament trends in Israel in: FAS. www.fas.org/nuke/guide/israel/nuke. Accessed 13.02.2015

¹⁰“Israel: Carter Offers Details on Nuclear Arsenal”, *Reuters*, *The New York Times*, May 27, 2008. “Israel tem 150 armas nucleares, diz ex-presidente dos EUA”, *BBC Brasil*, May 26, 2008.

¹¹Pat Buchanan, “300 Nukes in Israel Yet Iran a Threat?”. “300 ojivas nucleares israelíes, una amenaza mundial”, *HispanTV*, 29/2/2012. Mark Whittington, “Pat Buchanan Oddly Thinks Israel Is a Bigger Threat than Iran”, *Yahoo!*, February 22, 2012. Jeff Poor, “Buchanan: Who is a bigger threat—Iran or Israel?”, *The Daily Caller*, 22/2/2012.

¹²Barbara Slavin, “US Can Deter and Contain Iran, Brzezinski Says”, *Al Monitor*, November 26, 2012.

¹³Ibid.

long-distance strikes, in addition to a fleet of Heron TP¹⁴ *drones*, i.e. unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) that could reach an altitude of 40,000 feet and fly for at least 20 h until reaching the Persian Gulf. The IDF/AF was arguably larger than the British and German forces,¹⁵ but the possibility of using it to wage war against Iran with the certainty of victory, seemed limited.

Some in Israel believed that the attack on the Osirak reactor (Operation Opera) in Iraq (1981) had been a historic success, a precedent for the use of military force to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. But Pentagon officials believed that an attack on the nuclear facilities in Iran would be a very complex operation. Something else entirely than the “surgical” strikes carried out by Israel on the Osirak reactor in Iraq and the reactor in Syria (Operation Orchard), in the region of Deir ez-Zor, on September 6, 2007, with a total of eight airplanes, including F-15I Strike Eagle and F-16 Fighting Falcon jets and an intelligence aircraft.¹⁶

In order to attack Iran, however, Israel would need at least 100 F-15 bombers equipped with (laser-guided) GBU-28 bunker busters, of which it was reported to only have 30, escorted by F-16 Fighting Falcon jets. These planes would have to fly 1600 km (about 1000 miles) over hostile airspace and would have to be refueled in the air by other planes.¹⁷ According to the former CIA director Michael Hayden, Israel would not be able to carry out air strikes that could seriously affect the Iranian nuclear program. It would have serious problems just to reach the largest uranium enrichment plants in Natanz and Fordo, and the uranium conversion plant in Isfaham. Within the Israeli establishment, however, there were but a few isolated voices questioning the success of a broad assault on Iran, but the consensus was that the operation would be complex and difficult considering the capabilities of the Israeli Air Force.¹⁸ The bombing of the Yarmouk weapons factory south of Khartoum in Sudan, however, revealed that Israel was capable of reaching targets 1000 miles from its territory, such as the Natanz and Fordo plants, near the Iranian cities of Kashan and Qom, respectively.

¹⁴The Heron TP UAV, manufactured by IAI (Israel Aerospace Industries), can fly at an altitude of 43,000 feet, higher than any commercial aircraft. The United States has another model, the MQ-1 Predator, used to kill alleged terrorists in so called “3D”: “dull” operations, i.e., shadow operations.

¹⁵Anshel Pfeffer, “Israel could strike Iran’s nuclear facilities, but it won’t be easy”, *Haaretz*, 20/2/2012.

¹⁶“Report: U.S. officials say Israel would need at least 100”, *Haaretz*, 20/2/2012.

¹⁷Ibid. Michael Kelley, “US Offers Israel Advanced Weapons In Exchange for Not Attacking Iran”, *Business Insider—Military & Defense*, March 8, 2012.

¹⁸Anshel Pfeffer, “Israel could strike Iran’s nuclear facilities, but it won’t be easy”, *Haaretz*, 20/2/2012.

25.3 Comparing Israel and Iran

Possessing nuclear weapons did not make Israel a great power, however, even if it emerged as an important energy partner with the Leviathan gas field of its coast and the immense oil and gas reserves in the Mediterranean, disputed by the United States, the European Union, Russia and China. Its military power did not match its territorial expanse, its population size or its material and human resources.¹⁹ And the scenarios looming in the event of an attack on Iran, with or without the backing of the United States, would be really catastrophic. One need only compare the geographic and demographic data, and the size of its conventional armed forces, to see the disaster that would lead to the end of the State of Israel, with a holocaust caused by its own prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu. A self-holocaust. This was also what Russian President Vladimir Putin predicted.²⁰

Israel's territory stretched for only 14,150 square miles. It was surrounded by Egypt, the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Syria and the West Bank. Iran, on the other hand, had the sixteenth largest landmass in the world, in southwest Asia. Its territory extended for 1,024,140 square miles, bordering eight countries and with more than 1516 miles of coastline between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, linked by the strategic Strait of Hormuz. Its population was 78.8 million people (2012 est.), about ten times larger than that of Israel. The head of the Military Balance Project at the University of Tel Aviv, Colonel Yiftah Shapir, admitted that Israel could launch an attack against Iran and cause a lot of damage and disable its nuclear program, but it would have to bomb the country and it could not do it alone.²¹ He acknowledged that the most Israel could achieve was to delay its nuclear program by "*some months*," or by 5 years, at most.²² Both General (r) Nathan Sharony, head of the Council for Peace and Security, made up of 1000 senior Israeli security officers, and Meir Dagan, former head of the Mossad (2002–2010), also believed an attack on Iran would not be worth it. It would not be favorable to Israel.²³

¹⁹"Power status can be estimated by its territorial expanse and the number of its population, in addition to the material and human resources that a state is able to use in order to predict how victorious it can be in a war with another state, if it were to use its resources to advantage." Deutsch (1966, p. 52). Gramsci (1976, p. 191).

²⁰Stephen Bierman and Ilya Arkhipov, "Putin Says Iran Military Strike to Be 'Truly Catastrophic'", *Bloomberg Businessweek*, February 27, 2012.

²¹"Israel May Lack Capability for Effective Strike on Iran Nuclear Facilities", *Bloomberg*, 11/9/2011.

²²Larry Derfner, "Security expert: Attacking Iran isn't worth it", +972, February 6, 2012.

²³*Ibid.*

25.4 National Security Community in the US and Israel Opposed to an Attack

In 2010, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, backed by his Defense Minister Ehud Barak, went so far as to order generals Gabi Ashkenazi, Chief of General Staff, and Meir Dagan, head of the Mossad, to raise the alert level to F-Plus, the code for the preparation of an immediate attack against Iran. Generals Gabi Ashkenazi and Meir Dagan argued that this was an “*illegal*” measure that had not been approved by the Knesset (Parliament). They refused to carry it out.²⁴ The F-Plus alert level would make war fatally inevitable.

At Hebrew University, General Meir Dagan later called a military attack on Iran “*a stupid idea*,” and at Tel Aviv University he said that it would trigger a regional war, one Israel could not face, providing the Islamic republic the reasons it needed to continue its nuclear program.²⁵ In November 2011, he said at the Club for Industry and Trade in Tel Aviv that Israel should not attack Iran and predicted a *catastrophe* if it went ahead anyway.²⁶ In turn, General (r) David Fridovich, former deputy commander of the Special Operations Command and then Head of Defense and Strategy at the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, told the Israeli daily *Jerusalem Post* that an Israeli attack on Iran would be “*counterproductive*.”²⁷ General James Cartwright of the US Marine Corps was of the same opinion, and he stressed that it would persuade more Iranians to support the nuclear program and convince them that the country should possess such weapons. An attack—he added—could destroy the facilities, but not “*uninvent*” the technology. The intellectual capital would continue to exist.²⁸ Shlomo Gazit, former head of Intelligence and National Security of the Israeli Defense Force, clearly stated that an attack on Iran would have the opposite result, i.e., the “*liquidation of Israel*.”²⁹ “*We will cease to exist after such an attack*,” he stressed.³⁰ This is why General Martin Dempsey, Chief of Staff of the US Armed Forces, told CNN that “*we think that it’s not prudent at this point to decide to attack Iran*.”³¹

²⁴This fact was revealed in the TV *Uvda* (Fact) show of Channel 2 in Israel, on November 5, 2012. Aron Heller, “TV report: Israel security heads nixed Iran attack”, *US News*, November 5, 2012. “Israeli PM’s order to prepare for attack on Iran in 2010 rejected by his security chiefs”, *Daily Mail*, November 5, 2012.

²⁵Ethan Bronner, “A Former Spy Chief Questions the Judgment of Israeli Leaders”, *The New York Times*, June 3, 2011.

²⁶Ronen Bergman and Juliane von Mittelstaedt, “Dagans Bombe”, *Der Spiegel*, 7/11/2011.

²⁷Hilary Leila Krieger, “Strike on Iran could be counterproductive”, *Jerusalem Post*, March 15, 2012.

²⁸Kristina Wong, “Attacking Iran’s nuke sites may only slow progress”, *The Washington Times*, February 27, 2012.

²⁹“An Attack on Iran Will End Israel as We Know It”, *Tikun Olam* תיקון עולם: Make the World a Better Place—Promoting Israeli democracy, exposing secrets of the national security state.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹David Jackson, “Obama to meet Israel’s Netanyahu on March 5”, *USA Today*, February 20, 2012.

“(. . .) *A unilateral Israeli attack on Iran today would be disastrous*”, wrote the journalist Roger Cohen. It would unite Iran in fury; close off the Islamic Republic for a generation; provide a substantial boost to the “*wobbling*” Assad regime in Syria; radicalize the Arab world at a time of delicate transition; set fire to the borders of Lebanon, where Hizballah concentrated its forces; boost Hamas; put the US troops in the region at risk, especially those stationed in Bahrain and Qatar; skyrocket the price of oil; shake the vulnerable global economy; and unleash a possible war across the Middle East.³²

On August 30, 2012, General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated for the third time that an Israeli attack on Iran’s nuclear program could delay it, but probably not destroy it. And, speaking to reporters in London, he added impatiently, to the amazement of this audience: “*I don’t want to be complicit if they [Israel] choose to do it.*”³³ He then explained that the international coalition that was applying sanctions against Iran could dissolve if Israel took the initiative to attack it. In October 2012, during joint maneuvers in the Middle East, General Martin Dempsey met Defense Minister Ehud Barak in Tel Aviv. He warned him that American military commanders believed that any Israeli attack against Iran would severely limit the United States’ ability to organize an operation against the nuclear program, since it would end the vital logistical support from the Persian Gulf states.³⁴ Iran acquiring nuclear capabilities was one of the great fears of the Gulf countries. The other was a regional war that could destabilize the Middle East. And they were aware that an isolated Israeli attack would not liquidate Iran’s nuclear program and make it even more aggressive. Although Iran would suffer heavy losses, it would be able to pick up its nuclear program within a few years.

The United States, however, were already refocusing and reshaping its strategy in the Middle East because of the direction that the Islamic uprisings had taken with the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood. Washington’s objective was apparently to build an axis with the Sunni Gulf monarchies, involving the Muslim Brotherhood dominant in Egypt and Turkey, against the Shia alliance, inspired and guided by Tehran. Based on reports from the CIA and other intelligence agencies, President Obama knew, however, that conditions didn’t favor a military strike against Iran, and he calculated that the consequences would be harmful to the United States.

³²Roger Cohen, “Israel’s Iran Itch”, *The New York Times*, August 16, 2012.

³³“Top US soldier: ‘I don’t want to be complicit’ if Israel attacks Iran”, –*DEBKAfile Special Report*, August 30, 2012.

³⁴Julian Borger, “US warns Israel off pre-emptive strike on Iran. Arab spring has left US-friendly rulers in region nervous about possible impact of an Israeli strike on Iran’s nuclear programme”, *The Guardian*, October 31, 2012.

25.5 Israeli Attack on Iran as a Suicidal Holocaust

With a population larger than those of Iraq and Afghanistan combined, and with a very rugged topographical configuration, Iran was a theater where the United States would find it exceedingly difficult to wage a ground war and easily occupy the territory. Its nuclear facilities—about 12–20—were scattered across several regions. Some French, British and American intelligence agents suspected that Iranian scientists in Fordo, with 3000 reactors, were trying to enrich uranium exceeding 20% of purity. This would enable the government to produce nuclear weapons if stored in enough quantities for military use. The plant in Fordo was partly built inside a mountain, to the northeast of the mosque in the city of Qom, well protected with a battery of anti-aircraft missiles operated by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard.³⁵

The nuclear plant of Natanz in Isfahan province, almost 1000 miles away from Israel, was built about 26 feet below the ground, protected by several layers of concrete. About 5000 centrifuges were operating there, supplied with uranium hexafluoride. There were about 2800 centrifuges in Fordo, locked in the mountains, and almost 1400 were operational. According to the retired USAF Colonel Rick Pyatt, it would be very hard to attack Iran. Israeli planes would have to fly over hostile foreign territory and would have to be refueled in the air, since the targets were 1000 miles away. And it has highly doubtful that the Jericho-2 or Jericho-3 missile warheads of limited weight, probably less than 1000 pounds, could penetrate deep enough to achieve a certain level of destruction.³⁶ If Iran would come to possess or already possessed the designs to enrich uranium to make nuclear weapons—and many suspected experiments were under way, including at the military base of Parchim—, then other underground plants should also exist in caves that satellites and airplanes would have a hard time detecting. Iran's topography presented a great challenge for air strikes. It was very similar to Afghanistan, very rugged and difficult to map with airplanes, not least because planes would have to fly at low altitude and the Islamic Republic had built an excellent air defense system with countless surface-to-air missiles.

An air operation against Iran's nuclear facilities would probably have to be accompanied by ground troops. But Israel only had 176,500 active service members, 133,000 of which in the army, and 565,000 reserve troops. Iran, on the other hand, could count on more than 523,000 active service members, 350,000 of which in the army, with about 125,000 in the powerful corps of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard.³⁷ Iran also had an excellent naval defense system, mounted with Sunburn

³⁵Julian Borger and Patrick Wintour, "Why Iran confessed to secret nuclear site built inside mountain", *The Guardian*, 26/9/2009.

³⁶David Isenberg, "Israeli Attack on Iran's Nuclear Facilities Easier Said Than Done", *Inter Press Service*, Washington, February 13, 2012. Rick Francona, "Iran-Israel's Air Strike Options Update", *Middle East Perspectives*, June 22, 2008.

³⁷"Factbox: How Israel and Iran shape up militarily", *Reuters*, 3/11/2011.

missiles imported from Russia and China, the most lethal missile against any vessel, designed to fly nine feet above the ground or water at 1500 miles per hour.³⁸ It had submarines and modern patrol boats equipped with missiles, and it would be able to block the strategic maritime communication line through the Persian Gulf³⁹ and control the passage of oil shipments. The imbalance of conventional forces between the two countries was enormous.

Even with the support of the squadron stationed in the Persian Gulf and the participation of US troops, a war against Iran unleashed by Israel would be an extremely difficult, expensive and bloody conflict. According to Pentagon analysts, even a larger, less risky and probably more destructive US air strike on Iran's nuclear facilities would not be enough to destroy all uranium enrichment reactors.⁴⁰ It would only delay the program, but not prevent Iran from producing nuclear weapons in the medium or long term.⁴¹

Iran's population was another factor of strategic importance. It was greater than the sum of the populations of Iraq and Afghanistan and was largely concentrated in the mountains, outlining a belt stretching from Zagros and Elbroz and a line between the coast of the Caspian Sea and the Strait of Hormuz. Another part of the population lived in a few cities and in the Northeast, in Mashhad, a city with 2.83 million inhabitants near the border with Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, where the tomb of Imam al-Rida (765-c.818) could be found, one of the successors of the prophet Muhammad, revered by the Shia and visited by about 20,000 people each year. The rest of the country was very sparsely populated. With three sides surrounded by mountains and two by the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, Iran's size and topography turned it into a stronghold that was hard to invade, let alone conquered.⁴²

An Israeli attack on Iran would therefore be a disaster. It would claim the lives of thousands of civilians and devastate cities, but it would not annihilate 78.8 million Iranians or devastate a territory spanning 1,024,140 square miles, corresponding to the joined landmasses of Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Spain and Portugal. Iran, on the other hand, would immediately retaliate. And if it were to

³⁸"Iran's Arsenal of Sunburn Missiles Is More Than Enough to Close the Strait", *Business Insider*—Russ Winter, February 8, 2012.

³⁹Anthony H. Cordesman and Alexander Wilner, "Iran and the Gulf Military Balance I: The Conventional and Asymmetric Dimensions", Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), March 6, 2012.

⁴⁰Mark Landler, "Obama Says Iran Strike Is an Option, but Warns Israel", *The New York Times*, March 2, 2012.

⁴¹Ibid. See also: Iran's nuclear power plants. In: 1155/New Scientist Global Security. Iran's key nuclear sites 2012. BBC News Middle East, 09.01. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-11927720>. Accessed 06.05.2015

⁴²"The Geopolitics of Iran: Holding the Center of a Mountain Fortress", Stratfor—Global Intelligence, December 16, 2011. John Mauldin, "Fortress Iran is Virtually Impregnable to a Successful Invasion", *Market Oracle*, July 24, 2008. See Iran's geomorphical map in: Iran's geological "fortress". Source: Adapted by the author from: Stratfor—The Market Oracle in: <https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/geopolitics-iran-holding-center-mountain-fortress>. Accessed 16.02.2015

launch a barrage of Shahab, Gahdr-3^a or Sejji missiles with a range of up to 93 miles and armed with cluster bombs, whose sub-munition (bomblets) with about 202 explosives could devastate everything in a 220 to 440 yard radius, it would devastate many cities in Israel, including Tel Aviv, and decimate thousands of its inhabitants. Hamas (Sunni) in Gaza and Hizballah (Shia) in Lebanon would certainly take advantage to also attack Israel with Katyusha, Fajr-5, Urgan, Khaibar and others rockets in the possession of the two paramilitary organizations. Although Israel possessed the Arrow-3 High Altitude Ballistic Missile Defense System and the Iron Dome Anti-Rocket Missile System, which intercepted 85% of Grad and Qassam missiles⁴³ fired (about 60–85) by the Islamic Jihad from Gaza in early March 2012, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the Binyamin Netanyahu government to resist the bombings, even with the pre-built shelters by the Israeli Homeland Command, and the uprising of the Palestinian population inside Israel. It would be a hybrid war, of both high and low intensity, and the people of Israel could be largely destroyed.

Due to its geopolitical and geostrategic importance, connecting the Indian subcontinent to the Mediterranean Sea, and the religious and sectarian implications, a spillover of a war against Iran triggered by Israel, with or without the participation of the United States, would be virtually unavoidable. Although the Shia represent only 10–11% of all Muslims, they constitute the majority of the population in Iran, Azerbaijan, Iraq and Bahrain, and qualitatively important minorities in almost all other countries in the Middle East and its surroundings. And they are concentrated in regions of geopolitical and strategic significance, which Iran could leverage in the event of a war with Israel and the West.⁴⁴ Iran has also always maintained close relations with Afghanistan, India, Iraq and Pakistan—regional partners of the United States. If the Shia majority in Bahrain were to take power by overthrowing the Sunni autocracy of the al Khalifa family, legitimized by the presence of the US base in its country, they would certainly count on the support of the Shia population in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia and on the support of Iraq.

Sectarian war would also spread to Lebanon and Jordan. It would intensify in Iraq and Syria, as well as in Libya and Yemen, and it could reach Qatar, where the United States held US Central Command (USCENTCOM) and US Army Forces Central Command (ARCENT) facilities in As Sayliyah, stationing two brigades and more than 11,000 soldiers. In Al Udeid air base, located to the west of Doha, the United States Central Command (USCC) and United State Air Force Central Command (USAFCC) were stationed, and it was also home to the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing of the USAF and the No. 83 Expeditionary Air Group of the RAF. In one way or another, sectarian war would affect and involve American

⁴³The missiles of the Islamic *Jihad* hit the villages of Beersheba, Ashkelon, Kiryat Malachi, Netivot, Ofakim, Gan Yavneh and Kfar Azza, in addition to the *kibbutzim* Eshkol and Shear Hanegev.

⁴⁴Bradley (2012, p. 95–97). See Iran's location near the Strait of Hormuz in: World Atlas.com. <http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/infopage/persiangulf.htm>. Accessed 06.05.2015

troops, since the US had supported Israel and the dictatorial regimes in the region for decades, including the absolutist and corrupt Wahhabi monarchy of Saudi Arabia, and the result would be an increase in anti-Americanism and the further strengthening of al-Qa'ida.

About 64% of world oil reserves (Iran is the fourth largest exporter) lie in the Middle East, which supplied 70% of global oil demand, and the route from the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea was vital to the world economy. It's the most important choke point of the global oil trade. Through it, about 40% of global maritime oil shipments pass, and a war would inevitably disrupt the flow of 17 Mb/d of crude to Europe and the United States, as well as to China, Japan, South Korea and other countries. The Strait of Hormuz and, consequently, the transport of oil, would be directly affected, even if Iran didn't block it militarily. A shut down Strait of Hormuz would require the use of longer alternate routes, such as the East West Crude Oil Pipeline Petroline, with a capacity of 5 billion bbl/d and stretching 745 miles from Abqaiq in eastern Saudi Arabia to the Yambu Oil Terminal on the Red Sea coast. This would greatly increase the cost of transport.

Iran exported 2.5 million barrels of oil per day, and OPEC wouldn't be able to compensate this volume in the case of war in the Middle East. Since the beginning of 2012, the price of Brent crude had increased by about 10% and reached US\$ 125.98 by March due to the instability in the Middle East. And a war between Israel and Iran would not only potentially butcher thousands of Arabs and Israelis and Americans, it would also raise the price of gas and oil to an unimaginable level, skyrocketing past US\$ 250 per barrel, potentially even reaching US\$ 500 per barrel with the disruption of trade, causing a cataclysm to a world economy that was still shaken and depressed after the financial crisis of 2007–2008, triggered by the collapse of Lehmann Brothers and other corporations. A crisis that the United States and Europe were yet to surpass in 2012. Volatile financial markets would break out in a full panic with another, much more profound blow that would further delay the recovery of the US and, especially, the European economy.

In 2003, President George W. Bush requested US\$ 87 billion for the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan. Between 2003 and 2014, however, the United States had spent a minimum of US\$ 67 billion (2003) and a maximum of US\$ 185 billion (2008) per year, and less than 5% of these resources were used for reconstruction.⁴⁵ In 2011 alone, the campaign in Libya cost American taxpayers about US\$ 2 million per day.⁴⁶ And by the end of the year, the United States had spent around US\$ 1 billion, providing missiles, surveillance aircraft, *drones* and all kinds of

⁴⁵Frum and Perle (2004, p. 122–123). Richard Perle was deputy to the secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld, during the administration of President George W. Bush. Das Statistik-Portal—Statistiken und Studien aus über 18.000 Quellen 2015, US-Kriegskosten im Irak und in Afghanistan von 2003 bis 2014, (in Milliarden US-Dollar), <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/173138/umfrage/kriegskosten-der-usa-im-irak-und-afghanistan>.

⁴⁶“Allies meet in Abu Dhabi to discuss post Gaddafi future”, *Daily Mail*, June 9, 2011.

ammunition to NATO to topple [Muammar Gaddafi](#) and lead the country into chaos.⁴⁷ A conflict covering the entire Middle East would necessarily involve the United States, whose public debt had reached over US\$ 15.5 trillion by March 11, 2012, higher than its GDP, estimated at US \$ 15.04 trillion (2011),⁴⁸ and it continued to grow by about US\$ 4.01 billion per day.⁴⁹ American spending in the region, which already amounted to trillions of dollars, was already growing at a unsustainable, breakneck pace.

In 2002, President George W. Bush (2001–2005 and 2005–2009) accused Iran of forming the “*axis of evil*” with Iraq and North Korea. He ordered U.S. Strategic Command, supported by the Air Force, to draw up plans to bomb Iran. Within the Pentagon, however, generals and admirals warned that bombing Iran would probably not destroy all its nuclear facilities and could have serious economic, political and military consequences for the United States.⁵⁰ The intelligence community had not found specific evidence of clandestine activities or hidden facilities, and it was far from certain that war planes would be able to take them out. And so President George W. Bush back out. But he did attack Iraq, and General Colin Powell, then Secretary of State, even went to the UN and Security Council on February 6 and March 7, 2003, to prove that Saddam Hussein possessed chemical and nuclear weapons and that he had to be attacked and overthrown immediately. President George W. Bush and General Colin Powell lied. Iraq had no nuclear or chemical weapons.

After two lost wars (Iraq and Afghanistan), and while still looking for a more or less honorable retreat of his troops in Afghanistan, President Barack Obama seemed aware of the economic as well as military problem. He didn’t want to embark on another adventure, especially in an election year, even without disregarding the degree of “*instability and immaturity*” of public opinion in the United States, i.e., “*its potential for hysteria*”, as the unforgettable American political scientist Brady Tyson had observed a few years ago.⁵¹ The US intelligence community was not convinced that Iran actually planned to build nuclear weapons, and the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) 2011 confirmed the conclusion reached in 2007 and 2010: the program was stopped in 2003.⁵² But it didn’t rule out the possibility that Iran would be able to produce enough highly enriched uranium (HEU) to serve both

⁴⁷John Barry, “America’s Secret Libya War”, *The Daily Best*, August 30, 2011.

⁴⁸CIA—World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>.

⁴⁹U.S. National Debt Clock, The Outstanding Public Debt as of 11 Mar 2012 at 05:59:13 PM GMT, http://www.brillig.com/debt_clock/.

⁵⁰Seymour M. Hersh, “The military’s problem with the President’s Iran policy”, *The New Yorker*, July 10, 2006.

⁵¹Brady Tyson, “O sistema Interamericano depois de São Domingos”, *Política Externa Independente*, Rio de Janeiro, Editora Civilização Brasileira, Ano I, n° 3, Janeiro de 1966, p. 83–108.

⁵²Josh Rogin, “Exclusive: New National Intelligence Estimate on Iran complete”, *Foreign Policy*, February 15, 2011.

civilian (nuclear power generation) and military needs (production of nuclear weapons).

General James R. Clapper Jr., US Director of National Intelligence, said that American experts believed Iran was keeping the option open to produce nuclear weapons, but that there was no evidence that it was carrying out or planning to carry out this plan. General David H. Petraeus, head of the CIA, Leon E. Panetta, Secretary of Defense, and General Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, came to the same assessment in their television interviews.⁵³ And according to the Brazilian nuclear physicist José Goldemberg, the “*great progress*” in nuclear technology announced by Iran’s president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad “*wasn’t really that significant*.”⁵⁴ Nuclear fuel rods with enriched uranium for use in a research reactor, as President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad displayed on television, had already been produced in the 1980s by the Atomic Energy Institute at the University of São Paulo (USP).⁵⁵

It’s not very credible that Iran would attack Israel with nuclear warheads, even if it had produced them. Such an attack would also kill the Palestinian population inside and outside Israel, and a significant part of Lebanon’s population. And in March 2012, Ali Khamenei, leader of the Principlists who won the elections for Parliament (*Majlis Shora Eslami*) and Iran’s hierocrat, the Supreme Guardian of its religious laws (*Velayat-e Faqih*), reiterated that Iran was not looking for “*nuclear*” weapons and that it would be “*useless and dangerous*” to store them.⁵⁶

According to a survey conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Americans were no longer willing to spend trillions of dollars on new wars. By October 2012, about 67% of the population believed that the war in Iraq had not been worth the costs, 69% thought that the war in Afghanistan had not rid the United States of terrorism, and 71% said the war in Iraq should make the government more cautious regarding the use of force. And in general, most Americans were opposed to the use of force in the negotiations with President Ahmadinejad as well as to US involvement in a possible war unleashed by Israel on the pretext of the Iran’s nuclear program.⁵⁷

More than half the population of Israel was also against an attack on Iran, according to a survey published by the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, in addition to believing that it should not go about such an attack alone if it proved necessary.⁵⁸

⁵³James Risen and Mark Mazzetti, “U.S. Agencies See No Move by Iran to Build a Bomb”, *The New York Times*, February 24, 2012.

⁵⁴José Goldenberg, “O Irã e as armas nucleares”, *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 19/3/2012.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*

⁵⁶M. K. Bhadrakumar, “Obama gets Iran right, finally”, *Asia Times*, March 6, 2012.

⁵⁷“Foreign Policy in the New Millennium”, Results of the 2012 Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy, p. 5–6, 17, 29–32. Dina Smeltz and Roger Cohen, “The Need for U.S.-Iran Talks”, *The New York Times*, November 12, 2012.

⁵⁸“Ha’aretz poll: Most of the public opposes an Israeli strike on Iran. Support for Netanyahu’s Likud party is at all-time high, but Israelis still skeptical regarding attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities without U.S. backing”, *Haaretz*, 8/3/2012.

But Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's government of the Likud, closely allied to the Yisrael Beitenu party led by the Russian Israelite Avigdor Lieberman, minister of foreign affairs, was a reflection of the extreme right trend that had come to influence a great part of Israel's population.

25.6 Apocalypse Now!

To contain the pressures of the Jewish *lobby*, which supported the extremist GOP candidates, Obama continued to assert that all options were on the table, including the “*military component*,” to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. But president Obama wanted to avoid an armed confrontation and insisted on resolving the impasse through diplomatic means, amid the tightening of sanctions and covert sabotage operations and assassinations,⁵⁹ a war in the shadows waged by the CIA and the Mossad.

There was no alternative. For an air strike on Iran would herald the Apocalypse, like the sixth angel sounding his trumpet to release the four Angels who had been chained to the banks of the Euphrates, prepared for this hour and day and month to kill a third of mankind: “*The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number; The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur; A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths.*”⁶⁰

⁵⁹About five Iranian nuclear scientists were murdered since 2007, either by the CIA or the Mossad, which funded Sunni terrorists of the Majahidin-e Khalq Organization (MOC or MeK), opponents of the Shia regime in Iran.

⁶⁰Offenbarung des Johannes (Apokalypse), 9 Kapitel. *Das Neuen Testament*, in Die Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testament, p. 330–331.

Chapter 26

“Arab Spring”: Democracy, Chaos and Terror

“History is eternal becoming and therefore eternal future.” Oswald Spengler (Spengler 1991, p. 196)

*“Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.”* T.S. Eliot (Burnt Norton)

26.1 Old and New Cold War: Actors, Objectives, Methods

History does not repeat itself. It spirals and progresses to a higher stage, often by leaps and bounds, taking on new forms and aspects that are reciprocally related to each other, but actual fragments of past epochs combine and preserve themselves in the social subconsciousness and culture of people, the collective soul, even if qualitatively modified by society’s dynamics and the development of its productive forces. This is why the riots in the Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans—Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Croatia etc.—and in the eastern republics of the former Soviet Union after the 1990s, were a historic evolution, so to speak. A second cold war waged by the United States (whose economic power became more sophisticated, merging with the powers of the European Union through an ultra-imperialist cartel) by exploiting endogenous factors and encouraging domestic opposition in order to advance, among other things, the global governance system under its hegemony, and to fully ensure the monopoly on the fossil fuel resources and strategic routes *vis à vis* an invisible/visible enemy, represented by the emergence of China as an economic superpower and new global power center, and the resurgence of Russia, under the government of President Vladimir Putin (2000–2008 and 2008–2012), in addition to strengthening the security and predominance of Israel in the region.

The domestic conditions for the uprisings were clearly present, both in Eurasia and in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria and other Middle Eastern countries. The economic stagnation, rising food costs, unemployment, impoverishment and social exclusion, among other complex and diverse factors, fostered popular dissatisfaction and led to the outbreak of riots amid a systemic crisis of the global economy, triggered by the financial collapse of major banks in the United States between 2007 and 2008. The developments also spilled over because of the phenomenon of contagion, enabled by the existence of similar feelings and circumstances. The success of the uprising in Tunisia encouraged the revolt in Egypt and then spread according to the domestic conditions of each country, despite their differences in social and political structure.

Without the economic, political, moral and military backing of the United States and its partners of the European Union, especially Britain and France, the upheavals would have barely happened. And if they did, they wouldn't have taken major proportions and/or triumphed. In addition to the armed interventions by NATO—the Western ultra-imperialist cartel's military arm—, the so-called non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were one of the weapons used by the United States, with the cooperation of the European Union, to promote “*political warfare*,” mobilizing crowds on the pretext of promoting democracy, which really meant regime change, i.e., overthrowing governments and installing regimes favorable to their investments and strategic interests. And the crowds were almost always susceptible to the “*truly magical power of words*,” phrased corruptly to obscure reality and to stir or quiet the most violent of storms in the collective soul.¹

William Colby (1920–1996), former director of the CIA, said himself in the 1980s that many operations which were previously conducted covertly (covert actions) by the CIA, could now be carried out openly and without question by the NGOs (of which one third of the hundred largest were based in the United States).² It is clear why the Russian Duma (parliament) passed a law mandating the registration of NGOs operating within its borders. It was a similar national security initiative to the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) in force in the United States since 1938, through which organizations “*acting as agents of foreign principals*” must register with the National Security Division (NSD) of the Department of Justice and disclose their overseas relations.³

As a tool of psychological warfare (*psy-ops*) and manipulation of political facts, however, the Western media criticized the law passed by the Duma. But in early April 2013, President Vladimir Putin told the TV ARD, in Germany, that NGOs in Russia had received 28.3 billion rubles from overseas in just the four preceding months, the equivalent of 690 million euros, and that his government had the right

¹Freud (1948b, p. 1146).

²The Global Journal, <http://theglobaljournal.net/article/view/585/>.

³Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA). Its implementation is the responsibility of the Counterespionage Section (CES) in the National Security Division (NSD), <http://www.fara.gov/>.

to know where these resources were coming from.⁴ At the time, there were 654 NGOs operating in Russia, many of which shadow sponsored by USAID under the umbrella of the US-Russian Foundation for Economic Advancement and the Rule of Law (USRF).⁵ The National Endowment for Democracy (NED), National Democratic Institute, International Republican Institute, Freedom House and George Soros's Open Society Institute constituted some of the main covert sources of opposition funding, and the newspaper *Pravda* rightly reported that "*all foreign money that comes into Russia is for the purpose of subverting the government*" and destroying it from within.⁶ These NGOs were virtually the same ones that instigated and led the "*cold revolutionary war*" in the countries of the Caucasus and Eastern Europe, i.e., the so-called "*color revolutions*," including the Rose Revolution in Georgia (2003) and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine (2004). Meanwhile, the countries of the European Union continued to dismantle the social market economy built after World War II, while they strove to eliminate the national sovereignty of other States in the political and social arena, aligning them to the interests of the international financial system.

As Veronica Krashenninnikova, president of the Institute of Foreign Policy Studies and Initiatives based in Moscow, revealed, the United States had provided more than US\$ 5 billion to about 260,000 civil society groups in Russia since 1991. And this was only the official data. "*The United States is trying to achieve a certain foreign policy objective*," she told the *Financial Times*.⁷ USAID acknowledged that the funding of "*democracy and governance programs*" had amounted to US\$ 37.2 million in 2011.⁸

Even after the fiasco in Afghanistan—where the Taliban had proclaimed an Islamic Emirate⁹—and in Iraq, President Barack Obama (2009–2013, 2013–) didn't give up on trying to consolidate a global order, a planetary empire under the hegemony of United States and Britain, as advocated by geostrategist Nicholas J. Spykman.¹⁰ This was the *ultima ratio* of President Obama's policy, as it had been of President George W. Bush, and Obama himself reaffirmed before the British Parliament in Westminster (May 2011) that the "*special relationship*" of the two countries (US and Britain) and their action and leadership were indispensable to the

⁴"Merkel wirft Russland—'Störung' deutscher Stiftungen vor Putin pocht auf Recht zur Kontrolle der Finanzen", *Die Welt*, 5/4/2013. "Russische NGOs bekommen jährlich hunderte Millionen aus dem Ausland", *RIA Novosti*, April 5, 2012.

⁵"USA still tries to destroy Russia from within, through NGOs", *Pravda*, 16/11/2012.

⁶Some transnational NGOs began to appear soon after the Second World War with the aim of defending nature. Since the 1980s, however, they began to be created as instruments of international politics, especially in the United States, under the pretext, *inter alia*, of defending human rights, democracy, the environment or wide ranging social objectives, within a strategy that seeks to subjugate the concept of national sovereignty and establish a "*world government*", i.e., the global governance under the hegemony of the United States.

⁷Charles Clover, "Kremlin moves against foreign-backed NGOs", *Financial Times*, July 13, 2012.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹Atwan (2012, p. 16–17).

¹⁰Spykman (1942, p. 458–460).

cause of human dignity, and that the ideals and nature of its people made “*the United States and the United Kingdom indispensable to this moment in history.*”¹¹ The other powers of Europe, Japan and the rest of the countries were nothing more than vassals, given that economic and political globalization, fostered by the global financial system and the large multinational corporations, were increasingly eroding the power of nation-states, making them lose sovereignty over their own economic and social affairs and legal order.

Analyzing the issue of global governance, Professor António de Sousa Lara of the Technical University of Lisbon rightly concluded that the establishment of a new global order, “*with a uniqueness of structures, formatting of policies and interests, clearly configured the emergence of a new form of ideology and a new model of totalitarianism with the appearance of democracy.*”¹² Russia’s recovery, however, once again alarmed the United States, not because of communism, which had disappeared as a threat, but because it also represented a vast continental empire with an enormous nuclear and conventional military power, and because it perceived it as its main opponent. It wasn’t Russia as a power that had collapsed in the Cold War, but its autarkic socialist state, in which bureaucratization encapsulated the productive system and social equalization prevented the accumulation of capital, crucial for economic development. Furthermore, the Soviet Union was never able to free itself from the global market economy, which has always worked according to the laws of capitalism and in which it was viscerally integrated through the constraints imposed by international trade and the export and import of commodities and manufactured goods.

And so the attempts to destabilize Russia and divide it as much as possible continued after the dismantling of the communist regime. In 1979, Zbigniew Brzezinski understood that the fundamentalist revolution in Iran, the institution of Islamic law (*Shari’ah*) by President Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq (1979) in Pakistan, and other similar phenomena, suggested a widespread awakening of a more self-assertive consciousness based on ethnicity and the principles of the *Qur’an*. He convinced President Jimmy Carter, for whom he worked as national security adviser, to open a third front in the Cold War, raising up the Islamic peoples in the heartland of Eurasia against Moscow in order to break apart the Soviet Union.¹³

With the cooperation of the Saudi and Pakistani intelligence (ISI) services, the CIA recruited about 100,000 “*freedom fighters*” in the Muslim countries of North Africa and the Middle East to fight against the communist atheists, an operation in which drug trade money played an important role. The CIA virtually created Usamah bin Ladin, one of the organizers of the recruitment of the *mujahidin*, and it incited Islamic fundamentalism, which, in essence, has always been incompatible with capitalist civilization. Even though some Muslims secretly adopted and used

¹¹“Remarks by the President to Parliament in London, United Kingdom”, Westminster Hall, London, United Kingdom, The White House—Office of the Press Secretary, May 25, 2011.

¹²Sousa Lara (2007, p. 31–33).

¹³Brzezinski (1983, p. 226). For more details, see Moniz Bandeira (2006, p. 377–402).

the customs and products of the West, many always perceived them as sinful, forbidden by the *Sunna*, Islam's way of life and traditions.

After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, this movement grew in the Middle East and Central Asia, regions of the utmost economic and strategic importance to the industrial powers of the West because of their large oil and gas deposits. Politically and culturally manipulated by foreign secret services (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Pakistan), fundamentalist Sunni Islamist movements began to foment several civil conflicts after the dissolution of the Soviet Union (1991) in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Chechnya and other republics of the Caucasus.¹⁴

After al-Qa'ida's attacks of September 2001, under the command of Usamah bin Ladin, President George W. Bush and the neocons (neoconservatives), in addition to a substantial part of Washington's political elite, thought they could install democratic regimes in the Middle East, where the impressionable, gullible and uncritical masses have always been remarkably easier to manipulate through soft power, in order to reduce the United States' vulnerability to terrorism. But al-Qa'ida was but one of the manifestations of political Islam, as Samir Amin called the Salafist, Wahhabi movements. Many other groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, also rejected modernity—for modernity was based on the right of human creativity to deal with earthly matters—and democracy, since all sovereign power emanated from Allah (*wilaya al faqih*). The laws—the *Shari'ah*—had been dictated by God, and it was not up to men to organize society according to their will.¹⁵ The name al-Qa'ida (the base) was first used in the magazine *Jihad* in 1980 by the Sunni theologian Abdullah Yusuf Azzam. Azzam, born in Palestine and one of the founders of Hamas, used the term to describe the resistance against Soviet troops in Afghanistan. Azzam was assassinated on November 24, 1989, however, and it is suspected that his murder was inspired by bin Ladin, who appropriated the name and formed a home for multinational terrorist organizations with members from various countries, but particularly from Egypt.¹⁶

The resurgence of political Islam increased the list of players and further complicated the *Great Game* in the Middle East, where the insoluble question of Palestine was turning ever more convoluted because of Israel's advance in Judea and Samaria, believing it had the right to occupy all the land previously inhabited by the Hebrews, i.e., all of Palestine, the Land of Israel (*Eretz-Israel*). Although they were serving as pawns of NATO, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates entered the theater of the second cold war as the major sponsors of the insurgents and terrorists, following their own interests, which included overthrowing the existing regimes in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Syria, not because they

¹⁴Hunter (2004, p. 328–330, 348–355).

¹⁵Amin (2012).

¹⁶Musharraf (2006, p. 219). The dispute with Abdullah Yusuf Azzam had its origin in the fact that bin Ladin also wanted to use the organization for the *Jihad* against the secular Arab regimes, which he considered apostates.

were autocratic, but because they were secular, considered apostates (*dhummis*). This way, they meant to set the stage in the Middle East for the reconstruction of the Great Sunni Caliphate under *Shari'ah* rule.

The military interventions in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) by the George W. Bush administration contributed to destabilize the entire region and provided fertile soil for the flourishing and expansion of terrorism amid the economic, social and political chaos. al-Qa'ida decentralized even further, multiplying itself through the formation of several asymmetric associations, giving rise to such organizations as al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula, al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghrib, Jabhat al-Nusrah, Boko Haram, Ansar al-Shari'ah, Somalia al-Shabaab, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, etc. These and other associations constituted a vast multinational franchise network, a wide ranging, horizontal and decentralized organization. That is, the branches were commanded by regional emirs, who answered for the *Jihad* against the infidels (Western forces and Christians as well as Shia and other non-Sunni Islamic sects), connecting various radical Islamic movements in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, etc.¹⁷

Professor C. Snouck Hurgronje of the University of Leiden (Netherlands) predicted in 1916 that the faith in the coming of Imām al-Mahdi to regenerate the world, would serve as catalyst for the emergence of revolutionary movements, led by capable demagogues who would present themselves as this messiah, or as someone who had come to prepare the ground for his arrival.¹⁸ The economic, social and political hardships and uncertainties, such as the endemic unemployment, increasing costs of living, repression etc., were reviving a subconscious *substratum* in the Arab people, an archaic heritage. And the restoration of the Great Caliphate in the likeness of the Rashidum Caliphate of the “*four rightly guided caliphs*”, took on the aura of an utopia, which could only be achieved through the *Jihad* and the implementation of *Shari'ah*.

Indeed, social tensions were brewing in Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. Under autocratic regimes and in the midst of economic stagnation, political Islam was the “*expression of real misery*”, the “*sigh of the afflicted creature*,” the “*soul of a soulless world*,” the “*opium of the people*”, as Marx put it.¹⁹ It attracted young unemployed men with no prospect of improving their life to the *Jihad*, instilling in them the hope that, through martyrdom, they would reach the Garden/Paradise (*al-Jannah*), as promised in the *Qur'an* and the *Ahdiths*. There they could marry *houris* (companions), have wives renewed as virgins and feast on meat and fruit served by young men.²⁰

After the 1980s, the *Jihad* was rekindled and intensified, often as a “*martyrdom-operation*,” in which the terrorist committed suicide by detonating the bomb

¹⁷Atwan (2012).

¹⁸Hurgronje (1916, p. 101).

¹⁹Marx (1981a, p. 378).

²⁰*Der Koran* (Arabisch-Deutsch), Aus dem Arabisch von Max Henning, Teil 27, Sure 52, Der Berg, p. 525–524; Sure 56, Das Unvermeidliche (Al-Waqiah), ayat 34–36, p. 536–534.

strapped to his own body, killing dozens of people. Or thousands, as happened on September 11, 2001, when they turned passenger planes into missiles and crashed them into the WTC.²¹ And the *ratio decidendi*—the rationale—that led the Arabs to holy war, was the belief that life itself could not be as valuable as certain abstract and general goods²² that could be enjoyed in Allah’s Garden. The offer of a reward, even if in the form of a sensuous, orgiastic utopia, to those who were about to sacrifice their own lives, reflected the historical context in which the Muslims of Medina joined the *jihad* against the idolaters of Mecca.

26.2 Uprisings: Provisory Results and Perspectives

In 1986, the Soviet Union was considering the withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan and worried about the Islamic threat within its own borders. It abandoned its position of strict neutrality and started supporting the regime of Saddam Hussein, as it was fundamentally secular. It provided about US\$8.8 billion to US \$9.2 billion in weaponry—tanks, missiles, etc. This alliance alarmed Washington, and the duplicity of its policy apparently inspired Saddam Hussein to embark on another adventure in the mid-1990s: the invasion and annexation of Kuwait, despite the exhaustion and failure of Iraq in the war against Iran, which ended in 1988. In any event, the invasion of Kuwait served as a pretext for the United States to intervene militarily and reaffirm its predominance in the Middle East, first through Operation Desert Shield and then through Operation Desert Storm, based on UNSC resolutions. The Gulf War, as it was made famous, started with an extensive and intensive aerial bombing campaign. About 100,000 sorties were carried out and 88,500 tons of bombs were dropped, destroying Iraq’s entire civil and military infrastructure.

Iraqi troops were expelled from Kuwait in February 1991. President George H. W. Bush claimed he didn’t have a UN mandate to invade Iraq and overthrow Saddam Hussein. But the state of war lasted throughout the 1990s, under the administration of President Bill Clinton, including periodic bombing raids. By 1995, about 576,000 Iraqi children had died since the end of the Gulf War, according to scientists from the Food and Agriculture Organization, due to the economic sanctions imposed by the UNSC, subservient to the designs of the United States and the United Kingdom. Speaking at the International Conference on War-affected children in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Francis Boyle, Professor of International Law at the University of Illinois, blamed the economic sanctions and/or illegal wars conducted by the United States and Britain for the extermination of approximately 3.3 million people, including 750,000 children, in Iraq between

²¹Kepel (2004, p. 46).

²²Freud (1948a, p. 1014).

1990 and 2012.²³ According to his assessment, such sanctions, “*deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part*”, produced a genocide, as defined in Article II of the Genocide Convention adopted by the UN.²⁴

In mid-2013, 10 years after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, the level of violence, including murders, bomb attacks with dozens of victims each day, kidnappings, etc., and the resurgence of sectarian and ethnic tensions between Sunni and Shia Muslims, as well as between Baghdad, the Kurds and other local governments, constituted a state of latent civil war and threatened to shatter Iraq. Most of the times, the attacks were perpetrated by Sunnis linked to al-Qa’ida, targeting the Shia, while Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki ran a corrupt and brutal government, using the military forces and militias to repress the population. “*Iraq remained in a state of chaos*”, noted the sociologist Alain Joxe,²⁵ and according to the journalist Ned Parker in the journal *Foreign Affairs*, it resembled a “*failed state*.”²⁶

The government that arose from the military intervention of the United States and Britain after 10 years of cruel sanctions, didn’t promote democracy or economic development. About US\$6.6 billion of American taxpayer money intended for the reconstruction of Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein was stolen, as the special inspector Stuart Bowen revealed in June 2011, saying that it was “*the largest theft of funds in national history*.”²⁷ The prevalent corruption, the deterioration of the infrastructure due to 10 years of sanctions prior to the invasion and the bombing during the war, the lack of basic services, the outdated trade laws and other factors, prevented private investments in all sectors of the economy except oil exploration.²⁸ The government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki didn’t even provide basic services—regular electricity, clean water and health care—, and unemployment among young people had reached 30%, facilitating the recruitment by *Jihadists* who leveraged the feeling of powerlessness. The same could be said about Afghanistan.

Over the years following the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States promoted profound changes in military doctrine, modernizing its arsenals with electronic instruments and satellites to make strategic adjustments to asymmetric

²³Sherwood Ross, “US Sponsored Genocide Against Iraq 1990–2012. Killed 3.3 Million, Including 750,000 Children”, Statement by Professor Francis Boyle, Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Tribunal, Global Research, Region: Middle East & North Africa, Theme: Crimes against Humanity, US NATO War Agenda—In-depth Report: Iraq Report.

²⁴Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Adopted by Resolution 260 (III) A of the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948, <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html>.

²⁵Joxe (2012, p. 146).

²⁶Ned Parker, “The Iraq We Left Behind—Welcome to the World’s Next Failed State”, *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2012.

²⁷Tucker Reals, “Report: \$ 6B missing in Iraq may have been stolen”, *CBS News*, June 14, 2011.

²⁸Index Mundo—Iraq Economy Profile 2013, http://www.indexmundi.com/iraq/economy_profile.html.

warfare, and maintaining the principle of air superiority with the introduction of new technological advances, such as *unmanned aerial vehicles* (UAV) guided from a distance, the so-called *drones*. But it couldn't win the war in Iraq or Afghanistan, despite the intensive use of bombings, because no victory has ever been secured without the occupation and pacification of the country by ground forces, especially when dealing with an asymmetrical war against a hidden enemy who can't be easily identified because he does not have squadrons or air forces, and whose military organization, economic resources and information systems can't be located or described.

The technological advances developed by the United States and the western powers produced equalizing effects by enabling a growing number of states and even small hostile and fanatic groups of *ihadists* to use the Internet as a vehicle of propaganda and communication, using mobile phones to detonate bombs from a distance in urban guerrilla warfare, inflicting enormous damage to civilian populations, including in the United States. In addition to counting on the solidarity of the population in several Muslim countries, such as Afghanistan, these groups began using resources from the illicit drug trade—opium/heroin—to purchase smuggled weapons, including abandoned or stolen AK-47 and M-16 assault rifles, sniper rifles with laser scopes, body armor, heavy machine guns and submachine guns of all types, rocket launchers and rocket-propelled grenades (RPG).

President Barack Obama lucidly acknowledged on May 13, 2013, that “*America is at a crossroads*”, and recalling James Madison’s warning that “*no nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare*”, he stated that, although the dismantling of terrorist organizations should continue, including the elimination of its leaders with drones, “*this war, like all wars, must end.*”²⁹ And he added: “*That’s what history advises. That’s what our democracy demands.*”³⁰ And so he announced that the government’s efforts should be defined “*not as a boundless ‘global war on terror’*”, but as a persistent series of initiatives to dismantle specific violent extremist networks that threatened the country.

President Obama admitted that the United States had violated its fundamental values “*by using torture to interrogate our enemies*”; that it had spent more than US \$1 trillion in the last decade (especially on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan); and that the use of force alone would not bring security, and that it couldn't be applied “*everywhere that a radical ideology takes root.*”³¹ “*The threat today is more diffuse,*” Obama said, stressing that from Yemen to Iraq, from Somalia to north Africa, groups affiliated to al-Qa’ida were conspiring against the United States.³²

²⁹Remarks of President Barack Obama, The White House Office of the Press Secretary, May 23, 2013, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/23/remarks-president-barack-obama>.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

It seemed unlikely, however, that President Obama, who hadn't fulfilled the promises made during the election campaign for his first term, could change the “double standard” of American policy *vis-à-vis* the conflict in Palestine. President George W. Bush had already sabotaged the Oslo Accords by excluding Russia and the European Union from the peace process and by failing to make Israel comply with the commitments it had made. This “double standard” has always marked the foreign policy of the United States with respect to other issues, such as human rights, democracy and the proliferation of nuclear weapons,³³ due to the predominance of the interests of the international financial system and the industrial-military complex in the control of both the government apparatus and Congress.

The prospect unfolding in the Middle East by mid-2013 was very troubling and complex. The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and the other instruments of the “freedom agenda” established by President George W. Bush, and continued by President Barack Obama, had contributed decisively to topple the autocratic regimes in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. But the staged elections in these countries had opened the doors to chaos, a regime of insecurity that further deepened the economic and social crisis from before the revolts of 2010–2011.

In Tunisia, the Ennahda Movement, originally aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood, won the elections in December 2011 and formed a coalition government with a mixed legal system based on the French civil code and on Islamic law (*Shari'ah*). But the economic situation and uncertainty in the country, in the midst of a global economic crisis, scared away businesses and investors. Deficits increased, unemployment remained high and the social and regional disparities between the cities of the coast and the ever more impoverished heartland grew.

Meanwhile, the contradictions widened between the currents of Islam, especially between the reformers and Salafists, threatening the stability of the governments in Tunisia and Egypt, where the Muslim Brotherhood had won the government and the Salafist party -*Al-Nour*- has captured 25% of the seats in parliament in the elections of 2012. Muhammad Mursi of the Muslim Brotherhood became president by projecting a politically ambivalent profile, making concessions to both Islamists and moderates. But he assumed that he had the support of all sections of the population and went too far, revealing a growing authoritarian tendency without compromise. And due to the political tensions and the uncertainty regarding the government's direction, the economic and financial crisis worsened even further. The continuing political crisis, laid bare by the constant popular uprisings, affected tourism, significantly reducing government revenue, and stopped or slowed the growth of several sectors of the economy, such as construction and manufacturing. Unemployment rose to 13.20% in the first four months of 2013, against 8.10% in June 2009, according to data from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics.³⁴

³³Gerges (1999, p. 238–239). Joxe (2012, p. 34–35). Carter (2006, p. 125–138).

³⁴Historical Data for Egypt Unemployment Rate, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/egypt/unemployment-rate>.

The international reserves of the country plummeted more than 50% between 2011 and 2012 in order to sustain the value of the Egyptian pound, since President Mursi was facing a severe shortage of external funding and had to avoid a collapse of the country's fiscal and balance of payment accounts. In November 2012, President Mursi reached a deal (22-month *Stand-By Arrangement-SBA*) with the IMF worth US\$ 4.8 billion. But the estimates were that he would scarcely be able to meet the terms without radicalizing social and political tensions. These terms included a fiscal consolidation, the “*key pillar*” of the economic program, cutting the budget deficit by 8.5% of GDP around 2013/2014, a tax reform and the restructuring of subsidies. Indeed, in early June 2013, after secular forces, religious minorities and young rebels of the Tamarrod movement, i.e., thousands of people, had gathered for several days in Tahrir Square demanding the resignation of President Mursi, General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, head of the Armed Forces, implemented a coup in the midst of the profound crisis that had gripped Egypt, and he overthrew the government of the Muslim Brotherhood.³⁵

President Obama tried to save President Mursi, arrested with the other leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood. He even threatened to cut the military aid to Egypt, of the order of US\$ 1.3 billion.³⁶ But these resources always flowed back to the United States through the purchase of military, monitoring and communication equipment, increasing the profits of various American companies, including Lockheed Martin, DRS Technologies, L-3 Communication Ocean System, Deloitte Consulting, Boeing, Raytheon, AgustaWestland, US Motor Works, Goodrich Corp, Columbia Group. And so President Obama didn't succeed. He backed down and the United States announced the suspension of the supply of 20 F-16 fighter jets and 200 heavy M1A1 tanks (produced under license in Egypt). Lamenting that the Constitution had been suspended, Obama urged the military to immediately restore civil order and avoid the arrest of president Mursi and his supporters.³⁷ But according to the Israeli information agency DEBKA, the military could not have carried out the coup in Egypt without the support of Saudi Arabia, whose king Abdullah hadn't forgiven Obama for not supporting his friend Hosni Mubarak, and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Kuwait, which channeled substantial resources to move Egypt's economy, ensuring a minimum standard of living and avoiding famine in Egypt.

As far we know, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which were competing for influence in the Middle East and North Africa, had already transferred the vast sum of US\$ 13 billion to the Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo in the past.³⁸ But half of Egypt's 85 million inhabitants lived in poverty, and the

³⁵David D. Kirkpatrick, “Army Ousts Egypt's President; Mursi Is Taken Into Military Custody”, *The New York Times*, July 3, 2013.

³⁶“Saudis, Gulf emirates actively aided Egypt's military coup, settling score for Mubarak ouster”, *Debka.com*, July 4, 2013.

³⁷*Ibid.*

³⁸*Ibid.*

country had accumulated a debt of more than US\$35 billion after Mubarak had taken the neoliberal measures recommended by Washington—privatization and deregulation of the economy. Egypt depended on the financial support from the United States, the IMF and the monarchies of the Persian Gulf to meet its interest payments, which had reached US\$ 1 billion per year.³⁹ In July 2013, there was still no prospect of a solution to the impasse in Egypt. What direction the events would take, was unpredictable. In any case, President Bashar al-Assad, whose secular regime the Muslim Brotherhood wanted to overthrow in Syria, declared that the events in Egypt signaled the fall of political Islam.⁴⁰ And Assam al Haddad, Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation advisor of former President Mursi, wrote on Facebook that the coup in Egypt conveyed a message that would reverberate loud and clear throughout the Islamic world: “*democracy is not for Muslims.*”⁴¹

The situation of Yemen after the overthrow of President Ali Abdallah Saleh continued to be dramatic. About 10 million people out a population of 24 million continued to lack food, and in 2013, 13 million still didn’t have access to clean water and sanitary services. According to data from Unicef, malnutrition and diseases were affecting children, 43% of which were suffering from diarrhea and underweight. And conflicts continued in Yemen, which harbored more than 230,000 refugees from the Horn of Africa and 507,000 internally displaced people. Unemployment was exceeding 35%, mostly affecting the young population. Because of the uncertainty, about 90,000 students could not attend school in 2012, and the families in conflict zones had no shelter or means to sustain themselves, while the mortality rate continued to increase.⁴² The overthrow of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, whose supporters continued resisting, and the election of President Abd Rabbo Mansur al-Hadi in February 2012, didn’t improve the political or economic situation of the country, where the lack of electrical power often left San’a in the dark for several hours.

Just as in Yemen, elections also took place in Libya in 2012, but the government of Prime Minister Ali Zidan of the National Forces Alliance (organized under the aegis of NATO) was not in a position to impose its authority or stabilize the country. Libya continued without an actual system of governance, and power was fractured among some state institutions and the sectarian and tribal militias. The Justice and Construction Party (*Hizb Al-Adala Wal-Bina*), the Libyan branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, came in second place in the 2012 elections, but its power and

³⁹Manlio Dinucci, “L’arte della Guerra—Egitto, chi riempie il vuoto di potere”, *Il Manifesto*, 9/7/2013.

⁴⁰David Gardner, “After Egypt, political Islam faces its sternest test”, *Financial Times*, July 10, 2013.

⁴¹Statement of Essam al Haddad on Facebook, accessed <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=618096081548153&set=a.522535331102409.121628.522537587770670&type=1>. Yaghmaian (2013).

⁴²Amal Imad, “Yemen humanitarian Crisis under its transitional political reform”, Information and Public Affairs Department of Muslim Aid, UK.

*influence continued to grow with resources from Qatar.*⁴³ And in mid-2013, armed clashes were still occurring in Benghazi and other cities between the tribal militias and popular and government forces, which were receiving training from NATO advisors.⁴⁴ There was no safety. Like Iraq, Libya had virtually devolved into a “failed state”. *The chaos not only extended to Mali, but began to threaten the entire region, from Chad to Mauritania and the Atlantic Ocean, crossing the Sahel, one of the regions on earth with the most horrific levels of deprivation.*⁴⁵

*Qatar, whose special forces had acted decisively in Libya to bring down Gaddafi, as well as in northern Mali, became the main sponsor of the terrorist groups Ansar ad-Dine, al-Qa’ida in the Islamic Magrib (AQIM) and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa.*⁴⁶ And according to the statement of Russian ambassador Vitaly Churkin to the UN, both Qatar and Saudi Arabia were encouraging the civil war in Syria, funding and arming the opposition groups⁴⁷ in conjunction with the United States, France, Great Britain and Turkey. In fact, Saudi Arabia and Qatar were using their petrodollars to buy weapons from the United States, Britain and France, countries with war industries that have always been of crucial importance for their economies, especially in times of recession. These weapons were passed on to the Salafist rebels fighting against the regime of Bashar al-Assad.⁴⁸ Despite the embargo determined by the UNSC, a vast amount of machine guns, artillery, ammunition, anti-aircraft batteries and other weapons, donated by the Qatar monarchy, which had fought against the Gaddafi regime in Libya, was being shipped in Benghazi and Zintan and transferred to the opposition groups in Syria, where they entered through the Turkish border, as documented by the U.N. Security Council’s Group of Experts.⁴⁹

⁴³“Libya’s Muslim Brothers. The knack of organisation. The Muslim Brotherhood looks likely to make further gains”, *The Economist*, January 12, 2013. “Libyan activists protest against militias, Muslim Brotherhood”, Associated Press, *Fox News*, May 10, 2013.

⁴⁴Suliman Ali Zway and Kareem Fahim, “Dozens Are Killed in Libya in Fight With Militia”, *The New York Times*, June 8, 2013.

⁴⁵Abdullah Elmaazi, “Chaos in Libya Threatens Entire Sahel Region”, *Al Monitor*, May 3, 2013.

⁴⁶“Urgent, war on terror in sahel: Qatar supports terrorists”, Indian Defence and Military Forum.

⁴⁷“Russia Slams Saudi Arabia, Qatar For Funding Syrian Rebels”, *PressTV*, June 8, 2012.

⁴⁸Atwan (2012, p. 57–59).

⁴⁹Rania Abouzeid, “Arming Syria’s Rebellion: How Libyan Weapons and Know-How Reach Anti-Assad Fighters”, *Time*, May 29, 2013.

26.3 The Second Cold War as a Step Towards the Full Spectrum Dominance

Syria became the *Major Theater War* (MTW) of the second Cold War, clearly showing the confrontation of two blocks, formed by the United States, the European Union, the oil monarchies of the Gulf, Turkey and Israel on one side, and by Russia, China and Iran on the other, despite the diversity and contradictions in interests. In reality, the United States had always felt uneasy about the presence of the Soviet Union or Russia in the Mediterranean. It had wanted to overthrow the regime in Syria ever since Colonel Hafez al-Assad had signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with Leonid Brezhnev in 1980, establishing a special strategic partnership between Syria and the Soviet Union.⁵⁰ In 1987, President Mikhail Gorbachev reiterated the commitment to continue to provide economic and military assistance to Syria. Vladimir Putin, as President of Russia, the legal successor of the Soviet Union, maintained the strategic ties with Syria at a meeting in Moscow with President Bashar al-Assad in January 2005, and he forgave most of Syrian debts with the Soviet Union (about US\$ 9.6 billion out of US\$ 13.4 billion).

As far we know, Russia has never been willing to simply abandon Syria under pressure from the United States, Great Britain and France, who still dream about playing some imperial role in the Middle East. “*It is absolutely impossible to change the regime in Syria as a precondition for launching the dialog*,” the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, told the press in Istanbul after talking with his counterpart in Turkey, Minister Ahmet Davutoglu.⁵¹ And as soon as the European Union suspended the arms embargo on the rebels, under pressure from Britain and France, Moscow sent S-300 anti-aircraft defense systems to Bashar al-Assad’s regime,⁵² which were added to the other Russian Pantsir-S1 and Buk-M2 systems.

The conflict in Syria has become even more complex, however, due to the involvement of other visible and invisible actors, including al-Qa’ida, guided by the doctor Ayman al-Zawahiri, the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic terrorist associations motivated by their own interests, in addition to proxies for other countries. The Islamic *jihādists*, shouting *Allāhu Akbar* (God is great) and massacring Christians, Alawites and other minorities, supported by the West, Israel, Turkey and the absolutist oil monarchies of the Persian Gulf, lined up in the same trenches against the secular government of Bashar al-Assad, who never lost legitimacy or the support of large portions of the population, especially the ethnic and religious minorities and the forces of Hizballah, coming from Lebanon. The

⁵⁰Baer (2003, p. 95–96).

⁵¹“It’s absolutely impossible to change regime in Syria—Russian Foreign Minister”, *Itar-Tass News Agency*, 17/4/2013.

⁵²“Israel vows to stop Syria’s S-300 missile shield from becoming operational”, *Voice of Russia*, May 30, 2013.

situation of the Christians throughout the Middle East, but mainly in Syria, was turning increasingly dramatic.⁵³

According to the Stockholm International—Peace Research Institute, Qatar had spent more than US\$ 3 billion until mid-2013 to fund the civil war in Syria, where it sent 70 flights loaded with weaponry between March 2012 and April 2013, while it donated US\$150 per day to the rebels in Aleppo and other provinces.⁵⁴ Ever since he had ostensibly intervened in Libya, the goal of Emir Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani had always been to create the conditions to establish Islamism not only as a *Weltanschauung*, an outlook on the world, but also as a political ideology with a proposed political order, presenting the Islamic State governed by the *Shari'ah*, i.e., the Caliphate, as an alternative to the secular nation-state.⁵⁵ In any event, if the regime of Bashar al-Assad were to be toppled, the scenario in Syria resulting from the war tended to be worse than the one existing in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Yemen in mid-2013. Democracy would mean the rule of chaos and terror, with the most serious and profound implications for Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia and other countries in the Middle East and Africa with extremely fragile and unstable governments, in addition to the European Union itself.

Despite the disastrous experiences with *regime change* in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya etc., President Barack Obama gave in to the internal (Republicans, the Jewish lobby, etc.) and external (Israel, Britain, France, Saudi Arabia, Qatar) pressures and announced that the United States would supply arms to the rebels, arguing that President Bashar al-Assad's government forces had used chemical weapons in combat. But according to a UN commission, nothing could be proven in this regard.⁵⁶ Just as former President George W. Bush did to attack Iraq, President Obama resorted to propaganda, to lies, to justify the open (previously veiled) meddling of the United States in Syria. The supply of arms and other logistical equipment would contribute to heat up the US economy and shorten the cycle of recession, supporting the productive forces of capitalism shaken by the profound systemic crisis of 2007–2008. As such, President Obama was serving the interests and needs of the industrial-military complex, a convenient instrument for the achievement of economic surpluses, i.e., for capital accumulation. But what actually determined the decision was the fact that President Bashar al-Assad's forces,

⁵³Heinz Nußbaumer, "Der 'Neue Nahe Osten'", Hans Hollerveger, "Wer nichts tut, komm immer zu spät", ICO—*Information Christlicher Orient*, 13. Jahr, n° 49, February 2023, p. 4–5.

⁵⁴Roula Khalaf and Abigail Fielding Smith, "Qatar bankrolls Syrian revolt with cash and arms", *Financial Times*, May 16, 2013.

⁵⁵Tibi (2001, p. 248–249).

⁵⁶"In the wake of US-Israeli Attack on Syria, UN reveals terrorists not government used sarin gas", Land Destroyer Report, May 6, 2013, accessed <http://landdestroyer.blogspot.pt/2013/05/in-wake-of-us-israeli-attack-on-syria.html>; "US unveils Iraq WMD 'Curveball Style' lies vs. Syria—As NATO terror front collapses in Syria, US attempts to justify intervention by drumming up familiar WMD lies", International Observatory for Gulf State Despotism, April 26, 2013, iogsd.blogspot, accessed http://iogsd.blogspot.pt/2013/04/us-unveils-iraq-wmd-curveball-style.htm?utm_source=BP_recent.

reinforced by Hizballah militias coming from Lebanon, had retaken the strategic city of a-Qusayr, from which the government could control the country, and they were marching to reconquer Aleppo, markedly changing the course of the civil war in Assad's favor. A civil war that counted on the increasing participation from *Jihadists*, mercenaries recruited by Salafists in Tunisia, Morocco and even in Europe with the financial backing from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other Gulf emirates.

The objective of the United States has always been to topple Bashar al-Assad to eliminate the presence of Russia in the Mediterranean, closing its naval bases of Tartus and Latakia in Syria, in addition to containing China's advance in the Middle East and North Africa, isolating Iran and cutting its ties with Hizballah in Lebanon, in accordance with Israel's interests. There were no other reasons why the State Department allocated more than US\$ 6 million to the opposition in Syria from at least 2006 to 2009. These funds were designated for the operations of the television channel TV Barada River, linked to the Movement for Justice and Development of Syrian exiles in London.⁵⁷ And from the very beginning, the war in Syria had been a battle for control over the Mediterranean, a vital geopolitical and strategic region within the context of an undeclared global conflict in which the United States ostensibly intensified its efforts to maintain and expand the presence of its armed forces overseas, to be able to quickly project its vast power and operate “*unilaterally or in combination with multinational and interagency partners in order to achieve full spectrum dominance.*”⁵⁸

Full spectrum dominance has always meant the extension and consolidation of the United States' planetary hegemony, claiming the condition of the only true sovereign power on Earth for itself.⁵⁹ At the same time it sought to degrade, unilaterally or through the UN with the support of the powers of the European Union, the democratic principle of the equality of all nations, encouraging the catastrophic fragmentation of national states in order to transform the entire world into a market for its investment and to secure the safety and protection of this market with NATO serving as the gendarme of the financial system and the international corporations.⁶⁰

This objective, a *desideratum* of the *Project for the New American Century* of former President George W. Bush, has put the United States in a permanent state of war, an endless and undefined war against an asymmetric enemy without squadrons or air force, and whose military organization, economic resources and information systems have never been known or described in detail. President Barack Obama

⁵⁷Craig Whitlock, “U.S. secretly backed Syrian opposition groups, cables released by WikiLeaks show”, *The Washington Post*, April 18, 2011.

⁵⁸Joint Vision 2020—America's Military: Preparing for Tomorrow, May 30, 2013, Army Gen. Henry Shelton chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Office of Primary Responsibility, Director for Strategic Plan and Policy, J5, Strategy Division. Garamone (2000).

⁵⁹Lieven (2004, p. 13).

⁶⁰For an analysis of this subject, see more details in Moniz Bandeira (2006, p. 28–31).

endorsed this plan, as explained in the *Joint Vision 2010* and ratified by the *Joint Vision 2020* of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under the leadership of Army General Henry Shelton.⁶¹ In the first days of August 2013, the White House amplified the alleged global threat of terror and ordered the closure of 19 US embassies and consulates in the Middle East and North Africa, under the allegation that it had intercepted electronic messages between al-Qa'ida militants and Ayman al-Zawahiri, bin Ladin's successor, coordinating attacks against American interests in certain countries, including Yemen, Kuwait, Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, American tourists received an "*unusual*" alert regarding "*increased security concerns*" on trips to the region. Some analysts and members of Congress, however, realized that Obama's revival and amplification of the terrorist threat was meant to divert attention from the scandal caused by revelations of the whistleblower Edward Snowden in the British newspaper *The Guardian*, and to legitimize the electronic eavesdropping programs of the NSA, to which it attributed the discovery of the plot.⁶² Even Senator Peter King, a senior representative of the Republican Party (NY), told the press that "*it's absolutely crazy to say there's any conspiracy here.*"⁶³

According to Professor James Petras, if al-Qa'ida had once again become a threat to the United States after 12 years of war in Afghanistan and 11 in Iraq, at a cost of US\$ 1.46 trillion and more than 7000 American soldiers' lives, in addition to thousands physically and psychologically maimed, then the campaign against terrorism had been an utter fiasco.⁶⁴ Indeed, the warning of the White House regarding al-Qa'ida's terrorist threat—the visible/invisible enemy—was a *psy-op* to frighten the American people and the other countries to justify the deployment of electronic espionage by the NSA and the existence of various intelligence services, who had perverted democracy and turned the United States and Great Britain into security states, following a potentially totalitarian trend. The threat had been fabricated. No terrorist attacks occurred against the embassies and consulates of the United States in the Middle East during the time they were closed, demonstrating the falsity of the alert vaunted by the White House.

The visible/invisible enemy was a necessity of the military-industrial complex, and he had the same face as the one conjured by President George W. Bush to justify his attack on Afghanistan: terrorism, manifested as al-Qa'ida. Or Frankenstein's monster, as General Pervez Musharraf put it, accusing the United States, Saudi Arabia and his own country, Pakistan, of having brought it to life. With this same enemy—al-Qa'ida and other terrorist organizations—President Obama

⁶¹http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/doctrine/genesis_and_evolution/source_materials/joint_vision_2020.pdf.

⁶²Eric Schmitt, "Qaeda Messages Prompt U.S. Terror Warning", *The New York Times*, August 2, 2013. Josh Hicks, "Peter King says talk of terror-threat conspiracy 'absolutely crazy'", *The Washington Post*, August 4, 2013.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴James Petras, "The Obama Regime's Fabricated 'Terror Conspiracy' in Defense of the Police State", James Petras Website, <http://petras.lahaine.org/?p=1950>.

mobilized NATO, providing logistical support, weaponry and direct and/or indirect assistance in the wars in North Africa and the Middle East, such as in Libya and Syria. And what’s more, on August 21, 2013, after President Barack Obama had declared months before that the use of chemical weapons would be the “*red line*” for the United States to intervene militarily in Syria, rebels and terrorists manufactured a poison gas attack south of Damascus, filming the massacre of civilians and children and attributing it to the government of President Bashar al-Assad through the western media and social networks. The scenario for an American, French and British intervention had been set up perfectly, since Assad’s forces had obtained the upper hand against the insurgents in successive battles across the country, especially in Qasayr, the last bastion of resistance, and in al-Budweia al Sharquia, where they restored order and security to the relief of the population. With the support of France and Great Britain, President Obama, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, promptly ordered preparations for the bombing of Syria with Tomahawk missiles from the squadron in the Mediterranean. He said it would be just a “*punitive strike*”, although he no evidence against Assad’s government. The only thing left was for him to declare, as Tamburlaine⁶⁵ in the play of the English playwright Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593): “*The god of war resigns his room to me, meaning to make me general of the world.*”⁶⁶

St. Leon, August 2013.

⁶⁵Tamburlaine is the historic Timūr (1336–1405) or Timūr-e Lang, a Turkish khan originating from a Mongol tribe known as Barlas. He conquered almost all of Central Asia and founded the Timurid dynasty, but lost Persia to the Safavid dynasty in 1501. He founded the Timurid dynasty. After the loss of Persia to the Safavid dynasty in 1501, several members of this family established emirates, including Kabulistan (Afghanistan), and invaded Hidustan, where they founded the Mogul Empire.

⁶⁶Marlowe (1986, p. 166–168).

Chapter 27

A Short History of Islam: From Muhammad to the War on Terror

27.1 Islam: Warrior Religion, Believers Movement and Muhammad

Max Weber defined Islam as a “*Kampfreligion*,” a warrior religion, born in a charismatic community of warriors under the command of a “*warrior prophet*”, Muhammad, and his companions.¹ Max Weber was not wrong in this assessment, despite of a certain simplification that was criticized by some academics, including Ira M. Lapidus and Bryan S. Turner.² “A seventh-century prophet could not become the true spiritual leader of a tribal community without exercising political leadership and, in the Peninsula, mastering the basics of horsemanship, sword-play and military strategy,” reasoned the Pakistani writer Tariq Ali.³

The Believers movement (*ummat al-mu'minin*), those who believed in the oneness of God from which Islam dawned, didn't emerge in the Semitic desert of Arabia. This region was sparsely populated by shepherds and farmers, who only settled in small villages surrounding oases with a subsistence economy, and by Bedouin tribes, whose mode of production consisted of looting caravans traveling from Egypt and Yemen to Mecca, where they traded slaves, textiles, jewelry, grains, wine and other products. Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim (570–632 A.D.), the Prophet, was born in Mecca. And it was in Mecca that he started the Believers movement by preaching the *Qur'an* as divine revelation. Like other inhabitants of Mecca, he was a merchant and caravanner and, as such, also a warrior, since he had to deal with eventual Bedouin attacks while crossing the desert.

Mecca was not an oasis. It was a city of merchants and a religious center in the west of Arabia controlled by the Quraysh tribe, to which Muhammad's clan, the

¹Weber (1964, p. 899, 901).

²Lapidus (1999, p. 139–151). Turner (1974, p. 14, 39–55, 172–173).

³Ali (2002, p. 42).

Hashim, belonged. It was home to the Ka'aba, a large temple in the form of a black cube with 360 idols of stone or statues of pre-Islamic divinities, including *Al-Lah* (Great God). This was a pagan shrine that attracted thousands of pilgrims each year to the traditional trade and culture festivals in Okaz, a market between Mecca and Taif. These festivals lasted 4 months, and during this time the Arabs promised to neither use weapons or start wars in order to ensure the business environment. Legend had it that the Ka'aba was built by Abraham, the patriarch of monotheism, and his son Ishmael, born to Hagar, the mythical ancestor of the Arabs.⁴ The pilgrimages, which dated back to 500 years before Christ, strengthened the activities and commercial ties between Mecca and the other regions of Arabia, from Yemen to Damascus in Syria.

Although it was a commercial center and the most developed city in Arabia, in the seventh century Mecca was still ruled by tribal, customary laws. Public and private authorities were intertwined and the class of merchants dominated economically. There was also a fluctuating, non-tribal population of refugees and merchants from other regions who had flocked to Mecca to conduct business or because of various other reasons. But the division of labor had not yet reached its apex. There was no overarching public authority. The clans remained intact, including their totemic traditions, and the social organization of Mecca, as *Gentilverbände*⁵ was ordered according to ancient tribal customs—kinship, gender and age—, in which solidarity and security (*assabya*) stemmed from consanguinity and family ties.

Mecca was what Patricia Crone called a *stateless society*, in which the resolution of conflicts—the price of blood—was governed and mitigated by the tribe itself as an ethnic-sociocultural entity or through intertribal relations.⁶ The same applied to the Bedouins, herders of camels, horses and sheep who migrated with the seasons in search of pasture, carrying their own weapons since they didn't entrust their protection to others. It was easier to provoke them than to disarm them.⁷ But the inhabitants of Mecca, whose wealth came from trade, depended on the cooperation with other tribes as well as on deals with the nomad communities, the Bedouins, who were free, had no laws and institutions, lacked political control and threatened the traffic of caravans throughout the desert.

As the great historian Edward Gibbon wrote, the service of the Bedouins in the field was fast and vigorous, but their friendship could be bought, their faith was erratic, their enmity capricious.⁸ They were also addicted to theft and trade, and the caravans roaming the desert could be either plundered or saved by them.⁹ In one way or another, therefore, every tribe virtually comprised a military community, in

⁴Kaldûn (2005, p. 269).

⁵Weber (1964, p. 939).

⁶Crone (2011, p. 447–448).

⁷Kaldûn (2005, p. 94–95).

⁸Gibbon (1995, vol. III, p. 160).

⁹Ibid., p. 162.

addition to making deals with the Bedouins and paying tribute for safe passage of their commercial caravans.¹⁰ The violent disputes between tribes and clans, between shepherds and farmers for the oases, and/or between the forces of the decadent Persian and Byzantine empires, further contributed to the warrior spirit of the Arabs, whether they lived as Bedouins, nomads, shepherds, farmers or merchants with a sedentary lifestyle. The mentality and *ethos* of Mecca's inhabitants was not far removed from the Bedouins, even if they had settled and lived off trade. They were at the same time nomadic and urban.

At the time, Arabia was surrounded by two decadent empires: Persia under the Sassanid dynasty (226–651 AD), and Byzantine, heir to the Eastern Roman Empire. There were no territorial, ethnic, demographic or political boundaries separating them from other parts of the Middle East. Some kingdoms had existed to the south of the peninsula, in *Arabia Felix* (Yemen), including Saba, Aksum and Himyar, which controlled the Red Sea and the coast of the Gulf of Aden. There were also Christian (Nazarenes), Jewish and pagan tribes.¹¹ And a large part of this region was inhabited by Bedouins, whose clans (*'ašā'ir*) and tribes were locked in frequent disputes.

Until the first half of the seventh century, the Arabs were polytheists and idolaters, with a substantial part of Greek and Roman pagan heritage still lingering, in addition to other influences, including Zoroastrianism, the dominant religion in the Persian Empire. As a commercial city that attracted caravans from all quarters, including North Africa, Mecca was also imbued with many other religious tendencies, including monotheistic currents brought by groups of Jews and Christians. As far we know, the first Jews arrived in Arabia soon after the destruction of the second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D.¹² But there were Arab communities in Yemen who spoke Hebrew. They were possibly descendants of migrants and refugees from Palestine or Babylon.¹³ And inscriptions with Jewish names were discovered in tombs in 1956, suggesting the presence of Jewish communities in the province of Hijaz (part of *Arabia Petraea*, the ancient Roman province) on the Red Sea coast in the sixth century before Christ.¹⁴

According to Ira M. Lapidus, Mecca transformed itself into one of the most complex and heterogeneous places in Arabia.¹⁵ It had grown beyond the limits of the tribes and clans. The commercial exchange with other regions and the presence of adventurers of different religious and sectarian stripes, without ties to the tribes and local clans, modified economic relations and produced social stratification and the concentration of wealth, favored by the monetary circulation promoted by trade. This also produced irreconcilable discrepancies between the situation of individuals

¹⁰ Al-Barghouti (2008, p. 180).

¹¹ Küng (2010, p. 64–66).

¹² Donner (2010, p. 30–31).

¹³ Ibid., p. 30–31.

¹⁴ Johnson (1988, p. 166).

¹⁵ Lapidus (1988, p. 19–20).

and the imperatives of clan loyalty.¹⁶ Ibn Khaldūn al-Hadrami (1332–1406), the noted historian of Islam born in Tunisia, wrote in his famous work *Muqaddimah* that this nation dominated by Bedouins controlling the deserts, found itself in a situation not unlike anarchy.¹⁷ Indeed, Mecca was losing its social and moral identity, and anarchy was threatening commercial movements in Arabia.¹⁸

Professor Fred M. Donner was convinced that Islam began as a religious movement and not as a social, political or even national one. It was particularly concerned with personal salvation through the intensification of faith and the restoration of fair and virtuous behavior to face the day of judgment (*yawm al-din*) at the end of times.¹⁹ The pious and eschatological nature of the *Qur'an*'s message, however, implied a political and social meaning, with the condemnation of arrogance, hedonism, selfishness, usury, wealth and the abandonment of the tribal virtues. In short, it condemned the materialism of Mecca,²⁰ a society touched by imperial influence, but without the centralization of political power²¹ to maintain and expand its commercial order throughout Arabia, of which its wealth depended.

Monotheism, which probably arose in Egypt during the reign of Pharaoh Iknaton/Akhenaten (1336 or 1334 BC), was a historical necessity in the organizing process of tribal communities through the centralization and concentration of a public authority and the separation of social and political life. According to Max Weber, only a religious configuration based on the belief in the oneness of God could apparently provide a sound foundation for permanent political and military structures.²² This was no doubt one of the reason that led Constantine (307–337 A. D.) to legalize Christianity and make it the official religion of the Roman Empire, legitimating the supremacy of the monarch²³ by putting an end to the plurality of gods. All people owed obedience to only one monarch, through *jus divinus*, and they should worship his person. That is also why monotheism, infiltrated through Jewish and Nazaren groups, became the essence of Muhammad's preaching in an Arabia in those circumstances. His goal was essentially to unify the previously fragmented and polytheistic Arabs, not through tribal ties of kinship, but, above all, through religion, subjecting them to a single, almighty God, who he would serve as exoteric messenger, the last prophet, the "*living link between men and divinity*."²⁴

¹⁶Ibid. p. 20.

¹⁷Kaldūn (2005, p. 120–122).

¹⁸Lapidus (1988, p. 20).

¹⁹Donner (2010, p. xii).

²⁰Hurgronje (1916, p. 22).

²¹Lapidus (1988, p. 20).

²²Weber (1967, p. 70).

²³Emperor Flavius Valerius Claudius Constantinus (307–337 A.D.) adopted Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, transferring its capital to Constantinople (Byzantium). In 325, he convened the Council of Nicaea.

²⁴Gramsci (2004, p. 128–129).

The revelations of the *Qur'an* with a normative and ethical value corresponded to the commercial as well as social and political needs of Arabia, since no common law or higher authority existed other than the heads of tribes, clans and families. And these needs became acute in the face of domestic contradictions in Mecca and external conflicts with the Bedouins, the lords of the desert, and the inhabitants of Yathrib (later Medina—*Madīnat an-Nabī*—City of the Prophet). The trade activities in Arabia, with Mecca as main center, required order and security and, therefore, the establishment of a central authority. And in the circumstances of the time, only monotheism could legitimize such an authority as a political-religious ideology.

No one knows who wrote the surahs of the *Qur'an*. Muhammad himself was probably illiterate, he had never been taught how to read and write.²⁵ And neither had the men surrounding him, since these were Bedouins and people of a poor and humble origin.²⁶ Some sermons were certainly dictated by him to some of his disciples and others memorized and transmitted orally, since Muhammad was surely aware of the ancient prophets of the *Torah* (the Pentateuch had already been translated into Arabic)²⁷ and of the messiah (*Masih*), Jesus, son of Mary, of the Gospels, mentioned in the *Qur'an*.²⁸ Islam recognizes Moses and Jesus as God's messengers, but it attributes to Muhammad the condition of last prophet.²⁹ No other will appear in Islamic eschatology until the coming of the Imām al-Mahdī for *yawm al-Din* (the Day of Judgment), echoing the teachings of the Orthodox Syriac Church established in Antioch, presumably by the apostle Peter in the year 34 AD.

According to Ibn Khaldūn, the laws and religious precepts of Islam were rooted as a belief, articles of faith, which were passed on orally through the generations.³⁰ And the *Qur'an* was only fully compiled after the death of the Prophet, since he could make new revelations while he lived. Authorship of the verses was attributed to God (*Allah*), who would have revealed them to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel, entrusting him with the task of restoring true monotheism, Abraham's monotheism, and virtuosity among the Arabs through the eschatological prediction of the Final Judgment, when the "sons of darkness" would be called before Allah to be judged. The threat of judgment and fire as a punishment from God (*Allah*) was essential to force compliance with the laws of the *Qur'an*, which actually stemmed from the legal and ethical system of Judaism, with some innovations.

Werner Sombart pointed out that for the Jews, law was the law of God and that moral law and divine ordinations were inseparable.³¹ Obedience to God's laws,

²⁵Weber (1964, p. 361). Gibbon (1995, vol. III, p. 210).

²⁶Ibid., p. 428–429.

²⁷Ibid., p. 171.

²⁸*Der Koran* (Arabisch-Deutsch), Aus dem Arabisch von Max Henning, Teil 3, Sure 3, Das Haus Īmrāns 45, p. 55. Küng (2010, p. 77).

²⁹Ibid., p. 129.

³⁰Kaldūn (2005, p. 97).

³¹Sombart (1913, p. 192).

according to Thomas Hobbes, was the essential condition for man's salvation faced with the eschatological perspective of the Final Judgment; the interpretation of laws, however, depended on the sovereign authority, and this interpretation could not differ from the one given by the sovereign authority itself, to which the subjects owed obedience.³² This was the principle of Jewish monotheism, preserved by both Christianity and Islam in one way or another, as the ideological apparatus of systems of domination.

The *Qur'an*, whose official version was promulgated by Caliph 'Uthman (644–656 A. D.),³³ reflected the spirit of Muhammad's times, an era of turbulence, disintegration, terror, conquests and massacres. An era in which peace, according to Karen Armstrong, could only be achieved through the sword.³⁴ And in a way, Muhammad developed the theology of the just war, which sometimes may be necessary to preserve moral values and establish a more equitable society. But by demanding, in his capacity as God's messenger, the reform of tribal norms and the establishment of a social *ethos*, Muhammad threatened the status quo, the power of the wealthy merchants, whose profits were favored and swelled by the pilgrimages undertaken by the various tribes to the rituals around the Ka'aba and on the market of Okaz, in Taif.

In the course of sixth and seventh centuries, the changes in Mecca's social structure stemming from the economic prosperity that the monopoly on trade had generated, produced discontent and dissatisfaction in certain layers of society.³⁵ And Muhammad's message fomented the underlying contradictions and the emergence of another community in Mecca. A community based on religion, made up of those who believed in the Oneness of God, reinforcing the importance of individuality, with ethical rules and rites that transcended the clans and tribes, whose characteristics were determined by the material conditions of the production and distribution of the goods on which they relied.

Muhammad's preaching against the lust, the sumptuousness and the accumulation of wealth of the merchants, on the one hand, while poverty grew on the other, threatened the dominance of the wealthy Quraysh elite, the custodians of the Ka'aba.³⁶ In his capacity as the Prophet, the messenger of the one true God, he demanded the reform of the tribal rules governing commercial and financial affairs, denouncing usury (*ribā*), considered the fifth most serious sin, and the exploitation of those most in need, as well as civil and family affairs (marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc.), improving the *status* of women, although not putting them on equal footing with men. "*The Quranic ideal and Muhammad's example were probably much more favorable to women than later Arab and Muslim practice*", noted Professor Ira M. Lapidus.³⁷

³²Hobbes (2002, p. 190, 403–405 and 412).

³³Lapidus (1988, p. 21).

³⁴Armstrong (2001, p. 168–169).

³⁵Rodinson (1980, p. 180–181).

³⁶Bissio (2012, p. 104–105).

³⁷Lapidus (1988, p. 30–31).

Religion was the form in which political ideology expressed itself, weaving moral behavior, economic and commercial interests and social structure into a system of ideas to guide life in Mecca and across Arabia. And it did not take long for the idolaters to react, the powerful merchants of the Quraysh tribe and Umayya clan who had overcome the dominance of the Hāshim clan, to which the Prophet belonged. The Believers (Muslims, those who submit to the faith) who converted to the doctrine of the *Qur'an* were persecuted, imprisoned, beaten and threatened with death. Some fled to Abyssinia. And with the deaths of his uncle Abū Ṭālib ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (550–619), who had raised him and was the head of the Hāshim clan (of the Quraysh tribe), and his rich wife Kahdijah, both in the same year of 619, Muhammad felt isolated and sought support outside of Mecca.

Yathrib (Medina) was a small agricultural village around an oasis about 202 miles from Mecca. The polytheists clans—Aws and Kazraj—which arrived there from Yemen in the year 400 A.D. after the destruction of the Ma'ārib dam, located 55 miles to the northeast of San'a, dominated there and were in constant conflict with one another. As farmers, however, they needed stability in the oasis where they had settled. And in 620, a group of men of the Kazraj clan accepted Muhammad as Prophet, and together with others of the Aws clans, they later invited him to be the arbiter (*hakam*) of the conflict in Medina, where they celebrated the commitment of al-'Qaba, through which they promised to obey and defend him. At the time, dozens of Jewish clans were already in Medina, including the Qaynuqa, Qurayza, Qaynuqa and Nadir clans, and this meant there was more sympathy for monotheism, making its acceptance easier.

The *Hijra* (migration), Muhammad's move to Medina (622) with his disciples and companions, the Believers (*muhajirun*), marked the advent of Islam, the beginning of Arabia's transition from polytheism to monotheism, from a society governed by tribal mores to a society in which God (Allah) was the sovereign and the prophet, his messenger. Through his charismatic power (*Charismatische Herrschaft*),³⁸ Muhammad organized the *Umma*, the community of Believers, as an autonomous body, an embryonic state, without ethnic or territorial connotation. And the *Qur'an* constituted the political constitution in the religious sphere, defining the economic, social and civil rules.³⁹

³⁸Weber (1956, p. 159–166).

³⁹Islam is based on five pillars (*arkān ad-Dīn*): 1. The declaration of the faith (*shahada*) that “there is no God except God and Muhammad is his prophet” (*lā ilāha illā l-Lāh, Muḥammadun rasūlu l-Lāh*); 2. Praying five times throughout the day (*salah*); 3. Paying the religious tribute (*zakat*), equivalent to 2.5% of the wealth of every Muslim, to the less fortunate; 4. Fulfill the obligations of the Ramadan (*siyam*); 5. Make the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*). Later, during the Umayyad Caliphate (661–750), the *Jihad* was added as the Sixth Pillar of Islam.

27.2 Muhammad's Transformation Work in Arabia

Like other authors, Edward Gibbon wrote that Muhammad was epileptic, but a genius,⁴⁰ with powerful charisma and great eloquence. Epileptic or not, the truth is that he transformed Arabia on the ruins of two empires (Persian and Byzantine), and changed the history of the world.⁴¹ Professor Jean-Baptiste Duroselle stressed that in all ages, the alignment of favorable circumstances—of a warrior people with men of “*genie visionnaire*”, rampantly ambitious men gifted with a merciless authority that tolerated no debate and a talent for war and organization, has always led to “*phénomènes fulgurantes et périssables*,” dazzling and perishable phenomena.⁴² Indeed, it wasn't Muhammad who imposed himself on Arab society from the outside in, with his charismatic power as the Prophet, the apostle of God. He was but the product of a set of circumstances. A product of a society in which politics was expressed and managed in the realm of religion, as ideology, and whose economic and social contradictions and antagonisms created the need for a non-territorial public authority (*dawla*), responsible for the entire *Umma*, as a nation not of an ethnic, but of a religious-ideological nature.

The *Umma* initially included Jews and Christians, the “People of the Book” (Pentateuch), i.e., the monotheists who believed in the first revelations made by the biblical prophets. Despite the initial tolerance toward non-Muslims, however, in the eighth century, Muhammad's first biographer, Muḥammad ibn Ishāq (c. 704–767 or 768) wrote that Muhammad ordered the execution of about 600–700 or even 800–900 Jewish men and women of the Qurayza tribe shortly after defeating them in Trench to consolidate his power in Medina, and their goods were distributed among the Muslims.⁴³ Moreover, when he crushed the Jews of the Khaybar tribe, he ordered the torture of Kinana until he revealed where he was hiding the treasure of his community.⁴⁴ In his five-act tragedy *Le fanatisme, ou Mahomet le prophète*, written in 1736 and premiered in 1741, Voltaire portrayed Muhammad as a fanatic who formed his first ideas “*in deserts, and in caves*.”⁴⁵ And although he was a prophet, Hegel wrote, Muhammad did not transcend the human condition.⁴⁶ He was no son of God.

Muhammad's fanaticism reflected the circumstances in which he lived, and the religious intolerance he manifested originated not from Islam, but from Jewish monotheism. In *Deuteronomy*, Moses explicitly orders the elimination, the killing of all who worshipped gods other than the God of Israel—*Elohūn/Adonai/Yahwe*—

⁴⁰Gibbon (1995, vol. III, p. 210).

⁴¹Armstrong (2001, p. 164).

⁴²Duroselle (1982, p. 344–345).

⁴³Ishaq, 2003, p. 102 and 129.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 138–139.

⁴⁵Voltaire (1743), Acte Premier, Scene II, p. 9.

⁴⁶“*Mohammed ist Prophet, aber Mensch und über des Menschen Schwächen nicht erhaben*.” Hegel (1920), Band 171d, p. 791.

and who practiced rites other than those established by the priests.⁴⁷ The God of the Jews—called Allah by the Arabs—determined in *Deuteronomy* that anyone who committed apostasy, whether he was a prophet or your own brother or son, should be killed by stoning.⁴⁸ The *Jihad*, the holy war, did not emerge with Islam. It, also, was taught in *Deuteronomy*: “When the LORD your God gives it into your hand [the city that refuses peace and to pay tribute], you shall strike all the men in it with the edge of the sword. As for the women, the children, the livestock and everything else in the city, you may take these as plunder for yourselves (...).”⁴⁹ This same commandment, inspired by Scripture, can be found in the *Qur'an*. And according to Max Weber, Judaism was explicitly, and particularly, used as the model for Muhammad's preaching.⁵⁰

Muhammad relentlessly fought the Jewish clans who didn't recognize him as *rasul*, i.e., as the Prophet, the apostle of God, following the Hebrew tradition in the line of Abraham, Moses and Noah, and who didn't accept the norms and beliefs imposed in the revelations of the *Qur'an*. His main goal was to subjugate Mecca to the new political-religious order in which the infidel (*jahiliyya*), the idolaters who didn't submit to God, represented the enemy to be defeated. The conquest of Mecca would ensure the domain over Arabia. And after 622, the *muhajirun*, strengthened by Bedouin tribes, began to attack and plunder the caravans on their way to Mecca. In 624, they ambushed and destroyed an enormous caravan with more than 1000 camels and goods valued at 50,000 dinars⁵¹ in the oasis of Badr, southwest of Medina. This victory was perceived as a divine sign in favor of Muhammad, and it led several other Bedouin tribes to abandon Mecca, becoming clients of the *Umma* and falling under its protection.⁵²

Six years later, in 630, the Prophet returned to his hometown after winning successive battles, not as a submissive, forgiven son, but as a warlord wielding a scimitar.⁵³ He destroyed the idols in the Ka'aba and proclaimed the worship of the abstract God, who only Abraham, Moses, and he himself had known. And so he extended the *Umma*, forming a confederacy of protected tribes and client tribes, a sort of “supertribe”, according to the definition of professor Bryan S. Turner,⁵⁴ in which all Muslims should be brothers of all Muslims.⁵⁵ It was the rule of tribal society, amplified and perpetuated, resting on Islam, but not always adhered to by the Arab peoples.

⁴⁷Deuteronomio (13 7–29), in *Die Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testament*, p. 208–209.

⁴⁸Ibid. (13 1–5 and 13–9), p. 208–209.

⁴⁹Ibid. (20 1–19).

⁵⁰Weber (1996, p. 486).

⁵¹*Dirhm* or *dirham* is the name of a former currency in ancient times used in the Middle East and North Africa. The name comes from the Greek currency *drachma*.

⁵²Lapidus (1988, p. 31–32).

⁵³Toynbee (1951, p. 227–228).

⁵⁴Turner (1974, p. 82).

⁵⁵Ishaq (2003).

Muhammad died in 632. He had no living son to succeed him by agnation as head of the family, and he didn't designate any successor to command the *Umma* or a way of choosing him.⁵⁶ Despite the opposition of some clans, the merchant Abu Bakr (573–634), his former companion (*sahabi*) and father of Ayesha ('Ā'isha), Muhammad's youngest wife, was elected *Khalifat rasul Allah* (Caliph of the Messenger of God). He would assume the *dawla*, previously represented by the Prophet with his charismatic power, guiding the *Umma*, constituted as Caliphate, a particular form of non-territorial, non-national government/state that sought to overcome the primeval tribalism (*jahilliya*) through the introduction of a sense of religious brotherhood, in which the payment of the *zakat*, the religious tribute, was the sign of submission to Islam.

Legitimized by the canonization and routinization of the Prophet's charismatic power through the *shahada* ("There is no god except God and Muhammad is His Prophet"), the caliph Abu Bakr held temporal and religious power as *shaykh*. But he had no legislative power, since Allah was the sovereign and the legal code was embedded in the revelations of the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna/Ahdith*, the collection of texts about the behavior, the actions and words of Muhammad. These were the sources on which *Shari'ah* (*jus divinus*) rested, in addition to the dogmas, the customs, the consensus and the traditions. They were interpreted within a certain context by the *ulamā'/muftis* (religious scholars), constituting a hierocracy that formulated the jurisprudence (*fiqh*) that should guide the decisions of the Caliphs and Emirs.

As Max Weber stressed, however, under its religious-ideological cloak, Islam has always served the expansionist interests of the Arabs,⁵⁷ i.e., the interests of Mecca's merchants. And Abu Bakr and his successors, the four so-called "*rightly guided caliphs*" of the Rashidun Caliphate (632–661)⁵⁸ continued their war of conquest, taking advantage of the exhaustion and weakening of the Byzantine and Sassanid empires to reshape civilization according to the new *ethos* and the interests of a mercantile economy. In 634, the Rashidun Caliphate, with its seat of power in Medina, conquered the byzantine fortress of Bosra in Transjordan (Palestine) with little more than 13,000 fighters. In 635, it took Damascus, and a year later, in the Battle of Yarmok, all of Syria. In 637–638, the Muslims entered Jerusalem. In 639, they conquered Armenia and Egypt, and captured Mesopotamia, Persia, at the same time, advancing through the steppes of Asia.⁵⁹

Even though about 72 sects have emerged from Islam in different periods of its history—including the mystical and ascetic Sufis, Alawis, Ibadis, Druze, Zaidis, Yazadis etc.⁶⁰—the biggest schism occurred with the great uprising—*al-Fitna al*

⁵⁶Weber (1964, p. 843, 856–857).

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 899–890.

⁵⁸The four caliphs the Sunnis consider "rightly guided" were: Abu Bakr (632–634), Umar ibn al-Khattab (634–644), Uthman ibn Affan (644–656) and Ali ibn Abi Talib (656–661).

⁵⁹Pirenne (1992, p. 149).

⁶⁰Khuri (2008, p. 19–21).

Ḥagâzya—the civil war that lasted for 5 years, from the battle of Siffin (657) until the assassination of Ali.⁶¹ By that time, the Rashidun Caliphate already had 100,000 soldiers and extended from Arabia to Egypt in the West, and the mountains of Iran in the East. But the sons of Ali, Hasan and Husayn, born of Fatima'h and the grandchildren of Muhammad, were unable to take power.

A'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan, the governor of the Syrian province, established the Umayyad Caliphate (661–750), transferred the capital to Damascus, and made succession hereditary, a dynasty. And he decoupled the armed force from the tribal structures by forming an army composed of slaves purchased or captured in battle, so that they would obey his commands and not those of relatives.⁶² The *Jihad* as holy war was consolidated as the Sixth Pillar of Islam. Between 647 and 709, the Umayyad Caliphate occupied the Maghrib, i.e., all of North Africa except Ceuta, both shores of the Mediterranean—no longer the *Mare Nostrum* of the Roman Empire—, Sicily and southern Italy. Islam then expanded to the Iberian Peninsula (Al-Andalus) and crossed the Pyrenees to the south of France, where it was halted by the forces of Prince Charles Martel (688–741) in Poitiers at the battle of Tours in 732.⁶³ The Saracens also led Islam to the Caucasus in Central Asia and to the north of India (Pakistan and India), establishing an empire of about 10 million square miles, in which Jews and Christians, the “People of the Book” (*ahl al-kitab*), were allowed to stay and keep their faith, but only if they paid fees to Islam.

Islam, however, wasn't spread only by the sword, by wars of conquest. Trade routes used by the caravans and ships of Arabs and missionaries promoted its proliferation. By extending its territory, the Umayyad Caliphate absorbed the administrative apparatus and bureaucracy of the Byzantine and Sassanid empires, and the entire tax collection machine became patrimonial and authoritarian. According to Ira M. Lapidus, the Umayyad dynasty managed to maintain the Caliphate for 90 years by force of arms alone, during which it imposed four decades of peace,⁶⁴ although it had to face numerous rebellions of Shia tribes, the revolt of the Berbers (740–743) and another civil war (680–692) before exhausting itself.

The third civil war occurred between 744 and 750, in which the Persians converted to Islam (*mawali*) participated by supporting the rebels. The commander

⁶¹ Abu Bakr appointed Umar ibn al-Khattab as his successor and obtained the consensus of the Islamic community. Umar, the second caliph, won the battle of Nihawand, in which he captured many Persian slaves, women and children, but he was murdered by a Persian named Firoz. His successor, Uthman ibn Affan, was elected by the *Majlis* (council) of voters, and went on to rule the caliphate as a king. He was also murdered. Ali ibn Abi Talib, husband of Fatima'h, son-in-law and cousin of Muhammad, faced major rebellions, however. These resulted in a great civil war that lasted five years, a period known as *al-Fitna al Kubra*. The Caliphate of Ali, the last Rashidun, lasted from 656 to 661, when he was killed in the great mosque Masjid al-Kūfa in Iraq, during the *sujūd* (prostration), praying toward the Ka'aba. His adherents, arguing that the successors should be of the *ahl al-Bayt* (house/family of the people), and therefore direct descendants of Muhammad, the children of Fatima'h and Ali, formed the Shia (*Shī'atul 'Alī*) faction, the supporters of Ali.

⁶²Crone (1980, p. 39).

⁶³Gibbon (1995, vol. III, p. 336–339).

⁶⁴Lapidus (1988, p. 60).

of the rebel forces was Abu al-‘Abbās al-Saffāh (722–754) of the Banu Hashim clan of the Quraysh Tribe. He entered Kufa in southern Iraq after defeating Marwan II of the Umayyad dynasty. After taking power, he transferred the capital of the Caliphate to Baghdad, turning it into a great city, a strategically located metropolitan center in Mesopotamia between the Tigris and the Euphrates.

Like the Umayyad dynasty, the Abbasid dynasty did not rely on tribal militias. It continued to train the *mamlūk* army—a military elite—with slaves from various origins, mostly captured or purchased Turks and Berbers. And so the Abbasid dynasty consolidated its rule over Arab and non-Arab people.⁶⁵ The Arab Empire transformed into a vast commercial-ideological Islamic Empire, a mosaic of ethnicities (Arabs, Persians, Berbers, Kharjites, Turks *et alt.*), ranging from Arabia to North Africa and from the Iberian Peninsula to the Indian subcontinent, where the descendants of Genghis Khan ruled the Mogul Empire from 1526 to 1757, spanning 3.2 million square kilometers from Bengal in the east, to Balochistan, a province in Pakistan, to the west, and Kashmir and Kaveri in the north, covering about 110 million inhabitants. Islam also entered the steppes of Tartary, bordering China, when forces of the Abbasid dynasty defeated Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang dynasty at the Battle of Talla (751), and it penetrated the Caucasus, where the emirate of Tbilisi (*al-Tifis*) was established in Georgia. In the tenth century, Bulgarian tribes between the Volga and Kama rivers in the Urals embraced Islam.

Arabic became a lingua franca, spoken in all regions of the Islamic Empire, which reached its zenith during the Abbasid Caliphate: thousands of mosques (3000 in Baghdad alone) and schools (*madrāsas*) were created; the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, who reigned between 786 and 809, founded the House of Wisdom (*Bayt al-Hikma*), where the classic works of many ancient Greeks, such as Aristotle, and Romans, as well as from other civilizations, were systematically translated and relayed to the European Renaissance through Jewish translators in Cordoba during the Muslim occupation of Spain. At its height, with many advances in medicine, mathematics, algebra (with the introduction of “Arabic numerals”, which actually came from India),⁶⁶ astronomy, hydraulics and other sciences, Arab culture merged with Persian culture under the Abbasid dynasty, facilitated by the transfer of the capital of the Caliphate from Damascus to Baghdad, in Mesopotamia.

The Abbasid Caliphate lasted from 750 to 1258, when the Mongols destroyed Baghdad. However, even though it evolved toward a model similar to that of the Sassanid Empire—an absolute monarchy with greater centralization of bureaucracy—, its weakening had already started between the eighth and tenth centuries. In the year 756, Abd al-Rahman ibn Um’awiya (731–788) of the Umayyad dynasty, who had escaped from the Abbasids with some relatives after the fall of Damascus, took Seville, and supported by the Berbers and Bedouins of Yemen, he assumed the Emirate of Cordoba in 755, founded by the Caliph Al-Walid I (711–750), in the

⁶⁵Crone (1980, p. 39).

⁶⁶Roman numerals didn’t include the zero.

Iberian Peninsula, the region of Al-Andalus.⁶⁷ Through the construction of roads, aqueducts and other improvements, as well as extraordinary cultural, artistic and scientific advancements, the Emirate of Cordoba, transformed into a Caliphate (929–1031), gave a formidable economic boost to the province of Al-Andalus, where Christians and Jews could live together in the largest civilization center of Europe in the Middle Ages.

The majority of the population did not convert to Islam, however, despite the fact that some communities became hybrids—the Mozarabs (*musta'rib*)—with the adoption of Arab language and customs by Christians and/or of Christianity by Berbers, Arabs and Moors. And although Islamized and surrounded by Arabs, the Christian communities in Al-Andalus kept their Latin-Hispanic language as far as possible, no doubt romanticized because of their religious identity and national resistance, according to professor Emilio González Ferrín of the University of Seville.⁶⁸

After the fall of Caliph Hisham III (of the Umayyad dynasty) in 1009, a civil war broke out in Al-Andalus, and the Caliphate of Cordoba disintegrated with the emergence of dozens of taifas—39 small independent kingdoms and emirates that filled the *vacuum* of power and maintained the cultural, scientific and artistic splendor under the rule of Berber, Arab or Central Asian clans and families.⁶⁹ A significant part of the taifas was ruled by Slavs from Europe.⁷⁰ But without military organization, they were unable to consolidate themselves. When king Alfonso VI (1040–1109) took Toledo (1085), the Almoravids (*al-Murābiṭūn*),⁷¹ a nomadic tribe of Berbers from Mauritania and followers of orthodox, ascetic Islam, crossed the Straits of Gibraltar under the command of Emir Yusef ibn Tashfin to violently⁷² conquer half of the Iberian Peninsula. The effective occupation of the territory was carried out with troops from the Maghrib. After another period of anarchy and civil war (*fitna*), the Berber *Shaykh* Muhammad Ibn Abdallah ibn Tumart of the Hergha tribe, which was part of the Masmuda confederation, proclaimed to be El-Mahdi and led the Almohads (*al-Muwahhidum*), a movement to redeem Islam and restore its original purity, renouncing the anthropomorphism it was undergoing in the Iberian Peninsula.

The Almohads defeated and displaced the Almoravids in the Maghrib and the Iberian Peninsula, and Ab al-Um'min took on the title of caliph when he succeeded Ibn Tumart. The regime was maintained through a military alliance of Berber and Arab tribes. But the Islamic rule in the Iberian Peninsula was falling apart. And in a

⁶⁷Islam invaded the Iberian Peninsula in 710–711 with forces composed of Arabs, Berbers and Moors, led by Tariq Ibn Ziyad, of Berber origin and linked to the Umayyad dynasty.

⁶⁸Ferrín (2006, p. 243–244).

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 416. Manchado, Quesada and Lasala (2009, p. 148–153).

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 195–196.

⁷¹On this subject, see Paulo Fernando Moraes Farias, “The Almoravids: Some Questions Concerning the Character of the Movement during its Periods of Closest Contact with the Western”, *Bulletin de l'I.F.A.N* (Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire), t. XXIX, sér. B, n° 3–4, 1967.

⁷²Manchado, Quesada and Lasala (2009, p. 275–276). Ferrín (2006, p. 244).

permanent state of war, the Muslims were defeated in Lisbon (1147) by King Afonso Henriques with the support of the Crusaders, in the Algarve (*Al-Gharb*) in the first half of the thirteenth century, and, finally, in Granada (1492), when Emir Abu Abdallah Muhammad XII (c. 1460–c. 1533), known as Boabdil, capitulated to the forces of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabel of León and Castile.⁷³

Meanwhile, the *Ismaili* (ishmaelite) branch of Shia Islam—*Shī'atul'Alī*—led by Abdullāh al-Mahdī Billah, a Berber of Tunisian origin, had established the Fatimid Caliphate (*al-Fāṭimiyyūn*) in al-Qāhira (Cairo), Egypt, in 969, covering a vast area of the Maghrib (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya). This Caliphate, whose army also was composed of *mamālīk* (slave soldiers), extended from the Sudan to Palestine, Sicily, the Levant and Hijaz, from the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean via the Mediterranean, and it lasted from 909 until 1171. When Al-Adid (1149–1171), the last Fatimid Caliph, died, Salah ad-Din al-Ayyub (Saladin), of Kurdish origin, assumed the Sultanate of Egypt and Syria, realigned it with the Abbasid Caliphate and strengthened Sunni Islam through the creation of hundreds of *madrasas* for the teaching of the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna*. The Ayyubi dynasty dominated the Middle East during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a period in which the holy war with the Christians intensified because of the Crusades to the Middle East.

In 1250, after the death of Sultan as-Salih Ayyub (1240–1249), his son, al-Malik al-Din Turanshah was murdered by his own guards (*Bahris*), and the military elite formed by slaves coming from Turkish tribes in Central Asia (Kipchak/Lo), Circassians (Adyghe) from the Caucasus, and Georgians, established the Mamluk Dynasty (*Memlūk Sul-tanlıġı*), which resisted the attacks of the crusades and the Mongols and lasted until 1517. At the same time, in 1258, the Mongols under the command of Hulagu Khan invaded and sacked Baghdad, burning libraries and killing thousands of people, including women and children, the Caliph al-Musta'sim Billah and his entire family. The Abbasid Caliphate, already weakened after the loss of the Caliphate of Cordoba, Maghrib and Ifriqiya (the region between Tunisia, Tripolitania in the west of Libya, and the east of Algeria), disappeared. Only one Abbasid prince, Abu Abd Allah, with the honorary title of Al-Mustansir, managed to escape to Cairo, where he maintained the Caliphate symbolically, without any real power, under the protection of the Mamluk dynasty, which had come to dominate Egypt after 1261.

The Abbasid Caliphate disintegrated into several autonomous provinces without a central government, and the Mongols attempted to rebuild Baghdad with the most complete religious freedom in all of Mesopotamia. Many converted to Islam, as occurred in Khurasan in the northeast of Iran, where they also mingled with Persian tribes and Seljuq Turks, nomads from Central Asia who had established the Sultanate of Rûm (1077–1307) in Anatolia, a region of the Byzantine Empire between the Black Sea, the Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea.⁷⁴

⁷³Lapidus (1988, p. 384–389).

⁷⁴Finkel (2005, p. 3–4).

27.3 Rise and Fall of the Ottoman Empire

Around 1299, Osman I/Othman I (1258–1326), leading Turkish tribes settled in Anatolia, separated from the Rûm Sultanate (*Saljūqiyyān-e Rûm*), which fell apart into small emirates (*beyliks*). From the outset, his efforts were aimed at subjugating the nomadic warriors, the Bedouins, submitting them to organized settlements and a sedentary lifestyle. So began the rise of the Ottoman Empire, a patrimonial sultanate with a bureaucratic apparatus inherited from the Byzantine Empire. It was consolidated when Sultan Mehmed II (1431–1481) finally took Constantinople (Byzantium) after several sieges, where he celebrated his triumph in the cathedral Hagia Sophia by proclaiming the *shahada* with an *imman*: “*There is no god but God, and Muhammad is His prophet.*”

When they crossed the Straits of Galípoli (Ampulia) in the Adriatic Sea and entered the south of Italy, the Ottomans opened the doors for the penetration by other Turkish tribes, who advanced on the Balkans and occupied the north of Greece, Albania, Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia, Herzegovina and Bulgaria. They kept expanding along the Danube basin until reaching Central Europe and occupying Hungary. At the gates of Vienna, they were finally defeated by the forces of the Archduke of Austria, Leopold I (1640–1705), the Holy Roman Emperor, under the command of General Raimondo Graf Montecúccoli (1609–1680) at the battle of Saint Gotthard in 1664.

The Ottoman Empire was now a vast and powerful military structure, centralized and organized bureaucratically, with the ability to impose and collect taxes and fees across the expanse under its domain.⁷⁵ And when Lord Byron visited Turkey, Greece and other countries of the Ottoman Empire in 1815, he observed that, through their courage, temperament, strength and ability to use weapons, “*every Mussulman is born a soldier.*”⁷⁶ They were the *ghāzi*, the warriors who fought for the faith in Allah. It was the flame of the *jihad*, nurtured by the aspiration to spread Islam.⁷⁷ About 100 years later, during the war of 1914–1918, Captain Thomas E. Lawrence, better known as Lawrence of Arabia, observed that “*the sword had been the virtue of the children of Othman*”, but he also pondered that, at that time, swords were no longer in fashion, long surpassed by more deadly and scientific weaponry.⁷⁸

Indeed, changes in technology and in the organic composition of capital had heralded the rise of heavy industry, the supremacy of the European nation-states as industrial powers—especially Great Britain, France and Germany—, and the expansion of capitalist economy through the anabolism of natural, non-capitalist and pre-capitalist economies. The disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, stagnated and virtually debilitated since the defeat in Austria, accelerated after the elimination

⁷⁵Hourani (1991, p. 214–215).

⁷⁶Byron (2003, p. 50).

⁷⁷Finkel (2005, p. 10–11).

⁷⁸Lawrence (1962, p. 34).

of the Khanate of Crimea (1783) and continued during the thirteenth century with the independence of the countries in the Balkans, ensured by the Russian Empire (Treaty of San Stefano—1877), the loss of Bulgaria (1878) and the occupation of Egypt by Great Britain (1882) to defend its interests in the Suez Canal.

The Ottoman Empire, this mosaic of numerous ethnic groups and nations that included large Christian and Jewish communities, was bankrupt, increasingly reliant on foreign banks, the *Sick Man Of Europe*—an expression attributed to Tsar Nikolai I of Russia. It was a decrepit, dying empire.⁷⁹ And it no longer had the conditions to resist the internal nationalist revolts, the growing military power of Europe and the penetration of its goods and capital, particularly from Germany, France and Britain, which started to flood Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco since the end of the nineteenth century.

When the first world war broke out, only Turkey, which had signed a treaty of alliance with Germany, and Iran were relatively stable national communities in the Middle East, with their own idiosyncrasies, social psychology, language and culture. Since the end of the nineteenth century, however, Turkey was undergoing changes linked to the penetration of capitalist economy through French and German investments in association with the Ottoman Bank for the construction of the Anatolia railroad, *Haichar-Pacha-Ismid*, and for other ventures in Turkish Asia. And in 1908, the Young Turks—officers of the 3rd Army Corps in Macedonia—had already revolted against Sultan Abdul Hamid II, marched against Constantinople and restored the Constitution, uniting Muslims and Christians. In turn, Iran, whose customs, traditions and language (farsi) had been restored by Shah Ismail I (1500–1525) of the Safavid dynasty, converting the population to the Shi'a branch of Islam, was divided into zones of influence of the British Empire and the Russian Empire since the revolution of 1905–1909. And although Egypt became a colony of Great Britain, which destroyed its agrarian economy, it preserved its historical identity, maintained under the domain of the *mamlūk* dynasty.

By incorporating the most diverse ethnic groups, nations, cultures and religions into the *Umma*, Islam has undergone profound influences and various transformations, reflecting the local historical conditions of all geographic regions to which it had spread. And although the Arabs formed a nation with a continuous territory, with an ethnic community, with the same language, the sacred language of the *Qur'an*, which they never renounced, and with the same culture and religion, they were unable to overcome the characteristic dispersal and decentralization of natural and pre-capitalist economies, as happened in Europe.

The Rashidun, Ummayyad, Abbasid and Cordoba Caliphates built immense economic spaces, facilitated the movement of goods and the expansion of mercantile capital, which initially was concentrated in Mecca. Muslim trade through the Sahara and the Sahel (in Western, Black Africa) provided gold to Europe, which used it to mint coins, such as those that begun to circulate in the Iberian Peninsula and in Italy, like the *maravedís* and *marabottini*, coined by the Almoravids

⁷⁹Tuchman (1979, p. 182–183).

(*al-Murâbitûn*); it standardized weights, measures and values of currencies and enabled capital investments from and to regions previously controlled either by the Byzantine Empire (Egypt, Palestine, Syria and parts of North Africa) or by the Sassanid Empire (Persia and all of Mesopotamia). The routes opened by the Arabs created an enormous integrated trade network spanning from Asia to East and North Africa, and from North Africa to the Iberian Peninsula—Catalonia, Spain, Portugal—merging spaces of consumption, i.e., linking the most ancient urban centers (Damascus and Alexandria) and major cities such as Cairo and Baghdad, which at the time was one of the largest cities in the world, equivalent to Constantinople.

The Caliphates didn't consolidate any lasting centralized and unified state structure, however, despite the monotheism of Islam and the high degree of concentration of power that some of them had, such as the Abbasid Caliphate, during which Caliph Hrrûn al-Rashîd (786–809) created a vast postal service with a network of hostels in which messengers would arrive and find saddled horses with new, rested men, ready to carry the messages to the next stage until it reached the far ends of the empire. The material conditions of the mode of production and distribution of consumer goods, generated by geographical and historical factors, among others, produced profound economic, social, political and cultural differences when compared with Europe under Christianity, where the Catholic Church actively obstructed scientific advances. And several causes, including how accumulated capital was used and the life styles of the Bedouins and herders, contributed to block the transition from a mercantile economy to an industrial economy. Only a few incipient capitalist initiatives occurred in the beginning of the nineteenth century in Turkey, Iran and Egypt, where Sultan Mehmet Ali (1805–1849) promoted the establishment of small state enterprises. Despite the diversity in Islam's interpretation and application, its rigid canons were other factors that, to a greater or lesser degree, contributed to inhibiting the development of industry in the Middle East, beginning with the textile industry, which really drove the development of industrial capitalism in England, where the spinner, the mechanical loom and the steam engine provided the lever that revolutionized the entire manufacturing economy,⁸⁰ resulting in the emergence of heavy industry, the capital goods sector, causing a self-sustaining and transformative cycle in capitalism.

Muslim morals and mentality, based on the *Sunna*, *Ahdith* and the *Qur'an*, were detrimental to the introduction of new techniques. They rejected *Bid'ah* (innovation) and condemned those practices that were inconsistent with the times of Muhammad. Such factors, coupled with topography, climate, scarce urban concentration with no demographic structure capable of generating new demand and stimulating the accumulation of capital through large profitable sales, misogyny, taboos, and prejudice toward the consumption of various products of modernity, among others, didn't provide the conditions for industrial capitalism to evolve. Even the settled peasants, like the herders and Bedouins, had to make their own clothes to meet their demand. From Syria to Mesopotamia, the Fertile Crescent, and

⁸⁰Weber (1967, p. 102).

along the Arabian Peninsula, from Hijaz (the region of Mecca and Medina) to Yemen (*Arabia Felix*), the pastoral and agrarian—sedentary, nomadic or semi-nomadic—communities didn't develop beyond the stage of craftsmanship, a subsistence economy with little to no surplus production for the market or based on the supply of camels and cereal crops. Although they did accumulate portable wealth, i.e., money, through their trade profits, the Arab communities were unable to transform this into industrial assets and become a force of capitalist production.

With the exception of Yemen, the most fertile and wet region of the Arabian Peninsula, the geophysical conditions in the Middle East, covered by deserts—huge expanses of sand and rocks totaling approximately 1.4 million square miles, *Arabia Deserta*—, didn't favor the flowering of capitalist forces of production. Rather, they contributed to the consolidation of the traditional mindset of Islam and even reinforced conservatism, religious fanaticism and poverty in the agrarian and pastoral communities, which were almost completely isolated from the rest of the world before 1920. It was a situation similar to that of North Africa, where the Sahara covered 5.7 million square miles.

27.4 Carving Up the Middle East After World War 1914–1918

With the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, in addition to the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Germany in the World War of 1914–18, Great Britain and France, the triumphant imperial powers, decided to carve up the Middle East into several new states to serve the purposes of capitalist production and to implement the free market economy, incorporating them into the international division of labor. An immense territory with regions where natural, non-capitalist and pre-capitalist economies prevailed was opened up, enabling the increase of capitalist production and accumulation by unlocking new markets for the expansion of the consumption cycle. The British economist John A. Hobson noted that the exploration of parts of the world through military pillage, unequal trade and forced labor was the “*great indispensable condition*” for the growth of European capitalism.⁸¹ The export of capital to the backward regions with natural or pre-capitalist economies was essential and necessary for the imperialist expansion of Europe's industrial powers.

The Arabs, especially the Bedouins, didn't think highly of the Turks of the Ottoman Empire, which they saw as tyrannical and brutal.⁸² It was the rejection of the domain, of the oppression and of the exploitation by a foreign State, in this case Turkey, which above all compelled the Arabs to revolt during the World War of 1914–18. Painting the prospect that they would be entitled to form an independent, ethno-linguistic territorial state in the territory that traditionally covered the Middle

⁸¹Hobson (1930, p. 11).

⁸²Doughty (1983, p. 30).

East, Captain Thomas E. Lawrence, Officer of the British Military Intelligence (MI5), succeeded in fostering an uprising against the Ottoman Empire, which had allied itself with Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Despite Britain's "*defined and clear*" promise, the Arabs were never granted the independence and self-determination for which they rose up and fought against the forces of the Ottoman Empire. It was impossible to reconcile emerging Arab nationalism with British imperialism, as Captain Lawrence futilely tried to do.⁸³ The Arabs lacked unity and a sense of common destiny. Religious and sectarian rivalries and the idiosyncrasies of the tribes and clans meant they lacked the political and military strength to achieve their goal of independence. Great Britain and France sliced up the rotted Ottoman Empire according to their imperial, economic, geopolitical and strategic interests. The great *Sharif*, *Sayyid* Hussein ibn Ali, a descendant of the Prophet, governor of Hijaz and guardian of the two most sacred mosques—Al-Masjid al-Haram ([Mecca](#)) and al-Masjid al-Nabawi (Medina)—failed to create the United Arab kingdom, as he had been promised by Britain.

Over the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, France took control of Syria and Lebanon as mandates. To appease the Arabs, Britain gave up Mesopotamia, since then called Iraq, to one of the sons of *Sharif* Hussein ibn Ali, *Sharif* Faisal Bin Hussein bin Ali al-Hashimi, who had been exiled from Damascus by French forces, which aborted the creation of Great Syria—*Bilad ash-Sham*—, from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean to the Levant, west of the Euphrates, north of the Arabian Desert and south of the Taurus Mountains, between the south of Turkey and the highlands of Anatolia. The other son of *Sharif* Hussein ibn Ali, Abdullah, was granted the Emirate of Transjordan, established in 1921 as a British protectorate. After the Second World war, it was transformed into the kingdom of Jordan. In the partition, Italy received the southwest of Anatolia; Greece occupied Thrace, Izmir and the islands of the Aegean Sea; Armenia became a State; Kurdistan an autonomous province; and Britain and France maintained control over Istanbul (Constantinople) and the straits of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, which were of fundamental strategic importance as the connection of the Marmara Sea with the Black Sea, on one side, and the Aegean Sea, on the other.⁸⁴

Meanwhile, *Sharif* Hussein ibn Ali continued as King of Hijaz, but in 1925 he was defeated by the sultan of Nadj, Abd al-Aziz (1876–1953), the chief of the small Sa'udi tribe, who unified the tribes of central and eastern Arabia and later founded Saudi Arabia, not as Caliphate, but as an absolutist monarchy subjected to the *Shari'ah* and the conservative and reactionary rules of the Wahhabi sect. And the British explorer and writer Charles Montagu Doughty (1843–1926), who traveled to *Arabia Deserta*, wrote that although the tents of the Bedouins continued to be a sanctuary as at the time of Ishmael, in the second half of the nineteenth century Hijaz had become the "*canker-weed beds*" of the fanaticism through which the

⁸³James (1995, p. 391).

⁸⁴Fromkin (1989, p. 410–411).

Wahhabi doctrine embittered the hearts of the nomads and corrupted the ancient traditions of the desert.⁸⁵ Saudi Arabia only consolidated itself under the protection of the United States because of the rich, and strategically vital oil deposits discovered there in the early 1930s.

The relationship of the United States with Saudi Arabia has always been based on providing money and weapons to the royal family in exchange for oil concessions and military bases to the Americans. The *joint venture* Arabian-American Oil Co. (ARAMCO), formed by the oil companies Socal and Texaco, became the main channel of revenues to the royal family. But the undercurrent of opposition forces in the Islamic world and Saudi Arabia, where the people were impregnated by fundamentalism, never accepted the alliance of the monarchy with the United States, especially because they believed that the stationing of American troops on their soil contaminated their sacred places. It was a sacrilege, an offense against the entire Islamic world.⁸⁶

Although the Saudi monarchy used some of the oil revenue to subsidize public services and grant some privileges, such as the payment of taxes in 2011–2012, the truth of the matter is that 40% of the population lived in poverty and at least 60% didn't earn enough to feed their families.⁸⁷ And the *gap* between the revelations of the *Qur'an* and the religion practiced in Saudi Arabia was already affecting the credibility of the religious status quo, feeding a sense of revolt with young people attacking the government for being loyal to the United States and not to Islam.⁸⁸

Saudi Arabia was not averse to fostering destabilization, however. Like Qatar and other emirates, it continued to secretly fund Islamic fundamentalism in other countries with the prospect of establishing the Great Caliphate under its aegis. The political framework within which Arabs had lived for centuries had shattered. The new States—Syria, Iraq, Jordan etc.—were created with artificially drawn lines across the sands and rocks of the deserts, from the Mediterranean coast to the mountains on the border of Persia, according to the secret designs for colonial exploitation of the Sykes-Picot agreement signed in 1916.⁸⁹ None of these countries had known any prior unity or state structure, and nomadism, which was of profound influence on social discipline, persisted to a greater or lesser extent throughout the region. A region where instability was immanent and where the centrifugal forces always tended to prevail,⁹⁰ in conjunction with underdeveloped legal norms remaining from the tribal order and the *ethos* of Islam.⁹¹

Although the region of Syria retained its historical identity and possessed ancient and prosperous cities, such as Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and Hama, with small

⁸⁵Doughty (1983, p. 20).

⁸⁶House (2012, p. 240–243).

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, p. 5–35.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁸⁹Baar (2011, p. 1–19).

⁹⁰Amin (2012, p. 36–37, 54–55).

⁹¹Lawrence (1962, p. 34–35).

manufacturers of cotton, wool and silk, it encompassed a heterogeneous, ethnically mixed population—Arabs, Armenians, Turks, Kurds, Jews, Arameans, *et alt.*—of various sects and religions, including Christians and Sunni, Shia, Alawite, Druze and Ismaili Muslims. It was covered by a desert spanning approximately 325,000 square miles, inhabited by Bedouins, especially in the mountains of an-Nusayriyah where the Alawite tribes were settled. According to captain T. E. Lawrence, if the “vivid” racial and religious mosaic of Syria “*was by nature a vassal country, it was also by habit a country of tireless agitation and incessant revolt.*”⁹² In fact, France has always had to face down resistance while it controlled Syria, from where it only withdrew its troops in 1946 under pressure of Syrian nationalists and of Great Britain. Even after independence, the uprisings and the coups d’état didn’t stop until the early 1960s, when the Arab Socialist Ba’ath Party took power.

Iraq, on the other hand, was formed by the unification of three provinces—Mosul, Baghdad and Basra—and different ethnicities, with roots in Assyria and Babylonia, divided into sects—Shia, Sunni, Druze, Nestorian and Monophysite Christians, Roman Catholics etc.—and a tribal population of approximately 75% of the total, without any prior tradition of discipline and obedience to any government, although it had been subject to the authority of the Ottoman Empire.⁹³ This was the nature of the people with which Great Britain and France created their new states when redrawing the Middle East after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, already integrated into the global capitalist economy after the commercial treaty with Great Britain of 1838 (Treaty of Balta Liman), which provided for monopolies and reduced tariffs related to salt, tobacco, fishing rights etc. along its domain.

Although Saudi Arabia, which harbored the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and the emirates of the Persian Gulf maintained a certain political autonomy, Turkey was the only country that emerged from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire as a Nation-State, a political project cemented by an ethnic-linguistic nature and a common sense of destiny. Since the nineteenth century, after the crushing of the Janissary revolt (*ghazis*—warriors of Islam), a military caste created in 1383 by Sultan Mahmud II (1789–1839), and after the weakening of the *ulama*, the Turkish bourgeoisie and bureaucratic elite, which had been stripped of its European possessions, began to aspire to the formation of a state with a national identity, differentiated from Ottoman religious identity and separate from the Arabs. This feeling was expressed with greater clarity by the army, whose reorganization had been promoted by the German military in 1913.⁹⁴ British, French and, particularly, German investments in Asian Turkey, funding large rail, port and hydraulic works, bolstered this trend and created a progressive network of interests in the capital accumulation process.

⁹²Ibid., p. 344–345.

⁹³Fromkin (1989, p. 450–451).

⁹⁴Tuchman (1979, p. 182).

27.5 The New Independent States in Middle East as Geopolitical Constructs

With the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, the conditions were ripe for General Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938) to mobilize the Turkish masses, organizing the movement for the Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia⁹⁵ (a region comprising of Bosnia and other countries in the Balkans). Atatürk led the war against the Allies to secure the independence of Turkey (1919–1923) and convened the Grand National Assembly in Ankara (1920), when he established a secular regime in the territory of Anatolia with a capital in Ankara, separating the Turkish State from Islam and abolishing the sultanate and caliphate (1924).

The independence of Turkey was recognized by the Allies with the Treaty of Lausanne, signed on July 24, 1923, and General Atatürk took over the presidency for life of the Republic that was proclaimed about 3 months later, on October 29. Although Turkey was primarily an agrarian country, it followed the trend of European nations, where the creation of unitary, politically strong states arose from a need generated by the preeminence of financial capital to secure its investments and dispute the global market.

Meanwhile, when the Allied Supreme Council dismembered Syria and Mesopotamia of the Ottoman Empire at the Conference of San Remo (24/4/1920), it also endorsed the Balfour Declaration to facilitate the immigration of Jews and the establishment of their national home in Palestine, where the overwhelming majority of the population, about 568,000, was Arab, compared to 74,000 Christians and only 58,000 Jews.⁹⁶ The Arabs had lived in Palestine since the seventh century AD. They had been there for more than 1200 years. With his profound understanding of the region, Lawrence of Arabia warned Colonel Sir Gilbert Clayton, head of the British Military Intelligence (MI5), that an endless conflict would break out in Palestine, since the Arab peasants would not be willing to cede their land to the Jewish settlers,⁹⁷ and that a situation was being created in which “*the Jewish influence in European finance might not be sufficient to deter the Arabs from refusing to quit—or worse!*”⁹⁸

The states that emerged in the Middle East after the imperial dealings between Great Britain and France (the United States did not participate since President Woodrow Wilson advocated the principle of self-determination of peoples to divide Europe and other regions), entered the international division of labor as exporters of *commodities*, especially oil, cotton, rice, wheat, etc., and importers of manufactured

⁹⁵Province of the Byzantine Empire. *Rumeli*-Land of the Romans.

⁹⁶In 1919, there were around 65,000 Jews in Palestine in a population estimated at 700,000 inhabitants. Renouvin and Duroselle (1967, p. 323).

⁹⁷The acquisition of land in Palestine by Jewish immigrants from Europe began in the 19th century and after the First World War it continued with funds from the Jewish National Fund, under the condition that these lands could never be sold or leased back to the Arabs.

⁹⁸James (1995, p. 275–391).

goods. But they didn't contain the intrinsic conditions for stability. The regimes in Iraq, Egypt, Libya and Yemen were British and French geopolitical constructs. Sooner or later they would be overturned. They lacked legitimacy and national consistency, in large measure because of their identification with foreign domination and their imperialistic, colonial nature. Constant convulsions, military coups and popular uprisings had to be beaten back in the midst of the growing internationalization of the capitalist economy, which assimilated—dismantling/preserving—the non-capitalist social formations existing in the Middle East, the inevitable metabolism required by the process of capital reproduction/accumulation. At the same time, the internal political contradictions intertwined with and reflected the *great game* between the imperial interests of the United States, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union, which had emerged as a great power on the international stage.

The proclamation of independence of the State of Israel, on May 14, 1948 (Nakba), after a series of terrorist attacks against the forces of Great Britain sponsored by the organization Irgun Zva'i Le'umi (Etzel), incensed the contradictions in the Middle East even further. The Arabs revolted against the partition of Palestine. Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Iran attacked Israel. And they were virtually defeated. The war ended with an armistice in February of 1949. With fury, however, the Israeli army had already slaughtered and destroyed the villages and fields of the Palestinians with fire and dynamite.⁹⁹ And by promoting an *ethnic cleansing*, Israel expelled approximately 750,000 Palestinians (out of a population of 900,000) from the areas it was starting to occupy in 1967.¹⁰⁰ As such, Israel appropriated approximately 50% more territory than it had been originally assigned by the U.N. Partition Plan, i.e., it expanded its territory from 56% to 78% of Palestine, inhabited mostly by Arabs, which until then made up two thirds of its population.¹⁰¹

This, however, wasn't the entire region understood as the Promised Land (*ha-Aretz ha-Muvtachat*). In addition to the whole of Palestine, God had promised the West Bank, western Jordan, southern Syria and southern Lebanon to Abraham. Judea and Samaria, the West Bank and, above all, Jerusalem, of fundamental historical and religious significance, were still missing. Ben-Gurion, who continued to instigate ethnic cleansing (*tihur*) in order to depopulate and reduce the number of Arabs in Israel to less than 20%, advanced the project of settlements for immigrants from Europe and Asia in the confiscated lands, a policy continued by all his successors.¹⁰²

With its messianic *Weltanschauung*, Zionism, i.e., political Judaism, mixed religion and ideology with demographic and military concerns, arguing that Israel should be populated mostly by Jews and that it could not grant citizenship to the

⁹⁹Pappe (2012, p. 147–148).

¹⁰⁰Gordon (2008, p. 5–6).

¹⁰¹Milnes (2012, p. 141).

¹⁰²Pappe (2012, p. 214 and 250).

Arabs who lived in Palestine. Zionist leaders, such as Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir, wouldn't even accept that the territories of Gaza and the West Bank were granted to the Arabs. For them and others, the State of Israel should encompass all of Judea and Samaria, the biblical space of the Hebrews as laid out in the books of the Torah. And armed with this argument, they continued to capture and occupy the sources of water and electricity, as well as all the institutions—judiciary, schools, health system, etc.—existing in Palestine. The goal was to prevent the development of an independent economy in Gaza and the West Bank so that these areas could be annexed in the future,¹⁰³ consolidating Greater Israel. This was the Zionist utopia. But utopias, like ideologies, transcend the social situation in which they formed because of historical mutations in societies, and never really materialize.¹⁰⁴ Instead, they miscarry. Hence the existential crisis of Israel, a state at permanent war, depending on the unconditional economic, political and military support from the United States, to which it is linked to a considerable extent by elective affinities with religious, biblical roots and ethical boundaries,¹⁰⁵ as a “*membre d'honneur*”, much more integrated than a “*préside*” of the autistic Empire, as Alain Joxe, Director of the École des Hautes Études in Sciences Sociales in Paris, noted.¹⁰⁶

Although the Soviet Union, where Stalin had created an autonomous Jewish region (*Yevreyskaya adult oblast*) in 1934, and the United States, also interested in the decolonization process, had supported Israel's proclamation of independence, the question of Palestine emerged in a context of conflict between East and West. And in the midst of the confluence of national liberation movements, it contributed to the rise of Arab nationalism and pan-Arabism, accelerating the undoing of the regimes established in the Middle East. In 1951, Palestinian nationalists murdered King Abdullah because of the annexation of the West Bank by Jordan. In 1952, King Farouq of the Muhammad Ali Pasha dynasty, known as *Fat Fuck*, was deposed in Egypt by soldiers of the Free Officers Movement (*zubat al-ahrar*), led by Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser with the assistance of the CIA. In 1953, France forced King Muhammad V of Morocco into exile, since he resisted the continuity of the protectorate, but in 1956 it had to grant independence to the country and accept his return to the throne. Also in 1956, Tunisia gained independence under the leadership of Habib Bourguiba (1903–2000), who established a secular regime there.

The tensions in the Middle East already had grown to such an extent that Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser assumed the presidency of Egypt in 1954 and took various measures of a nationalistic nature, nationalizing banks, insurance companies and heavy industry. In 1955, he endorsed neutrality *vis-à-vis* the conflict between East and West, joining Egypt with India, Indonesia and other countries in the Bandung Conference (1955). Through an agreement with Czechoslovakia, he then bought

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 117.

¹⁰⁴Mannheim (1952, p. 181–184).

¹⁰⁵Khalid (2013, p. xx).

¹⁰⁶Joxe (2012, p. 35).

modern armaments from the Soviet Union, which the United States had previously declined to sell.¹⁰⁷ President Nasser implemented a series of measures to strangle the State of Israel. He cut off its access to the Gulf of Aqba, and in 1956, after a military pact with Saudi Arabia and Yemen, he nationalized the Universal Suez Canal Company, of British capital. With the support of Great Britain and France, who landed troops in Suez, Israel attacked Egypt, occupied the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip and reopened the route to the Gulf of Aqba.

Although the United States didn't support Egypt's initiatives, the war only didn't evolve further because the Americans approved a resolution with the Soviet Union at the UN General Assembly demanding a cease-fire. But after the occupation of the Sinai Peninsula by Israel during the Suez Canal crisis, Syria, which had gone through twenty different governments between 1946 and 1956, in the midst of military coups, and four constitutions, signed a treaty with the Soviet Union to purchase war equipment—aircraft, tanks, etc. And on the February 1, 1958, it merged with Egypt under the name of the United Arab Republic, a secular state that was joined by the Mutawakkilite Kingdom of North Yemen. Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser assumed the presidency of the new Arab state as a step toward the realization of the Arab nationalism and Pan-Arabism that he advocated.

At the same time, 1958, General Abdul-Karim Qassim (1914–1963), supported by the nationalists of the Ba'ath Party, communists and Kurds, carried out a coup in Iraq, the *key pillar* of British imperial policy in the Middle East, and executed King Faisal II (1935–1958) and his entire family, descendants of the al-Hashimi clan. By abolishing the monarchy and establishing a secular republic, he promoted an agrarian reform, nationalized 99% of the lands of the Iraq Petroleum Company, of British capital, delivering the oil fields to the state-owned Iraq National Oil Company, claimed control over the territory of Kuwait,¹⁰⁸ which had previously belonged to Iraq, banned polygamy and took several measures of a social and nationalist nature.

Because of the popularity and prestige of President Nasser and the spread of nationalist pan-Arabic sentiment, King Abdullah I of Jordan and Camille Chamoun, President of Lebanon, feared that Egypt would also absorb their countries. But the prime minister of Lebanon, the Sunni Rashid Abdul Hamid Karami, was in favor of their integration with the United Arab Republic. And in the midst of religious tensions, armed conflict broke out in Beirut between Muslims and Maronite Christians, who were aligned with the West. President Dwight Eisenhower (1953–1961) ordered Operation Blue Bat, the occupation of the airport of Beirut by 14,000 marines, from which they only withdrew after an agreement was reached that led the Maronite General Fuad Chehab to the presidency of Lebanon (1958–1964).

¹⁰⁷For more details, see Moniz Bandeira (2006, p. 178–182).

¹⁰⁸The Ottoman-British Agreement of 1913 recognized Kuwait as a district of Basra province, whose sovereignty was transferred to Iraq. In 1939, there was a popular uprising in Kuwait for its unification with Iraq, but it was crushed by Sheik Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with the support of British officers. David Klein, "Mechanisms of Western Domination: A Short History of Iraq and Kuwait", California State University, Northridge, January 2003.

The opposition to the United Arab Republic was also growing inside Syria, probably instigated by the intelligence services of the West. Saudi Arabia sponsored the Muslim Brotherhood, whose supporters tried three times in 1964 to assassinate President Nasser and to destabilize the regime in Egypt,¹⁰⁹ and it allocated financial resources to the Bedouin tribes, including the Ruwallah, with approximately 1 million people, so that they would rise up in northern Syria. On September 15, 1961, army officers who resented the subordination to Egypt, mutinied in Damascus and proclaimed the independence of Syria.

The initiatives of General Abdul-Karim Qassim and his alliance with the Communist Party in Iraq, had also scared the United States, and the CIA began to see him as a problem. It would therefore be best “*to get rid of him*,” i.e., the “*incapacitation or elimination*” of General Qassim would be promoted, since murder was one of the skills of the secret service.¹¹⁰ The CIA funded a current within the Ba’ath Party (Resurrection) and the nationalist military, integrated in the National Guard, with the collaboration of General Saddam Hussein,¹¹¹ who Washington saw as a *bulwark* of anti-communism, and it followed all the steps of the conspiracy; on February 8, 1963, the military coup took place as planned by William Lakeland, CIA Station Chief and attaché of the US Embassy in Baghdad.¹¹² General Qassim was shot in the midst of a hunt for and extermination of communists based on a list provided by a CIA agent, the journalist William McHale, who operated under the mantle of Time magazine correspondent.¹¹³ More than 10,000 people were arrested, many were tortured, 5000 communists were massacred and buried in common graves, and 149 army officers were executed.¹¹⁴ Colonel Abdul Salam Arif took over the government, succeeded by General Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr (1914–1982), who favored the unification of Iraq with Syria. His interior minister and deputy prime minister, Ali Salih al As’adi, declared: “*We came to power on a CIA train*.”¹¹⁵ And since then, Saddam Hussein began to exercise de facto power as head of the Al-Mukhabarat al-‘Iraqiyya (intelligence service) and vice president of Iraq in the government of General Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr (1968–1979). The Ba’ath Party became hegemonic.

However, the union of Iraq with Egypt, which the Ba’ath Party and Saddam Hussein had intended, no longer seemed viable. The United Arab Republic uniting

¹⁰⁹ Ali (2002, p. 155).

¹¹⁰ Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (November 20, 1975), “C. Institutionalizing Assassination: the ‘Executive Action’ capability”, Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders—Additional, Supplemental and Separate Views, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, p. 181, n. 1. JFK Library, Memorandum for The President from Robert W. Komer, February 8, 1963 (JFK, NSF, Countries, Iraq, Box 117, “Iraq 1/63–2/63”, document 18), p. 1. Powers (1979, p. 161–162). Hersh (1997, p. 194–195).

¹¹¹ Saddam Hussein took part in the assassination attempt of colonel Qassim in 1959.

¹¹² Rositzke (1977, p. 108–109).

¹¹³ Aburish (2001, p. 58–59).

¹¹⁴ Cockburn and Cockburn (1999, p. 71–78). Darwish and Alexander (1991, p. 22–26).

¹¹⁵ Aburish (2001, p. 58–59).

Egypt and Syria had failed in 1961, although the two countries had joined in the Non-Aligned Movement (1961), a block against the cold war organized in Belgrade under the patronage of the President of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, along with President Nasser, President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru. The resentment against Western colonialism and the unrestricted and unconditional American backing of Israel, which was becoming the main party responsible for the tragedy in Palestine, were therefore the main factors of solidarity (*assabya*) between the Arab countries.

27.6 Middle East Wars in the 1960s...

In the 1960s, the clashes of the Israeli Defense Forces with detachments from Egypt, Jordan and Syria, and the guerrilla warfare operations carried out by militants (*fida'in*) of the Ba'th Party in Syria, and by al-Fatah, a faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO),¹¹⁶ set up in 1964 with the support of the Arab League and led by Yasser Arafat, further disturbed the political environment in the Middle East. In the early months of 1967, President Nasser requested the withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), who had formed a protective barrier at the Sinai (Resolution 1001 [ES-I], November 7, 1956). At the same time, he gathered 100,000 soldiers and armored vehicles in the region of the peninsula, once again blocking the gulf of Aqba and threatening to close the Straits of Tiran. Egypt then signed mutual defense agreements with Jordan and Syria.

According to the official version, the Israeli government led by Prime Minister Levi Eshkol realized, through Nasser's attitudes, that Egypt and Syria, armed with weapons and military advisers provided by the Soviet Union, were preparing to reconquer the lost territories. And so it decided to take the initiative and unleashed a *preemptive war*. But in effect, it seems that Israel was preparing the attack on Egypt and Syria for some time, with logistical and intelligence support provided by the United States. Since June 3, B-52 and RF-4C planes of the 38th Squadron and 17th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, in addition to other planes taking off from the Ramstein (Germany) and Moron (Spain) airbases, were flying over and photographing the borders between the Arab countries and Israel. The rear fuselages of the RF-4C were painted with the Star of David on a blue background so that they would seem to belong to the Israeli air force.¹¹⁷ And the ship *U.S.S. Liberty*,¹¹⁸ anchored in the

¹¹⁶Al-Fatah was one of the factions of the PLO.

¹¹⁷Green (1984, p. 204–206, 210–211).

¹¹⁸On that occasion, an Israeli plane attacked the USS Liberty and killed 34 American soldiers. The investigation, ordered by then President Lyndon Johnson and the Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, concluded that the incident had been a mere "accident". After investigating the attack with other officers, however, Admiral Thomas Moorer, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, declared that attributing the attack to an "accident" was "one of the classic all-American cover-ups." The strike was carried out with an "unmarked aircraft" from Israel, probably with the

vicinity, provided wireless military and diplomatic COMINT (*Communications Intelligence*) and ELINT (*Electronic Intelligence*) intercepted by their devices.¹¹⁹

Israel's objective in triggering the war of 1967 was to gain the tactical advantage of surprise and prevent the alleged or real threat of Egypt from materializing. The Israeli airplanes under the command of major Mordechai Hod carried out Operation Focus (*Mivtza Moked*), and in order to mislead the enemy, they first went to the Mediterranean, where they abruptly returned and, in four sorties, destroyed approximately 452 airplanes on the ground, almost the entire Egyptian, Syrian and Jordan air force. During the fighting, Israel also relied on the logistical support from the United Kingdom, while American jets took off from Wheelus Air Base in Libya and attacked the ground forces of the Arab countries.¹²⁰ "U.S. financial and military assistance gave Israel the military power to invade any or all of the Arab countries at any time and any place she chose, without fear of the outcome," wrote Stephen Green, director of Oxfam Inc., in Somalia.¹²¹

The war started on June 5, 1967 and lasted only 6 days, but it enabled IDF troops to take back control of the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, in addition to the Golan Heights. These sacred places for Muslims, Christians and Jews—the last bastions of Palestine—were now under Tel Aviv's command. It was a humiliating defeat for the Arabs. A new *Akba* took place, a new exodus. Between 400,000 and 450,000 Palestinians were displaced and expelled from their lands. And while President Nasser maintained his prestige and popularity in Egypt, whose people didn't want him to leave the government, Israel's triumph profoundly smeared the image he projected on the collective soul of the Arab masses as the visible or invisible chief, the awaited Imām al-Mahdī of Islam. "The War of 1967," remarked the Pakistani writer Tariq Ali, "destroyed Nasserism as an anti-imperialist force in the Middle East."¹²²

President Nasser died at the age of 52, on September 28, 1970, after quenching a quarrel between King Hussein of Jordan and Yasser Arafat, president of the PLO. The cause of death was a myocardial infarction, revealed dr. Al-Sawy Habib, a member of his medical team, refuting allegations of the journalist Mohamed Hassanein Heikal of TV Al Arabiya's Studio Cairo that he was poisoned after drinking a cup of coffee, served by his companion and friend Muḥammad Anwar as-Sādāt (1918–1981).¹²³

The hypothesis that Nasser was assassinated could well be a fantasy, or not. The controversies remained. Anything was possible in the underworld of the intelligence services—CIA, Mossad, MI5, KGB (previously GPU/MVD) *et alt.*—within

intent of implicating Egypt. *Dead in the Water—Cover-Up Alleged in Probe of USS Liberty*, BBC Documentary on the USS Liberty.

¹¹⁹Green (1984, p. 212–215).

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 206–211.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, p. 244.

¹²²Ali (2002, p. 165).

¹²³"Nasser did not die of poisoned coffee: doctor", *Al Arabiya*, September 26, 2010.

the constraints of international politics. And the truth of the matter was that, after succeeding Nasser, Muḥammad Anwar as-Sādāt demonstrated that he would realign his foreign policy. Egypt's relations with the Soviet Union began to sour. At the end of 1971, after supporting the crushing of the Communist coup in Sudan, Sādāt was already considered a traitor within the KGB *apparatus* and the Central Committee in Moscow.¹²⁴ As Henry Kissinger revealed in his memoirs, there had indeed been secret contacts between Sādāt and the White House.¹²⁵ The head of intelligence in Egypt, General Ahmed Ismail, had a connection with the CIA.¹²⁶ And on July 18, 1972, Sādāt announced the expulsion of 20,000 Soviet military advisors, claiming that Moscow refused to deliver certain war equipment to Egypt. It is actually possible that Moscow refused to do this. The loss of tanks, planes etc. by Egypt had been immense, estimated at £ 1 billion.¹²⁷ When Israel bombed its air bases, they were defenseless, and the aircraft on the ground had no camouflage. And Moscow probably feared that Egypt would start another war against Israel, which was not in its interest, and so it refused to provide new weapons. The decision to rescind the treaty with the Soviet Union and expel its military advisers had apparently been taken by Sādāt after the negotiations between Leonid Brezhnev, Secretary-General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), and Richard Nixon, President of the United States, in May 1972.¹²⁸

Sādāt had come to realize that the Cold War climate was fading after 1970. The obvious economic vulnerability of the United States had begun to shake the stability of the international monetary system, among others because of the growth in military spending, which increased to US\$800 million in 1967 and an additional US\$600 million in 1968 due to the Vietnam War. This had a strong impact on US balance of payments, which reached a deficit of US\$ 9.8 billion in 1970.¹²⁹ The Soviet Union, on the other hand, was facing a serious crisis in its relations with China, fearing its rapprochement to the United States. And it was Brezhnev who actually sought out greater dialog with the United States, especially to be able to obtain technology and equipment from the Federal Republic of Germany, which would enable the modernization of some sectors of Soviet industry, increasing productivity and, consequently, the supply of consumer goods to the population.

The attack of Egypt and Syria against Israel on October 6, 1973, when the Jews were celebrating Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), their most important religious holiday, surprised both the United States and the Soviet Union, even though Sādāt had already decided to do it since mid-1972.¹³⁰ And the Mossad only got evidence

¹²⁴ Andrew and Gordievsky (1990, p. 501).

¹²⁵ Kissinger (1994, p. 739–740).

¹²⁶ Andrew and Gordievsky (1990, p. 501).

¹²⁷ Appendix: “Sobre a guerra árabe-israelense”, interview with Isaac Deutscher, in Ali (2002, p. 452).

¹²⁸ Ulam (1984, p. 85–86).

¹²⁹ Solomon (1977, p. 102–103).

¹³⁰ Bundy (1998, p. 428–429).

that the attack was imminent on its eve, in the night from October 5 to 6.¹³¹ With the tactical advantage of surprise, the troops of Egypt and Syria penetrated the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights. At the same time, they crossed the Suez Canal and attacked Israeli forces in Jawlan. Israel's military capabilities were superior and it could likely have defeated Egypt and Syria again, especially with the prompt backing it received from Washington, but the war had to end when Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, integrated¹³² in OPEC, resorted for the first time to the powerful weapon of oil, imposing a total embargo on exports, on which the United States, the powers of Europe and Japan relied to sustain their industrial production. Faced with this situation, the UN approved Resolution 338 determining the cease-fire on October 21–22, with the backing of the United States and the Soviet Union.¹³³ The war ended a few days later, on October 28, 1973.

27.7 . . . and in the 1970s to 1980s

The shock produced by the high oil prices promoted by the Arab countries, shook the international monetary system even further. Saudi Arabia and the other members of OPEC took advantage of the war to compensate for their losses with the devaluation of the dollar, the *currency* they used for all their hydrocarbon transactions. The oil embargo quadrupled the price of a barrel, sent the stock exchanges into a free fall, and drove up inflation in several countries, including the United States. The industrial powers closed the year of 1974 with a deficit of around US\$ 11 billion, and the countries of the so-called Third World, closed with one of almost US\$ 40 billion. And although Washington considered a military intervention in the countries of the Persian Gulf,¹³⁴ it had no alternative but to put pressure on the government of Tel Aviv, even if reluctantly, to accept the ceasefire established by the UN and start negotiations with Egypt and Syria about the occupied territories.¹³⁵

The KGB leadership increasingly suspected that Sādāt meant to seek reconciliation with the West to reach a solution for the conflict in Palestine, solve Egypt's economic problems and ensure its borders.¹³⁶ In effect, it seems that he started the Yom Kippur war not because he thought he could win, but because he was trying to

¹³¹Thomas (1999, p. 152–154).

¹³²Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), an intergovernmental cartel formed at the Bagdad Conference (1960) by the oil producing countries: Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Iran and Venezuela, joined by Libya, The United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Indonesia, Algeria, Nigeria, Ecuador, Angola and Gabon.

¹³³U.N. Resolution 338, 1973, Appendix 2, in Carter, 2006, p. 219.

¹³⁴House (2012, p. 242–244).

¹³⁵Kissinger (1994, p. 739–740). Dallek (2007, p. 520–533).

¹³⁶Andrew and Gordievsky (1990, p. 543).

seek an accommodation with Israel, enable terms for peace, recover the territories Egypt had lost and redeem the honor of the Egyptian army, defeated in 1967.¹³⁷

Even though it was an oil producer, the Soviet Union did not escape the consequences of the global financial crisis. Integrated into the global capitalist market, it had to bear the ever higher costs of raw materials and manufactured goods that it imported from the West. Between 1960 and 1970, Soviet technical and financial resources had made the construction of the Aswan dam possible to regulate the flow of the Nile river. But under the new circumstances, the Soviets were no longer able to assist in the industrialization efforts of Egypt, promoted by Nasser through state enterprises in heavy industry, particularly in the iron, steel and chemical industries.

Sādāt, in turn, had understood that Israel had become a reality and that the wish to destroy it was unrealistic, something that only fanatics, for whom rationality did not exist, could still aspire to. Israel had transformed into the most formidable military force in the Middle East.¹³⁸ Whether the Muslims wanted it or not, not acknowledging its existence had become a moot point. There was no turning back the wheel of history. And this realization led Sādāt to visit Israel as president of Egypt, where he was received by Prime Minister Menachem Begin and President Ephraim Katzir and spoke before the Knesset (Parliament).

This initiative paved the way for the Camp David Accords (Maryland) signed in 1978 under the patronage of the American President Jimmy Carter.¹³⁹ In 1980, however, Israel incorporated East Jerusalem into its domain and, in 1981, the Golan Heights, which wasn't recognized by any other country. By passing resolution 478, the UNSC considered these acts "*null and void*" and demanded Israel's withdrawal. It also declared the annexation of the Golan Heights "*null and void*" through Resolution 497. Israel didn't abide by any of the UNSC resolutions, nor did it suffer any sanctions, which were always vetoed by the United States. It withdrew its troops from the Sinai Peninsula only in 1982, as part of the 1978 peace treaty with Egypt.¹⁴⁰

Islamic radicals attributed the defeat of Egypt and other Arab countries in the war with Israel to the abandonment by the Arab governments of the authentic practice of Islam; they had committed apostasy. And President Sādāt paid with his life for the alignment with Washington and the peace with Israel. Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Islambouli of the Islamic Jihad assassinated him in 1981. This movement had emerged from the Muslim Brotherhood, based on the Salafist doctrine. Its great theoretical scholar had been Sayyid Qutb, whose influence grew after his sentencing and execution in 1966. And as Antonio Gramsci already predicted around 1932, the connection between Islam's intellectuals and the people

¹³⁷Kepel (2004, p. 44–45).

¹³⁸Hobsbawm (1994, p. 359).

¹³⁹Camp David Accords, Appendix 3, in Carter, 2006, p. 221–230.

¹⁴⁰Framework for Egypt Peace Treaty, 1978, in Carter, 2006, p. 231–234.

fostered fanaticism, which could be momentary, limited, but which accumulated “*psychic masses of emotions and impulses*” that extended into normal times.¹⁴¹

The Yom Kippur war of 1973, however, represented a turning point in the political landscape of the Middle East. Through their sudden enrichment after the oil shocks (1973 and 1978), the Sunni oil monarchies—Saudi Arabia and the small emirates of the Persian Gulf (Wahhabis and Salafists)—, had come to believe that the weapon of oil had turned them into a political power. And so the constellation of forces began to shift in the Middle East. Pan-Arab nationalism, with its Socialist inclination, began to fade away. Colonel Muammar Gaddafi—who took power in Libya in 1969 and preached the Third Universal Theory, the State of the Masses (*Jamabirya*) as an alternative to democracy—didn’t have the same charismatic power as Nasser. And in the *vacuum*, radical political and ideological Islam, represented by the Muslim Brotherhood,¹⁴² funded by Saudi Arabia, the emirates in the Persian Gulf and, possibly, by Jordan,¹⁴³ grew and spread from Egypt to Syria and other countries, influencing the educated middle class, particularly young people with no prospect of finding work and with no hope of improving society or finding a solution to the conflict in Palestine. Relying on the concept of *takfir*, the Muslim Brotherhood considered those Arab leaders who did not establish the *Shari’ah* apostates,¹⁴⁴ and this is the reason why the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, followers of bin Ladin, always tried to overthrow the Gaddafi regime, and why it didn’t give up on establishing a caliphate in Libya after his fall.

When Colonel Hafez al-Assad (1930–2000), leader of the Arab Socialist Ba’ath Party, took power in Syria through a coup d’état in 1970, the infiltration of the Muslim Brotherhood in his country had already taken enormous proportions. The mosques and *madrasahs* only preached hatred and vengeance, inciting the *Jihad*, as they did in Saudi Arabia. In 1980, its militants, who had executed 50 Alawite cadets from the Artillery School in Aleppo, tried to assassinate him with grenades and machine guns, disgusted with the equality of rights between men and women and between Muslims and non-Muslims he had encouraged with the constitutional reform, taking the status of official religion away from Islam and turning Syria into a secular state. The assassination attempt failed and Colonel Rifaat al-Assad, brother of President al-Assad and commander of the Defense Companies, ordered his soldiers to execute the militants of the Muslim Brotherhood—between 250 and 500 of them—incarcerated in Tadmor prison in Palmira, a town located in an oasis in northeastern Syria.

¹⁴¹Gramsci (2004, p. 129).

¹⁴²The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, who wanted to purge Islam of foreign influences. Al-Banna was killed in 1949. Many of its militants were persecuted in Egypt and fled to West Germany, where they established the cells that later planned the attacks of September 11, 2001.

¹⁴³Baer (2003, p. 94–97).

¹⁴⁴Soufan (2011, p. 52).

The Muslim Brotherhood persisted, however, and in February 1982, its militants captured Hama, the fourth largest city in Syria on the banks of the River Orontes. The Defense Companies crushed the revolt and massacred and imprisoned thousands of Sunnis, between 10,000 and 20,000, including in the cities of Aleppo and Palmira.¹⁴⁵ President al-Assad declared that this was the price to pay for the years of terrorism practiced by the Muslim Brotherhood.¹⁴⁶

Colonel Hafez al-Assad died on June 10, 2000,¹⁴⁷ when he was 69 years of age. Under his rule, Syria, which until then had been an extremely volatile country, was a “*model of political stability*.”¹⁴⁸ A dictatorship, but more stable than any other in the Middle East, under the rule of law, which didn’t prevail in Saudi Arabia, as the former CIA agent Robert Baer remarked.¹⁴⁹ The Muslim Brotherhood in Syria “*existed in name only*”, stressed Robert Baer, adding that its members were in exile, mostly in Saudi Arabia and in Germany.¹⁵⁰

Directly or indirectly, the United States, which Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran, called the “Great Satan” (*Shaytân and Bozorg*), had become the main reason for the resurgence of Islamic terrorism in Central Asia and the Middle East. On July 3, 1979, at the suggestion of Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Jimmy Carter signed a *finding* authorizing the CIA to provide covert assistance to the *mujahidin* insurgency against the government of Afghanistan through propaganda, psychological warfare and others means.¹⁵¹ The (communist) People’s Democratic Party in Kabul was facing revolts because of the radical counter reforms it had implemented regarding land tenure, the abolition of peonage and of dowries, and the education and equality of rights for women.¹⁵² Such reforms were unacceptable to the fundamentalist and orthodox Muslims.¹⁵³

When Moscow realized that after the stabilization of the conflict in Berlin and the two Germanies, the main theater of the cold war had moved to Central Asia and the Middle East, it ordered its troops to invade Afghanistan on December 27, 1979, in order to prevent that the instability in that country would contaminate the eastern republics of the Soviet Union with a predominantly Muslim population. It wasn’t

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 103–104. “Syria’s Hama: An uprising crushed 30 years ago”, *Al Arabiya*, February 3, 2012.

¹⁴⁶Neil MacFarquhar, “Hafez al-Assad, Who Turned Syria Into a Power in the Middle East, Dies at 69”, *The New York Times*, June 10, 2000.

¹⁴⁷Colonel Hafez al-Assad, born in the village of Qurdaha, belonged to the Alawite minority, an ethnic group that lived in the an-Nusayriyah or Jabal al-‘Alawīyin mountains next to the Mediterranean.

¹⁴⁸Eyal Zisser, “Where Is Bashar al-Assad Heading?”, *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2008, p. 35–40.

¹⁴⁹Baer (2003, p. 207–208).

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 104.

¹⁵¹Gates (1997, p. 146).

¹⁵²Around 1980, half of the students in Afghanistan were women, and women also made up 40% of physicians, 70% of school teachers and 30% of civil servants.

¹⁵³Moniz Bandeira (2006, p. 180–182 and 383–391).

only the United States which had decided to fund the *mujahidin* in Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia was also allocating resources to the *ihadists* in Chechnya,¹⁵⁴ to al-Qa'ida, to the Taliban and to the Muslim Brotherhood, whose virus had spread to Central Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Meanwhile, on December 29, 1979, the State Department created a list of countries qualified as *sponsors of terrorism*. It included Syria, Libya, Iraq, South Yemen, but obviously omitted the United States itself and Saudi Arabia. As the great French playwright J. B. Poquelin Molière already wrote: “*hypocrisy is a privileged vice, which, with its finger, closes the mouth of everyone, and plays its game in peace with a sovereign impunity.*”¹⁵⁵

Less than a year later, on September 22, 1980, General Saddam Hussein took over the presidency of Iraq and invaded the borders of Iran, after he'd removed General Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr in July 1979. In 1983, the State Department crossed Iraq from its list of “*sponsors of international terrorism*” without consulting congress, restored diplomatic relations with the Saddam Hussein dictatorship and secretly gave him all the logistical and military support, including chemical weapons. But Iraq didn't win the war and after withdrawing its troops from the Iranian borders, it accepted the terms of peace in 1988. The United States thought they could transform Iraq into a *pivotal country* under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, just as Iran had been under the tyranny of Shah Reza Pahlavi, and establish a relationship according to the *oil for weapons* model. And so began the tragedy-comedy of missteps, with the construction in the Middle East of a system in a permanent state of insecurity, war, threat of war and terror.

¹⁵⁴Baer (2003, p. 146–147). Hunter (2004, p. 383–386).

¹⁵⁵Molière (1862).

Appendix 1: Memorandum of the National Security Council for Zbigniew Brzezinski

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

September 17, 1979

5338

9

TOP SECRET/CODEWORD

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

FROM: THOMAS THORNTON

SUBJECT: What Are the Soviets Doing In Afghanistan? (S)

Simply, we don't know. Speculation is, however, intriguing. (S)

There appears to be three possibilities:

1. The entire sequence over the weekend (dismissal of the military in the cabinet; retirement of Taraki; Amin's announcement of the end of one-man leadership) was stage-managed by the Soviets as a way of getting a more acceptable government installed in Kabul. This doesn't seem likely. The Soviets made quite a fuss over Taraki last week in Moscow; Taraki would have been a much better figurehead for a national front government in Afghanistan; and the Soviets would not seem to have any reason to do in the military faction. This would seem to be the least likely explanation. (S)
2. Amin is doing the whole thing in defiance of the Soviets, facing them with a fait accompli. This would be a high-stakes game for him, but he is capable of it. It is not clear, however, why Amin would now be calling for broadened leadership unless that is solely window-dressing or nothing more than a gratuitous slap at Taraki. (S)
3. Amin started out on his own, but after the dropping of Taraki, the Soviets stepped in, called his bluff, and are now forcing him to accept a collective leadership -- something the Soviets have probably been looking for for quite a while. (S)

We have no evidence that proves or disproves any of these. ~~_____~~ before the

TOP SECRET/CODEWORD

ORIGINAL CL BY Z. Brzezinski
☐ DECL ☒ REV ON 17 SEPT 1999

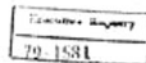
SANITIZED

E.O. 12958, SEC. 3.6

PER 8/25/99 CLM RE 95-27

Appendix 2: Finding by Jimmy Carter 03.07.1979

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~



Finding Pursuant to Section 662 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as Amended, Concerning Operations in Foreign Countries Other Than Those Intended Solely for the Purpose of Intelligence Collection

I find the following operations in foreign countries are important to the national security of the United States, and direct the Director of Central Intelligence, or his designee, to report this finding to the concerned committees of the Congress pursuant to Section 662, and to provide such briefings as necessary.

SCOPE

AFGHANISTAN

DESCRIPTION

Support insurgent propaganda and other psychological operations in Afghanistan; establish radio access to the Afghan population through third country facilities.

Provide unilaterally or through third countries as appropriate support to Afghan insurgents, either in the form of cash or non-military supplies.

The White House
Washington, D.C.
Date: July 3, 1979

DECLASSIFIED
per 31414 NSC
by [signature] NARA DATE 3/18/04

DERIVATIVE CL BY 022357
DECL 2 REVW ON 25 June 1993
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Appendix 3: CIA 06.08.2001: Bin Laden Determined to Strike in US

Declassified and Approved
for Release, 10 April 2004

Bin Laden Determined To Strike in US



Clandestine, foreign government, and media reports indicate Bin Laden since 1997 has wanted to conduct terrorist attacks in the US. Bin Laden implied in US television interviews in 1997 and 1998 that his followers would follow the example of World Trade Center bomber Ramzi Yousef and "bring the fighting to America."

After US missile strikes on his base in Afghanistan in 1998, Bin Laden told followers he wanted to retaliate in Washington, according to a [REDACTED] service.

An Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) operative told an [REDACTED] service at the same time that Bin Laden was planning to exploit the operative's access to the US to mount a terrorist strike.

The millennium plotting in Canada in 1999 may have been part of Bin Laden's first serious attempt to implement a terrorist strike in the US. Convicted plotter Ahmed Ressam has told the FBI that he conceived the idea to attack Los Angeles International Airport himself, but that Bin Laden lieutenant Abu Zubaydah encouraged him and helped facilitate the operation. Ressam also said that in 1998 Abu Zubaydah was planning his own US attack.

Ressam says Bin Laden was aware of the Los Angeles operation.

Although Bin Laden has not succeeded, his attacks against the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 demonstrate that he prepares operations years in advance and is not deterred by setbacks. Bin Laden associates surveilled our Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam as early as 1993, and some members of the Nairobi cell planning the bombings were arrested and deported in 1997.

Al-Qa'ida members—including some who are US citizens—have resided in or traveled to the US for years, and the group apparently maintains a support structure that could aid attacks. Two al-Qa'ida members found guilty in the conspiracy to bomb our Embassies in East Africa were US citizens, and a senior EIJ member lived in California in the mid-1990s.

A clandestine source said in 1998 that a Bin Laden cell in New York was recruiting Muslim-American youth for attacks.

We have not been able to corroborate some of the more sensational threat reporting, such as that from a [REDACTED] service in 1998 saying that Bin Laden wanted to hijack a US aircraft to gain the release of "Blind Shaykh" Umar 'Abd al-Rahman and other US-held extremists.

continued

For the President Only
6 August 2001

Declassified and Appr
for Release, 10 April

Appendix 4: Z. Brzezinski's Memorandum for the President: Reflections on Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan

MEMORANDUM

~~SECRET~~

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~
~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

December 26, 1979 C

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI ZS.
SUBJECT: Reflections on Soviet Intervention
in Afghanistan

I will be sending you separately a proposed agenda for the NSC meeting on Friday, and it will focus on both Afghanistan and Iran. In the meantime, you are receiving today's SCC minutes on both subjects. This memorandum is meant merely to provide some stimulus to your thinking on this subject.

As I mentioned to you a week or so ago, we are now facing a regional crisis. Both Iran and Afghanistan are in turmoil, and Pakistan is both unstable internally and extremely apprehensive externally. If the Soviets succeed in Afghanistan, and if Pakistan acquiesces, the age-long dream of Moscow to have direct access to the Indian Ocean will have been fulfilled.

Historically, the British provided the barrier to that drive and Afghanistan was their buffer state. We assumed that role in 1945, but the Iranian crisis has led to the collapse of the balance of power in Southwest Asia, and it could produce Soviet presence right down on the edge of the Arabian and Oman Gulfs.

Accordingly, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan poses for us an extremely grave challenge, both internationally and domestically. While it could become a Soviet Vietnam, the initial effects of the intervention are likely to be adverse for us for the following domestic and international reasons:

Domestic

A. The Soviet intervention is likely to stimulate calls for more immediate U.S. military action in Iran. Soviet "decisiveness" will be contrasted with our restraint, which will no longer be labeled as prudent but increasingly as timid;

B. At the same time, regional instability may make a resolution of the Iranian problem more difficult for us, and it could bring us into a head to head confrontation with the Soviets;

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Declassify on: OADR

Declassified/Released on 7/14/18
under provisions of E.O. 2958
by R. Soibers, National Security Council
FBI 276

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C. SALT is likely to be damaged, perhaps irreparably, because Soviet military aggressiveness will have been so naked;

D. More generally, our handling of Soviet affairs will be attacked by both the Right and the Left.

International

A. Pakistan, unless we somehow manage to project both confidence and power into the region, is likely to be intimidated, and it could eventually even acquiesce to some form of external Soviet domination.

B. With Iran destabilized, there will be no firm bulwark in Southwest Asia against the Soviet drive to the Indian Ocean;

C. The Chinese will certainly note that Soviet assertiveness in Afghanistan and in Cambodia is not effectively restrained by the United States.

Compensating Factors

There will be, to be sure, some compensating factors:

A. World public opinion may be outraged at the Soviet intervention. Certainly, Moslem countries will be concerned, and we might be in a position to exploit this.

B. There are already 300,000 refugees from Afghanistan in Pakistan, and we will be in a position to indict the Soviets for causing massive human suffering. That figure will certainly grow, and Soviet-sponsored actions in Cambodia have already taken their toll as well.

C. There will be greater awareness among our allies for the need to do more for their own defense.

A Soviet Vietnam?

However, we should not be too sanguine about Afghanistan becoming a Soviet satellite.

A. The situation is badly organized and poorly led;

B. They have no sanctuary, no organized army, and no central government -- all of which North Vietnam had;

C. They have limited foreign support, in contrast to the enormous amount of arms that flowed to the Vietnamese from both the Soviet Union and China;

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D. The Soviets are likely to act decisively, unlike the U.S., which pursued in Vietnam a policy of "inoculating" the enemy.

As a consequence, the Soviets might be able to assert themselves effectively, and in world politics nothing succeeds like success, whatever the moral aspects.

What is to be Done?

What follows are some preliminary thoughts, which need to be discussed more fully:

A. It is essential that Afghanistani resistance continues. This means more money as well as arms shipments to the rebels, and some technical advice;

B. To make the above possible we must both reassure Pakistan and encourage it to help the rebels. This will require a review of our policy toward Pakistan, more guarantees to it, more arms aid, and, alas, a decision that our security policy toward Pakistan cannot be dictated by our nonproliferation policy;

C. We should encourage the Chinese to help the rebels also;

D. We should concert with Islamic countries both in a propaganda campaign and in a covert action campaign to help the rebels;

E. We should inform the Soviets that their actions are placing SALT in jeopardy and that will also influence the substance of the Brown visit to China, since the Chinese are doubtless going to be most concerned about implications for themselves of such Soviet assertiveness so close to their border. Unless we tell the Soviets directly and very clearly that our relations will suffer, I fear the Soviets will not take our "expressions of concern" very seriously, with the effect that our relations will suffer, without the Soviets ever having been confronted with the need to ask the question whether such local adventurism is worth the long-term damage to the U.S.-Soviet relationship;

F. Finally, we should consider taking Soviet actions in Afghanistan to the UN as a threat to peace.

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