

The Geopolitics of Energy & Terrorism

Part 8

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Introduction

The following chapters are independent essays written in April and May 2016, and they can be read in any order.

The wars for the global resources of oil and natural gas are the topic of most essays. To a large extent, the wars of the 20th and 21st centuries were the result of energy rich countries competing to secure their exports, or the result of energy poor countries competing to secure their access to energy resources.

Many episodes of the energy wars of the 20th and 21st centuries are described in the following essays.

I.A.

26.5.2016

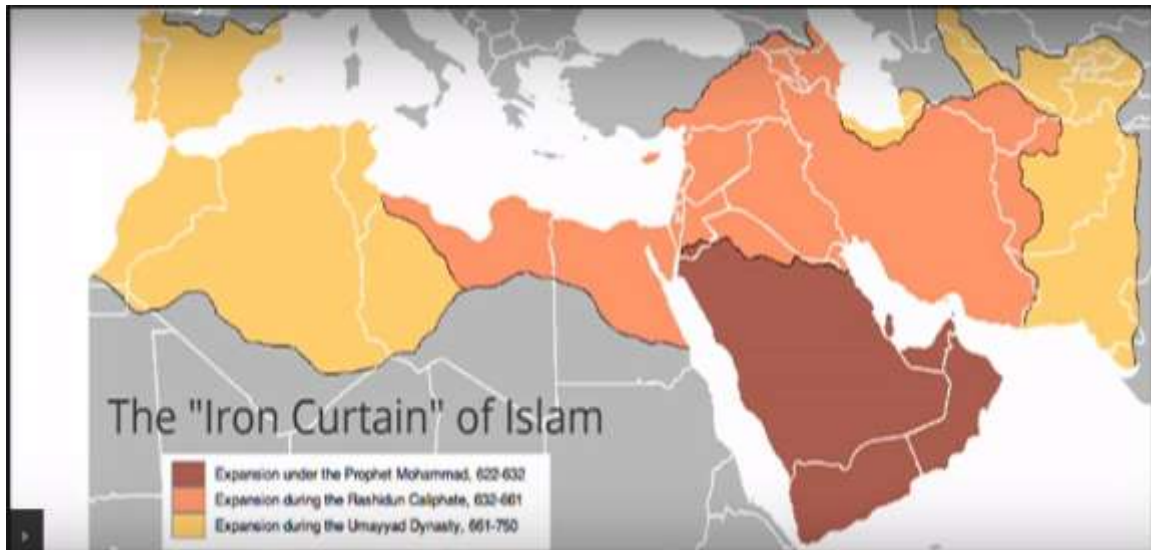
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The Islamic Iron Curtain of the 7th Century

Prophet Muhammad was the founder of Islam. For the Muslim people Prophet Muhammad was the man who was sent by God to spread Islam on earth. Muhammad was a merchant. See Wikipedia link below. Muhammad was a righteous man, and his prices were that fair, that no further bargaining was required between the seller and the buyer. Remember that bargaining was an essential part of trade in the Muslim world.

Muhammad was born on 570 C.E. and he is the man who united the Arab world. In the period 600-700 C.E. an Islamic Iron Curtain was created, which no longer allowed the infidels i.e. the Christians, to trade through the Silk Roads. From now on the infidels would have to stop at Egypt, and purchase from the Muslim traders the merchandises of East Asia i.e. spices, silk etc. Before Muhammed and Islam the Romans could freely travel through the Silk Roads. After the Islamic Iron Curtain the Indian Ocean became an Islamic Sea.

Map 1



During the 20th century Gamal Nasser, the Egyptian leader, wanted to unite Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and the Arabic countries of the Persian Gulf to a single Arabic country, with him as its leader. Muammar Qaddafi of Libya wanted to unite Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya in a single Arabic country too.

Map 2



Muhammad used Islam to unite the people of the Arab World. Gamal Nasser and Muammar Qaddafi mainly used Arab nationalism and socialism to unite the Arab World against the “greedy” capitalists/imperialists of the West. It was no longer a battle between Muslims and Christians, between Muslims and infidels, but a battle between Arab socialists against Western capitalists/imperialists.

Erdogan, Turkey’s President, is using today the Islamic socialist model of the Muslim Brotherhood to unite the Muslim World. Erdogan’s path resembles more to the path followed by Prophet Muhammad.

You can call it Islam against the infidels, you can call it socialists against capitalists, but I prefer to call it the war for the Silk Roads.

“Muhammad”

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad>

For more information see “A Brief Introduction of International Trade” by Ryan Petersen.

Pan-Arabism VS Pan-Islamism

Pan-Arabism i.e. Arabism and Socialism, is the ideology that was used by the Egyptian socialist dictator Gamal Nasser, the Libyan socialist dictator Muammar Gaddafi, and other pro-Soviet socialist dictators of the Arab World, in order to attack the Arab and Persian Kings of the Persian Gulf i.e. the Saudi Family, the Shah of Iran etc. The main idea of Pan-Arabism, besides its socialist economic model, is for the Arab people to unite, in order to act more efficiently as an international oil cartel, and synchronize (reduce) their production, in order to sell oil at higher prices to United States, Europe and China i.e. “save our oil for our children”.

Map 1



Map 2 The Arab World



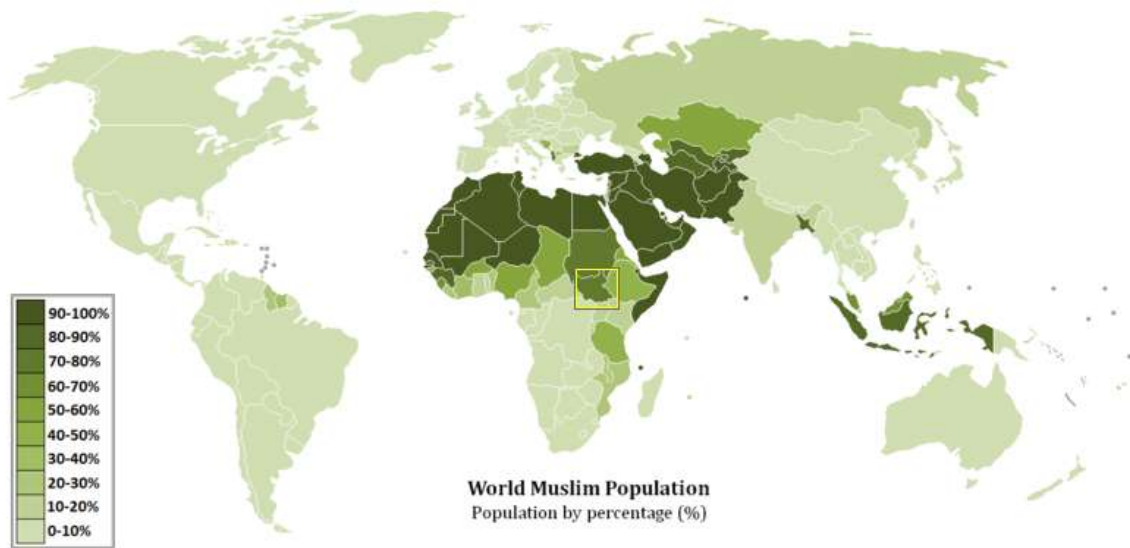
<http://martinsidwell.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Arab-World-Map.jpg>

Pan-Islamism on the other hand does not separate Muslims to Arabs and non-Arabs, or to Sunnis and Shias etc. Pan-Islamism wants all Muslims to unite in order to form an efficient oil cartel. The commercial ambitions of Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism are the same, but Pan-Islamism involves a much larger oil cartel than Pan-Arabism.

Map 3



Map 4



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:World_Muslim_Population_Map.png

Remember that when Nasser was using Pan-Arabism in the 60s and 70s, except of attacking the Saudis, he also wanted to attack the Iranians, who were cooperating with Israel, and were exporting oil through the Eilat-

Ashkelon pipeline, thus avoiding the Suez Canal which was controlled by the Arabs of Egypt.

Today Erdogan is using Pan-Islamism, because Turkey does not have oil and natural gas, but she has the strongest army of the Muslim World, due to her alliance with NATO during the last decades. The Islamists of Turkey want to export to Europe the oil and natural gas of both the Arabs and the Persians (Iranians), but also of the Muslim countries of Central Asia (Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan).

The Saudis were also using some form of Pan-Islamism, in order to attack Gamal Nasser, who was using Pan-Arabism in order to get hold of the oil of the Persian Gulf. In the 50s and 60s, with the use of Pan-Arabism, Gamal Nasser was doing to the Saudis what Erdogan is doing to them in the 21st Century, by using Pan-Islamism.

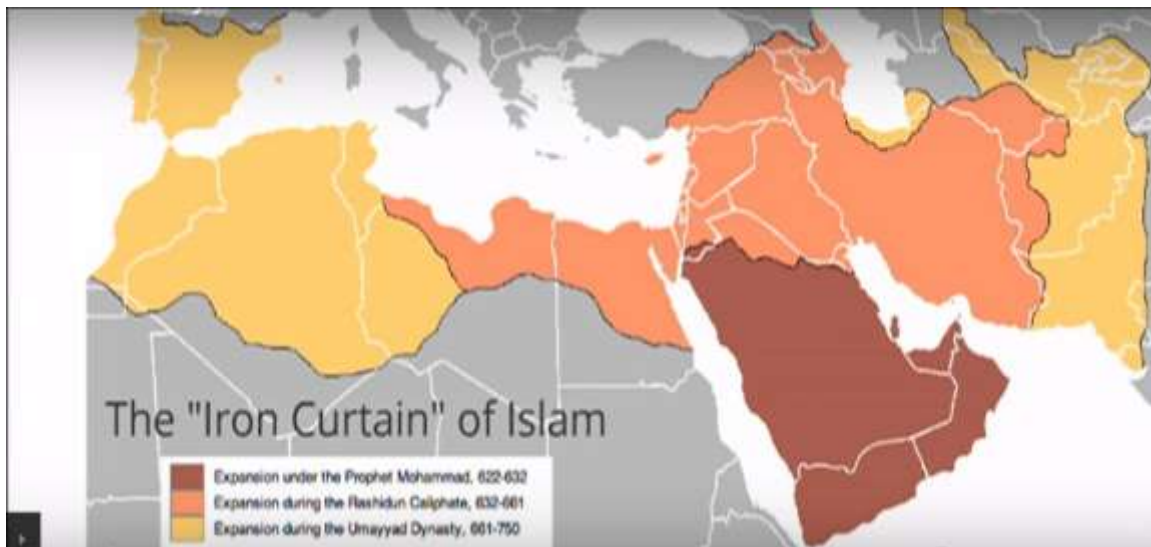
The Saudis of course are not using socialism as a part of their Pan-Islamic ideology, because they have Kings. The main advantage of the Saudis is their oil revenue, which allows them to make very large contributions to the other Arab countries, in exchange for their support. Gamal Nasser could always promise more than the Saudi King, because promises are always easier to find than actual money. Gamal Nasser also had the support of members of the Saud family who were enemies of the King.

The other advantage of the Saudis is that the Holy cities of Islam i.e. Mecca and Medina, are located in Saudi Arabia. Prophet Muhammad was born in Mecca and died in Medina, and the Muslim people believe that it was in

Mecca that Allah gave the Koran to Muhammad. The Saud family believes that they are the natural leaders of the Islamic World, because during the previous centuries it was their ancestors who were leading the revolts against the Ottoman Empire at the Arabian Peninsula. The Sauds consider themselves to be true seeds of Prophet Muhammad, because Muhammad was born in their land.

Prophet Muhammad was a very honest merchant, and he is the father of Islam. With Islam, the people of the Middle East were able to unite during the 7th century C.E., and they managed to block the “infidels” (Christians) from the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. After the rise of Islam the Christians had to buy the goods of Asia i.e. spices, silk etc, at much higher prices from the Muslim merchants of the Mediterranean Sea, because they were no longer allowed to use the Silk Roads themselves.

Map The Islamic Iron Curtain



After the rise of Islam, the Islamic World was able to control international commerce, and that lasted until around 1500 C.E., when the Christians conquered the oceans, and found alternative routes to Asia i.e. around Africa and through the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The Christians also discovered the New World i.e. the American Continent. From 1500 the importance of the Middle East and the Islamic World started decreasing, and it became again of extreme importance in the 20th Century, due to its very rich oil reserves.

What is important is that Nasser's Pan-Arabism and Erdogan's Pan-Islamism follow the legacy of Prophet Muhammad, except that every Muslim leader is using the legacy of the Prophet in his own way.

As I said the Saudi Pan-Islamism does not include socialism, and it is based on the fact that the Saud family was the head of the revolutions against the Ottomans in the Arabian Peninsula, and also in their belief that they are true seeds of the Prophet himself.

Erdogan's Pan-Islamism is the Muslim Brotherhood's version, and it involves a Socialist Islamic Union, which would remind the Soviet Union, except that religion would play a major role, while it was almost banned in the Soviet Union. The Russian Communists wanted to assimilate their Muslim colonies i.e. Central Asia etc, and they almost banned religion.

Erdogan would not be the King of the Socialist Islamic Union he is dreaming of, like the Saudi case, but neither he would be the General

Secretary, as it was the case in the Soviet Union. Erdogan would be the Sultan or the Caliphate of this Socialist Islamic Union.

You should not see Erdogan as a crazy man, because it does not mean that he has to unite the whole Muslim World in a Socialist Islamic Union in order to be successful. In politics it is not all or nothing. Erdogan has already managed to “convince” the Saudis to pay Turkey billions of dollars, and he has managed to convince the Qataris to invite Turkey to establish a military base in Qatar, in order to protect Qatar from Saudi Arabia and Iran.

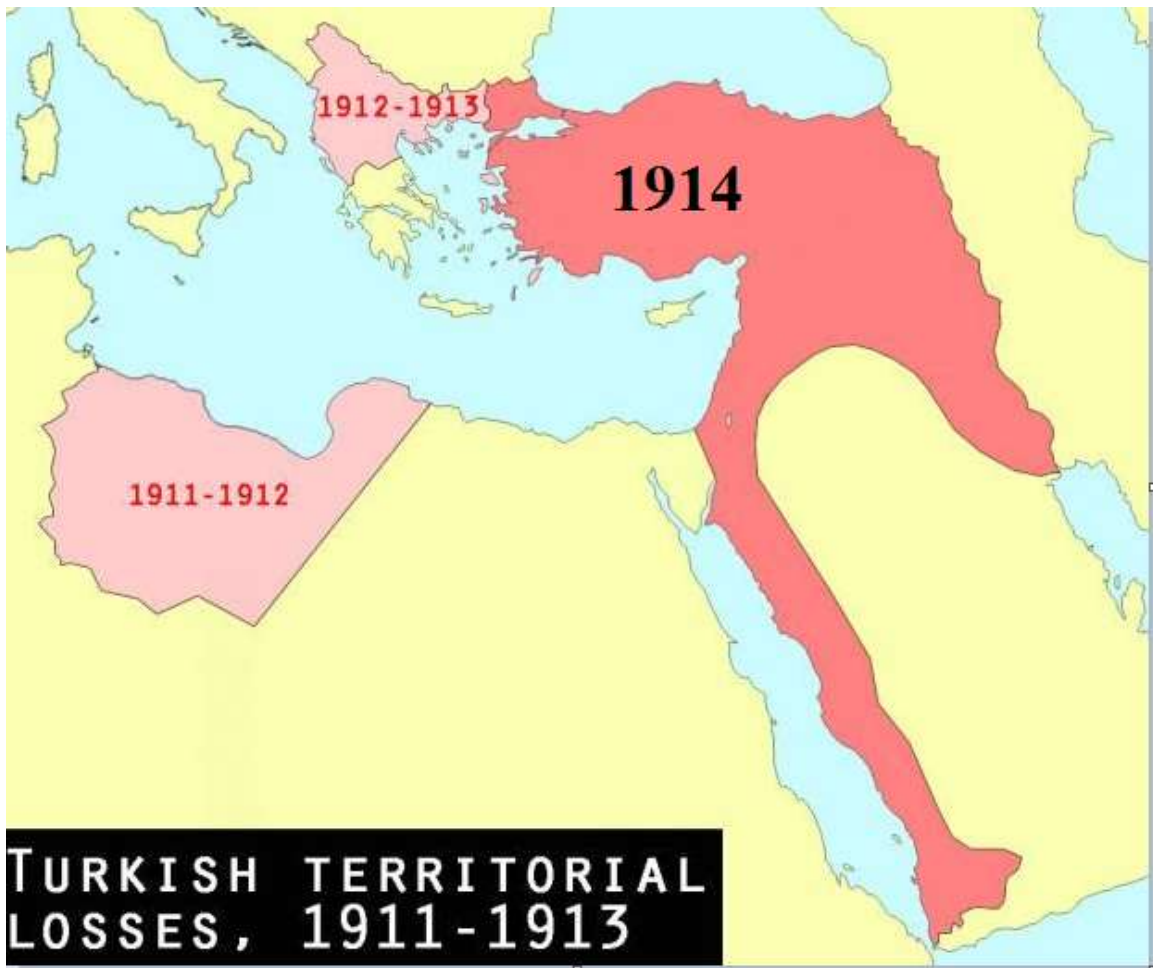
The Qataris not only are more obedient than the Saudis to the Turks, but they also pay them billions of dollars, and they hope that they will manage with Turkey to construct the Qatar-Turkey Pipeline. The Turks and the Qataris see positively the inclusion of Iran in this pipeline, because Iran and Qatar share the largest gas field in the world i.e. the South Pars/North Fields. The Saudis on the other hand are not as rich as the Iranians and the Qataris in natural gas, and they consume internally their gas production, in order not to have more troubles with Russia. The Saudis and the Russians are the two largest oil exporters.

Saudi Arabia and Russia are able to discuss, because Saudi Arabia mainly exports oil to Asia, and Russia mainly exports oil to Europe, and Saudi Arabia does not export natural gas. Therefore there is some room for cooperation between the Saudi and the Russians, given of course that Russia would protect the Saudis from the Turks and the Iranians.

However after the death of King Abdullah and the rise of King Salman to power in January 2015, the Saudis and the Turks have reached an agreement, and they are allies again. But the Turks do not even want the Arab League to operate under the leadership of Saudi Arabia, with the argument that Arabs are not different than Muslims. The Turks want Saudi Arabia to completely surrender herself to Turkey's leadership. So we have to wait and see if the Saudi-Turkey alliance will last. Remember that the Saudis were leading the revolts against the Ottomans many centuries ago.

From Erdogan's point of view, if he manages to put under Turkish influence all the regions controlled by Turkey before the First World War (1914-1918), he would still be able to control the oil and natural gas pipelines, but also the trade routes of the New Silk Roads that will connect Asia to Europe after the rise of China.

Map 5 The Ottoman Empire Before WW1



http://images.mentalfloss.com/sites/default/files/styles/insert_main_wide_image/public/ottoman_empire_territory_lost_copy_copy.jpg

P.S.

I said that the Saudis, like the Turks, have also promoted a Pan-Islamic model, but that's not accurate, because Saudi Arabia promoted the idea of a united Islamic World under her leadership, but she did not include Iran in this Union. The Saudi model referred a Sunni Islamic Union.

Erdogan on the other hand promotes a true Pan-Islamic model, because he wants to send to Europe the oil and gas of Iran, but also of Iraq and Azerbaijan, which are also Shia countries, and Erdogan wants Turkey to be in good terms with the Shia World too.

See also “The Islamic Iron Curtain of the 7th Century

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/04/26/the-islamic-iron-curtain-of-the-7th-century/>

The Hezbollah – Al Qaeda Axis

A great article by the Gatestone Institute, about the alliance that was forged between Iran, Sudan, Al Qaeda and the Lebanese Hezbollah in the early 90s in Sudan. See “The New, Improved Axis of Jihad”, May 2013. The Gatestone Institute is a very anti-Jihadist and pro-Israel American think tank, and it has great and detailed articles on terrorism. James Woosley, the CIA director for the period 1993-1995, is included in its list of advisors.



This particular article was written in 2013 and it is a bit outdated, because in 2015 Sudan changed sides, and aligned itself with Saudi Arabia, after receiving considerable financial support. But for the previous decades Sudan has been the strongest ally of Iran in Africa. Moreover the US-Iranian

relations have improved a lot, at least when compared to what they were in 2013, and therefore Iran cannot support Al Qaeda attacks against the United States in the way it could in the past. Moreover, the war in Syria strained the alliance between Al Qaeda, Iran and Hezbollah, because Al Qaeda is a Sunni terrorist group and it is fighting the Iranian ally Bashar al Assad.

The article writes about the alliance that was forged in Sudan in the early 90s, between Sudan, Iran, Hezbollah and Al Qaeda. Osama bin Laden, one of Al Qaeda's founders, was a hero of the Afghanistan war against the Soviets (1979-1989). But when the Saudi King invited the Americans to fight Saddam Hussein, when Saddam invaded Kuwait in 1990, Osama bin Laden, and many other Saudis, criticized the Saudi King, and he was expelled from Saudi Arabia.

Osama was the son of one of the largest constructors of Saudi Arabia, and he grew up with the children of the royal family of Saud. We can therefore assume that when he became an enemy of the Saudi King he must have received very large sums of money from members of the royal family who were antagonizing the King. That was the point of the alliance that was forged in Sudan in the early 90s. Al Qaeda, Hezbollah and Iran could unite their forces to fight the Saudi King and the Americans.

Osama bin Laden was hiding in Sudan from 1992 to 1996, and he moved to Afghanistan only after the Americans threatened the Sudanese with military action, and the Sudanese had to ask him to leave. I guess that in Afghanistan Osama bin Laden must have also had support from Pakistan, and the tolerance of China, even though I am sure that China never participated in the terrorist

attacks against the United States. China has many problems with Islamic terrorism too. But Pakistan, one of the strongest allies of China, is an Islamic country, and a very corrupt one, with very strong ties to Islamic terrorism. Remember that it was in Pakistan that the American navy seals killed Osama bin Laden in 2011, without asking the permission of the Pakistani authorities. After that the head of the CIA in Pakistan was poisoned, and the Pakistani doctor who helped the Americans trace Osama bin Laden was jailed, supposedly for connections with terrorist. See “Pakistan-Osama bin Laden”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/05/08/pakistan-osama-bin-laden/>

I must say that when we talk about the alliance between Iran and Al Qaeda we are talking about a partial alliance against the Saudi King and the Americans, and not a full scale alliance, because Al Qaeda is a Sunni and terrorist group, and most of Al Qaeda’s financing comes from Sunni countries i.e. Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, UAE, Pakistan, Afghanistan etc. Al Qaeda is a loose sum of Sunni Islamic gangs that operate in many countries, and which are influenced by many countries. A new gang might join, and an existing gang might leave. But Al Qaeda is a Sunni terrorist group, and as you can see Al Qaeda and Iran are killing each other in Syria.

Gatestone mentions the names of the officers who forged the alliance between Iran, Sudan, Al Qaeda and Hezbollah in the early 90s, and it also says that training camps were opened in Sudan and South Lebanon, and Hezbollah was the one training the men recruited by Osama bin Laden for Al Qaeda.

Keep in mind that before the war in Syria, which among other things is a war between Saudi Arabia and Iran, it would have been much easier for Al Qaeda to cooperate with Iran. Remember that both Iran and the Saudis are hurt by the American efforts to bring the oil and gas of Central Asia (Turkmenistan, Kazakstan) to the Indian Ocean.

Moreover there are many in Saudi Arabia who perceive the traditional alliance between Saudi Arabia and United States as an obstacle to stronger ties with China, which is now the big importer of Saudi oil. Moreover the American military presence in the Persian Gulf was a main part of the Iranian propaganda. Iran, and the other Saudi enemies, would always use the American military presence in Saudi Arabia to describe the Saudi King as an apostate who brought the infidels to the Holy Cities of Islam i.e. Mecca and Median. In 2003, after the 9/11 attacks, the Americans finally decided to move their bases to Qatar.

The article mentions many attacks carried out by the Iran-Al Qaeda-Hezbollah axis, with the 9/11 attack being the greatest achievement of this alliance. According to Gatestone, Venezuela was the base for the Iranian operations in the American continent, and the Lebanese Hezbollah was using the Margarita Island of Venezuela for its drugs trade with the Mexican drug cartels. Hezbollah is using drug trafficking in order to fill the gaps of its budget.

Note that Venezuela supported Iran, Russia and Assad in the Syrian Arab Spring, even though Qatar has made a lot of investments in Venezuela.

Hezbollah was also using the banking system of Venezuela for its operations in the American continent.

For the article see:

“The New, Improved Axis of Jihad”, May 2013

2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th Paragraph

Indicators and warnings continue to grow concerning the resurgence of an "Axis of Jihad" comprised of Iran, Hizballah, and al-Qa'eda. This axis is not new: its three actors, both national and sub-national, have been working together in an operational terror alliance for over two decades. Still, so many seem unaware not just of this alliance, but of the ideological bonds that brought them together in Khartoum, Sudan, in the early 1990s and have kept them together to the current day. The bond is as old as Islam, and includes the commitment to jihad [war in the name of Islam] and Islamic Shariah law; the threat is to all free and democratic societies which stand in the way of global Islamic government and the forcible application of Islamic Shariah Law.

This modern-day Axis of Jihad was formed in the Sudan under the aegis of the Muslim Brotherhood regime of Omar al-Bashir and his sometime political ally, National Congress Party chairman Hassan al-Turabi. Al-Qa'eda as such had not yet taken its current form, but after the end of the 1980s Afghan war against the Soviet Union, Usama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri had found safe haven in the Sudan. Al-Bashir and Turabi are pan-Islamists, meaning they see the world in terms of the Dar al-Islam (House of Islam, where Shariah is enforced) versus the Dar al-Harb (everywhere that is not under Islamic Law). Such a worldview chooses to disregard the ancient intra-Islamic schism between Sunni and Shi'a and instead to unify the entire Islamic world in jihad against the "infidel."

So it was that al-Bashir and Turabi invited the Iranian regime leadership and its Hizballah terror proxies to Khartoum in late 1990 to meet with the future leadership of al-Qa'eda. Then-Iranian president (and once again a 2013 candidate for the office) Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, intelligence director Ali Fallahian, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commander Mohsen Reza'i and other top Iranian leadership

figures accepted al-Bashir's invitation and traveled to Khartoum, along with Islamic jihadis from around the region.

There, and in subsequent meetings that took place in Khartoum throughout the early 1990s, the alliance was formed among Iran, Hizballah, and what soon would be known as al-Qa'eda. Usama bin Laden was especially interested in the explosives expertise coupled with a "martyrdom" mentality he had seen demonstrated by Hizballah with such deadly effect against Western targets. It was arranged that Imad Mughniyeh, Hizballah's top terror operative, would commit to training Usama bin Laden's growing cadre of terrorists in explosives techniques, especially those involving suicide truck bombings that could bring down large buildings. Training camps were set up in Sudan, Lebanon, and elsewhere where al-Qa'eda's would-be shahid recruits could learn this craft. The attacks at Khobar Towers, the U.S. East Africa Embassies in Dar Es-Salaam and Nairobi, against the USS Cole, and eventually the 9/11 attacks themselves were all the result of this terror alliance.

17th, 18th, 19th Paragraphs

The Tri-Border region of South America, where the borders of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay met, served as an early hub of terror operations from the 1980s onward for the Iranian Embassy in Buenos Aires and Hizballah, which jointly directed the 1992 and 1994 terror attacks against the Israeli Embassy and Jewish Cultural Center, respectively, from this lawless area. Since 2005, Iran's operational base in Venezuela has become the nexus for its operations across the Western Hemisphere, including South, Central, and North America. Diplomatic relationships with Venezuela and other Latin American regimes hostile to the U.S., such as Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua also provide Iran with a means of evading international isolation and sanctions, obtaining a ready source of fraudulent travel documents, and laundering money.

Hizballah's operations in the Western Hemisphere, including inside the U.S. and Canada, are noted with special concern by U.S. officials: former Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff remarked that Hizballah made al-Qa'eda "look like a minor league team," while former Assistant Secretary of State Richard Armitage has called Hizballah the "A team" and al-Qa'eda the "B team." Masters of clandestine intelligence tradecraft, as well as among the most highly trained and ideologically-committed special operations

forces anywhere, Hizballah (which is trained by the Iranians) expends considerable effort establishing cell networks across the Americas. These cells are assigned to pre-attack casing and surveillance; fundraising via a variety of scams like cigarette smuggling as well as narcotrafficking; and operational planning for terror attacks. Former U.S. Ambassador Roger Noriega testifies regularly for Congress to detail Hizballah's collaboration with narcotraffickers and guerrilla groups (such as the FARC -- Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) whose drug-running and terror training activities are becoming ever more complex, dangerous, and threatening to U.S. national security, as well as that of friends and allies throughout the hemisphere.

Venezuela's Margarita Island, better known as a prime tourist destination, has become a safe haven for terrorists and drug smugglers, as well as Hizballah's banking and finance hub in the Western Hemisphere. According to Noriega, Hizballah runs countless businesses and safe houses on the island. Even closer to home, Hizballah has forged operational relationships with Mexican drug cartels such as Los Zetas. The links are opportunistic, rather than ideological, on both sides; Hizballah increasingly uses narcotics trafficking to fill funding gaps left by cutbacks in Iranian largesse, while the cartels benefit from Hizballah's explosives, tunneling, and weapons expertise. Al-Qa'eda, too, has boasted about the ease of moving non-conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction into the U.S. via the Mexican drug tunnels. Kahlili's reporting names al-Qa'eda operative Adnan Shukrijumah, who has been spotted and tracked over the years by U.S. and allied security agencies from Canada to the U.S., and south into Latin America, among the list of operational commanders awaiting attack orders from Iranian Qods Force commander Qassem Suleimani, the overall Iran-Hizballah-al-Qa'eda coalition commander.

<http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3726/axis-of-jihad>

The Pakistan – Osama bin Laden Connection

According to the Pakistani Prime Minister, the Pakistan-China alliance is higher than the mountains and deeper than the seas. See Stratfor article. I guess he is referring to the 46 billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which is promoted by China (New Silk Roads). Actually the two countries have been allies for decades, and they jointly fought the Soviets in Afghanistan, and also their common rival India.

As you can read at the following Stratfor article, the construction of this economic corridor faces various problems, and one of them is that is heavily based on the western Pakistani province of Balochistan. The Baloch people are a Sunni Muslim tribe, and 7 out of 9 million of them live in Pakistan.







Image 1 Baloch People

Baloch بلوچ



Ethnic Baloch men in Zaranj, Afghanistan

Regions with significant populations

 Pakistan	approx 6,900,000 (2013) ^[1]
 Iran	1,557,000 ^[2]
 UAE	468,000 (2014) ^[3]
 Oman	434,000 (2009) ^{[4][5]}
 Afghanistan	300,000 (2009) ^[6]
 Turkmenistan	30,000 ^[7]

Languages

Balochi, Urdu, Persian

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baloch_people

Pakistan was a part of India, and when it was separated from India it became one country, in order for the Muslims of India to have power. But now the Baloch people believe they are not equally treated by the other Muslim tribes of Pakistan, and they claim that religion should not be placed before national characteristics, and many of them ask for a country of their own.

At the following map, from a Balochist site, you can see a map of a Balochistan, as it is envisioned by the Baloch people. The Baloch people

have been traditionally living in what is today Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan, and the map includes some parts of all these three countries.

Map 1 Balochistan



<https://balochliberationmovement.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/map4.jpg>

The Pakistani port of Gwadar is located at Balochistan, and China is supposed to use the port for commercial purposes, but also as a naval base, in order to become a two Ocean power and encircle India.

Map 2 Pakistan



<http://www.mapsofworld.com/pakistan/maps/pakistan-political-map.jpg>

For India, the China-Pakistan Economic and Military corridor is a real headache, because it will undo India's geographic advantage over China for the trade with Europe and Africa, and it will give China the chance to encircle India. That's why India is supporting the aspirations of the Baloch people in Pakistan, in the same way she is supporting the Tibetan people in China.

India also has a motive to become an American ally, since India cannot expect much help from her traditional ally Russia, because Russia and China have formed an alliance against the United States. The United States are facing China in the South China Sea, because China wants to make it a Chinese lake, and a huge part of the world trade passes through the Malacca Straits and the South China Sea.

As you can read at the following Huffington Post article, in March 2016, the Pakistanis arrested in Balochistan an ex officer of the Indian Navy, and they claim that he was there to help the Baloch people find arms. India denied the accusations, even though she admitted that the man was indeed an ex Indian officer. But what the Pakistanis say sounds plausible. See Huffington Post “Tensions Mount Between India and Pakistan Over Balochistan”, March 2016.

In the same Huffington Post article you will read that Pakistan asked for Iran’s cooperation on the Iranian-Pakistani borders, in order to take care of the Baloch issue, since both countries have Baloch populations at their borders. But Iran did not agree to cooperate with Pakistan on the Baloch issue, even though the Iranians treat their Baloch population much worst than the Pakistanis treat theirs, as you can read at the article.

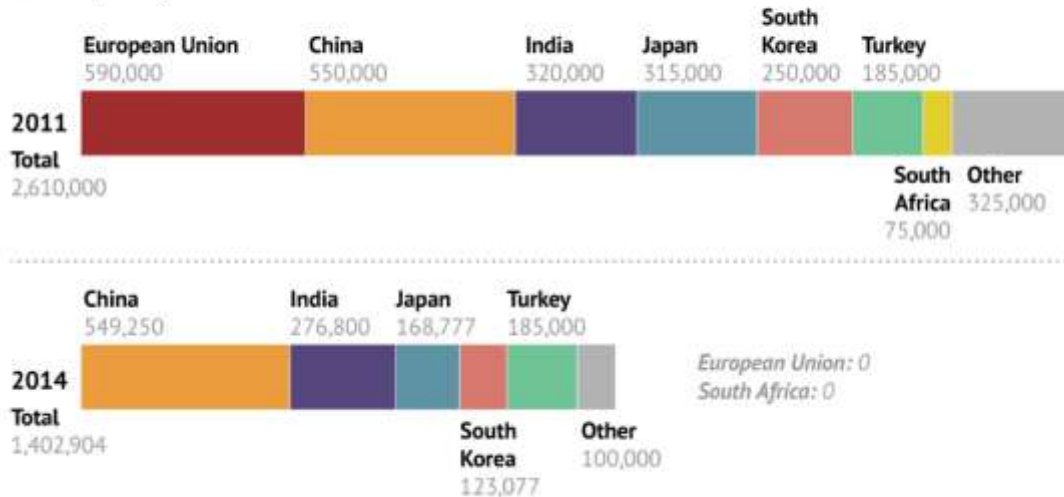
The reason Iran does not want to cooperate with Pakistan against the Baloch people of Pakistan is that it Iran does not want to alienate India, and that could happen if the Iranians and the Pakistanis start cooperating against the Baloch people of Pakistan. India is the second largest importer of Iranian oil, second only to China, and Iran cannot afford to lose India to the Arabs.

Image 2 Iranian Oil Exports

IRANIAN OIL EXPORTS: BEFORE AND AFTER SANCTIONS

Iranian Oil Exports by Destination (approximate)

Barrels per day



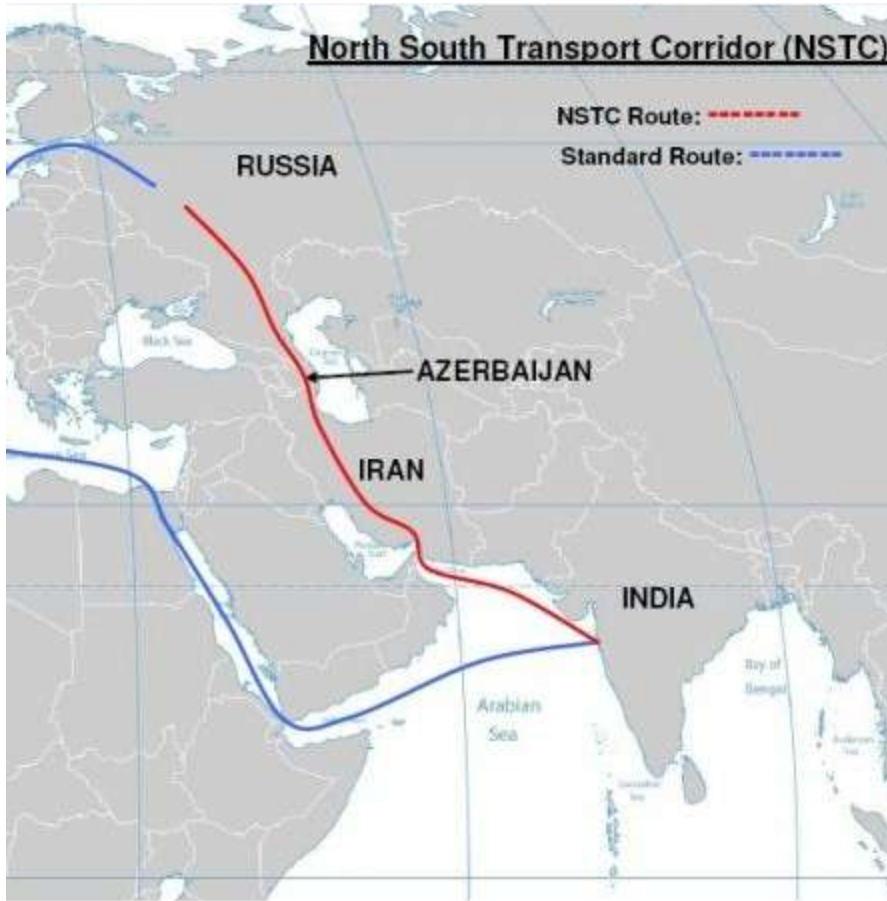
Sources: EIA; Reuters; IEA; country data

Copyright Stratfor 2015 www.stratfor.com

https://www.stratfor.com/sites/default/files/main/images/Iran-Oil-Exports-071615_0.jpg

Moreover the Indians have included Iran in the Indian Silk Roads i.e. the North South Transport Corridor. The North South Transport Corridor will connect Bombay (India) with Chabahar (Iran), and from there the Indian merchandizes will reach Europe through Azerbaijan and Russia.

Map 3 North South Transport Corridor



<http://financialtribune.com/sites/default/files/styles/large/public/field/image/07%20INSTC%20449-ab.jpg?itok=WFV1LGNK&c=5591aebda12dbd507d5a2fc5e22ee93a>

The Iranians and the Indians are also promoting the Iran-Oman-India natural gas pipeline, which will bypass Pakistan, one of India's greatest rivals.

Map 4



The Iranians obviously would be very happy to see that the issue of the Baloch people is “settled”, but India is a great customer and they do not want to upset India by getting involved in the Pakistani-Indian rivalry. After all Iran and Pakistan now have some common economic interests, but in the past they have been bitter rivals, because Pakistan was a major Arab ally. Now the Pakistanis are trying to become somewhat neutral in the Iranian-Saudi rivalry, because they have significant economic interests with both the Arabs and the Iranians.

I said that the Indians are trying to cause problems in Iran and China, and I have to say that the Iranians and the Chinese are doing the same thing, and they have supported many terrorist attacks against India. Pakistan is the specialist when it comes to terrorism, and Pakistan can use the 180 million Muslim people of India to that end. Pakistan has great influence in Islamic terrorism.

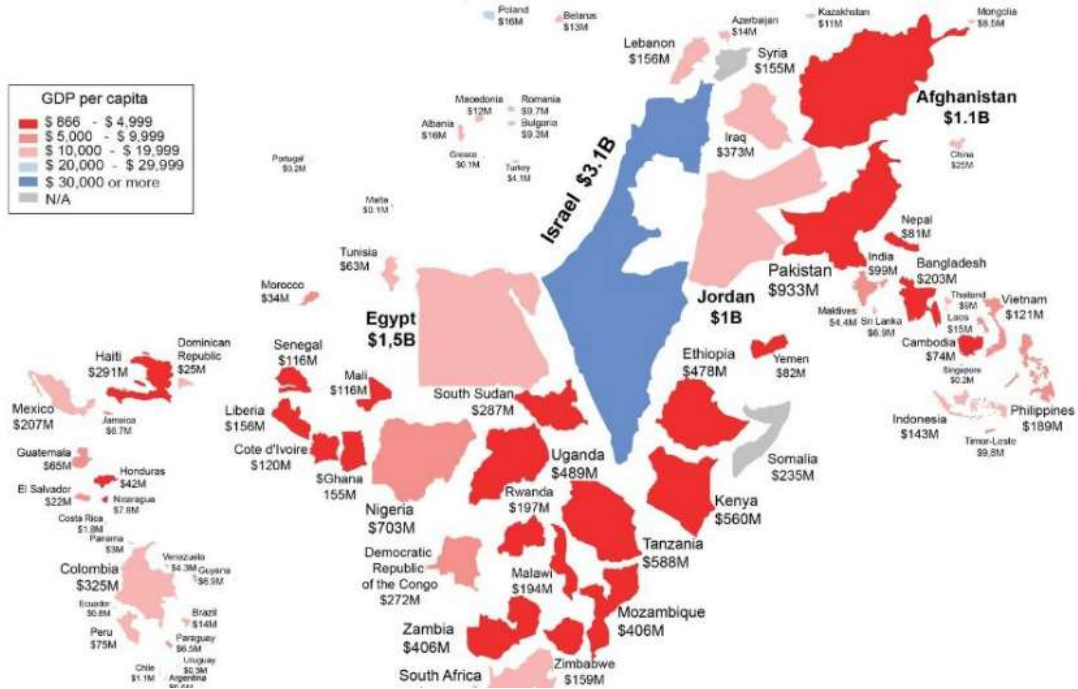
The India-US alliance has alienated Pakistan and United States. The United States have already accused the Pakistanis for carrying out attacks against CIA agents. See “Declassified U.S. document suggests Pakistani link to attack on CIA agents”, April 2016.

The United States are also thinking to cancel the annual military aid they offer to Pakistan, which is approximately 1 billion dollars per year. The Pakistanis are threatening the United States they will buy Russian or Chinese aircrafts instead of American ones. I guess they also mean they will support more terrorist attacks against the United States if the Americans stop giving them the 1 billion dollars each year. See Financial Times “Pakistan threatens to buy Russian or Chinese jets in spat with US”, May 2016.

For the American military aid see the following map.

Map 5 American Aid

Countries Scaled to the Economic Aid They Receive From the U.S.

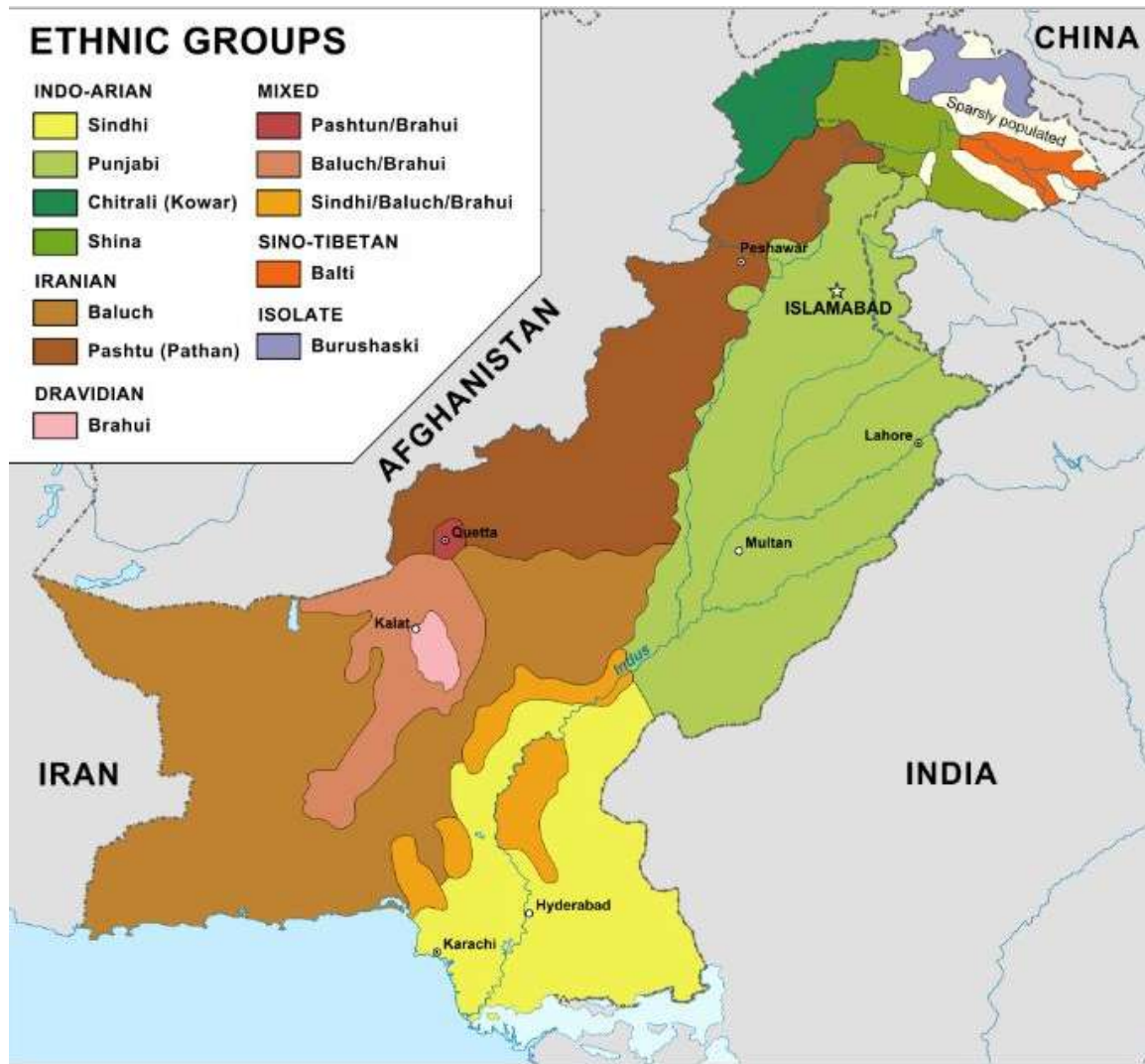


<http://howmuch.net/articles/countries-scaled-to-the-economic-aid-they-receive-from-us>

Also note that Osama bin Laden, the number 1 man of Al Qaeda, was hiding at Pakistan when the US navy seals killed him. After the bin Laden assassination Pakistan imprisoned a Pakistani doctor who supposedly helped the Americans trace bin Laden. See Financial Times “Bin Laden case doctor linked to militant”, May 2012.

Moreover, the CIA head in Pakistan, was poisoned after his success with bin Laden, and he had to urgently quit Pakistan. According to the Americans it was the Pakistani secret services that poisoned him. See Washington Post “After presiding over bin Laden raid, CIA chief in Pakistan came home suspecting he was poisoned by ISI”, May 2016.

Map 6 Ethnic Groups of Pakistan



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/3/30/Pakistan_ethnic_map.svg/2050px-Pakistan_ethnic_map.svg.png

Articles

“The \$46 Billion Tie That Binds China and Pakistan”, May 2016

7th Paragraph

While CPEC has been touted as a "game-changer" for Pakistan, Islamabad will need to overcome several problems standing in the way of its implementation. The first is

regionalism. Rivalries among Pakistan's provinces of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Sindh and Balochistan — each with its own strong cultural identities — have long stood in the way of forging an overarching national identity. In particular, Balochistan, the country's least-populous province, has long accused Punjab, the wealthiest and most populous province, of marginalizing its people. One grievance Balochis hold is that Punjabis expropriated the operations of the Gwadar port, which is being expanded under the CPEC, and delegated the port authority's administration, cutting Balochis out of the equation. (In November 2015, a Chinese firm signed a 43-year lease for the rights to operate the port.)

[https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/46-billion-tie-binds-china-and-pakistan?utm_source=paidlist-a&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=*\[DATE:\]*&utm_content=Daily+Intelligence+Brief%3A+May+6%2C+2016](https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/46-billion-tie-binds-china-and-pakistan?utm_source=paidlist-a&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=*[DATE:]*&utm_content=Daily+Intelligence+Brief%3A+May+6%2C+2016)

“Tensions Mount Between India and Pakistan Over Balochistan”, March 2016

1st, 2nd, 3rd Paragraphs

On March 24th, the Pakistani security officials, backed by the civilian authorities, said they had arrested an Indian national somewhere in Balochistan and now they describe it as the “evidence” of Indian involvement in the restive province. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs has also confirmed that Mr. Kulbhushan yadhav, a former Navy officer, has been arrested. While Islamabad says Mr. Yadhav worked for the Indian intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), on a high position, New Delhi has denied his affiliation with its premier intelligence agency.

The circumstances surrounding the arrest of the Indian national are still elusive. Nobody knows how and where he was arrested and who arrested him. Likewise, the Pakistanis have leveled all kinds of allegations on him soon after the news about his arrest broke out. They say he was involved in providing training and weapons to the Baloch insurgents and engaged in promoting unrest in Karachi. One wonders how much time it took the Pakistani officials to extract so much information from Mr. Yadhav when they

are saying that he has been moved to Islamabad for further investigation. Regardless the authenticity of the Pakistani charges, the arrest of Mr. Yadhav will significantly help Islamabad in embarrassing India and discrediting the Baloch nationalists for what they bill as a homegrown liberation movement.

For the past several years, Pakistan has been accusing India of interfering in Balochistan, but it never brought in public any evidence to substantiate its claims. The alleged Indian involvement in Balochistan has become an integral part of the talking points the Pakistani officials use whenever they meet with the Indian officials. The meeting between former prime ministers Manmohan Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Yousuf Raza Gilani at Sharm-el-Sheikh in Egypt in 2009 was the first occasion when Balochistan was mentioned at a high level. Afterward, the Pakistani officials also provided dossiers to the United Nations — which were not made public — in October 2015 to prove the Indian hand in fomenting trouble inside Pakistan. The Indians, on the other hand, say they have no interest in destabilizing Pakistan.

6th Paragraph

This incident coincided with the first visit to Islamabad of Iran's Hassan Rouhani since becoming the President. Iran has suddenly become an active player in the region after the lifting of the sanctions because of the successful deal with the P5+1 nations. Tensions between Tehran and Riyadh have also skyrocketed in the recent months because of differences on Syria and Yemen. The Pakistani officials have reportedly mentioned Mr. Jadhav's case with the visiting Iranian leader and sought Iran's cooperation on border security. (The Iranian leader denied discussing the matter with the Pakistanis). The Iranians, on their part, have even a worse record than the Pakistanis when it comes to treating the Baloch people. For instance, last month Shahindokht Molaverdi, Iran's vice president for women and family affairs, conceded that “we have a village in Sistan and Baluchestan (province) where every single man has been executed.”

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/malik-siraj-akbar/tensions-mount-between-in_b_9552090.html

“Pakistan threatens to buy Russian or Chinese jets in spat with US”,
May 2016

http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/49dcfe66-11c6-11e6-839f-2922947098f0.html?ftcamp=published_links%2Frss%2Fworld%2Ffeed%2F%2Fproduct#axzz47jU2m2h3

“Declassified U.S. document suggests Pakistani link to attack on CIA agents”, April 2016

<http://in.reuters.com/article/usa-pakistan-cia-attack-idINKCN0XB2VO>

“Lawmakers: Pakistan could use F-16s against India, not terrorists”, April 2016

<http://www.worldtribune.com/lawmakers-pakistan-could-use-f-16s-against-india-not-terrorists/>

“U.S. tells Pakistan it will have to fund F-16s itself”, April 2016

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-pakistan-planes-idUSKCN0XT1U6?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews>

“Bin Laden case doctor linked to militant”, May 2012

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/8a5872b2-aa5b-11e1-8b9d-00144feabdc0.html#axzz47fBHLrSe>

“After presiding over bin Laden raid, CIA chief in Pakistan came home suspecting he was poisoned by ISI”, May 2016

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/in-bin-laden-raids-shadow-bad-blood-and-the-suspected-poisoning-of-a-cia->

[officer/2016/05/05/ace85354-0c83-11e6-a6b6-2e6de3695b0e_story.html?postshare=7671462470729574&tid=ss_tw](https://www.facebook.com/officer/2016/05/05/ace85354-0c83-11e6-a6b6-2e6de3695b0e_story.html?postshare=7671462470729574&tid=ss_tw)

The American-Russian Price War for Natural Gas

A very interesting article by Foreign Affairs, about whether there will be an American-Russian price war over natural gas. See “A U.S. Gas War With Russia”?, May 2016.

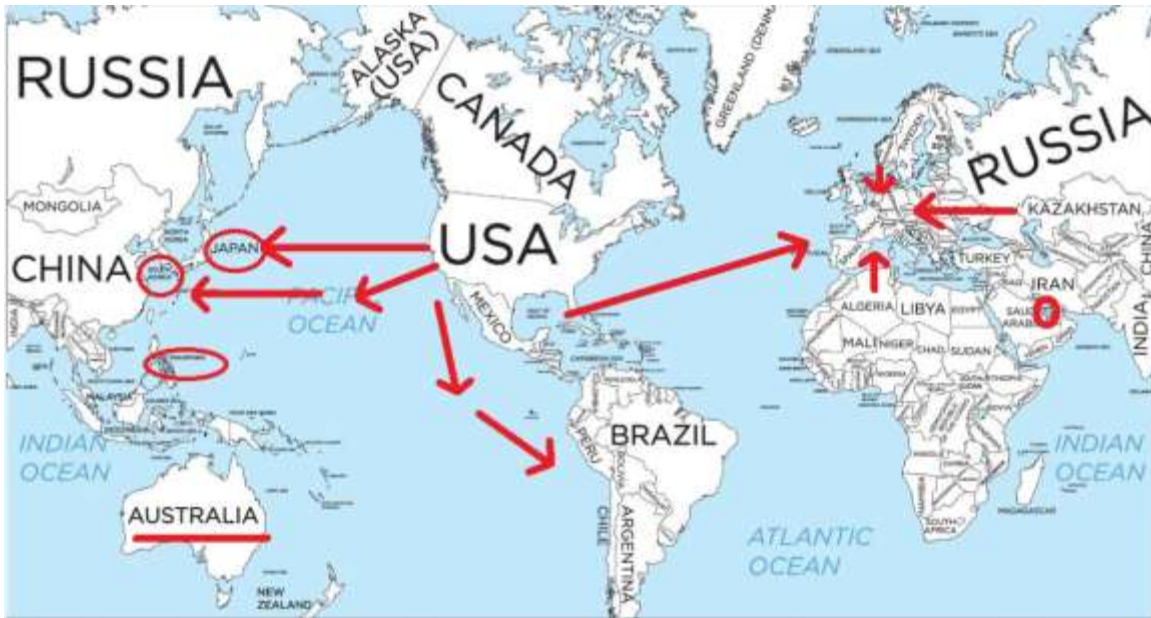
In April 2016, the first shipment of American LNG arrived to Europe, and many analysts started talking about a price war between Russia’s Gazprom and the American energy companies. These analysts expect the American LNG shipments to Europe to push Gazprom towards lower gas prices, and also to reduce the Russian geopolitical might over Europe, since the American gas will reduce European dependency on Russian gas. Europe, together with Turkey, consume approximately 450 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year (2015), and Russia supplies approximately 1/3 of it, and earns 42 billion dollars (2015).

According to Foreign Affairs, the American LNG shipments to Europe will have a more ambiguous effect on Russia. The American companies will be able to ship to Europe a maximum of 80 billion cubic meters of LNG per year by 2020. But at the same time the European production is falling by 10 billion cubic meters per year i.e. Norway, Netherlands, England. Therefore a part of the American LNG, if it does indeed reach Europe, will only cover a part of the falling European production.

The Foreign Affairs article also mentions Norway and Algeria, who are the second and third largest suppliers of natural gas to Europe. The American

LNG will reach the western coasts of Europe, and it will more likely hurt Norwegian and Algerian exports to Europe than the Russian ones. However nobody talks about a price war between American, Norwegian and Algerian natural gas, but they only talk about a price war between American and Russian natural gas.

Map



The Foreign Affairs article also mentions Qatar, because the European Union already had access to plenty of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Qatar. Qatar has significantly increased its exports of LNG to Europe during the last few years, and therefore the American shipments to Europe could hurt the Qatari LNG exports to Europe. Remember that the Qatari and Iranian state owned media passionately supported Bernie Sanders in United States. Bernie Sanders wants to ban the American oil and gas production. See “The Financing of Hollywood’s Socialist Propaganda”.

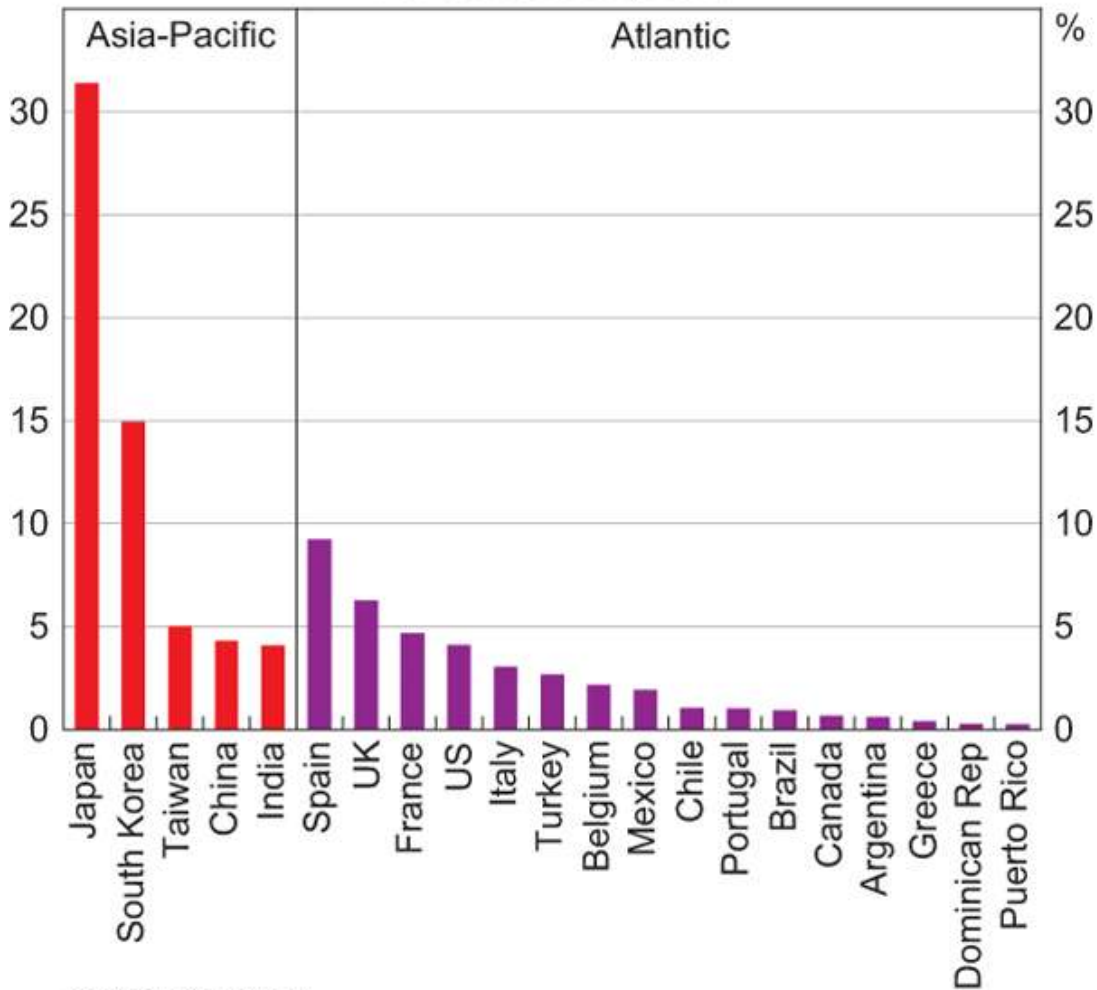
<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/05/12/the-financing-of-hollywoods-socialist-propaganda/>

Moreover, the producers of natural gas in United States are private investors and do not care about geopolitics, but about where they can get higher prices. And they might get higher prices in countries that do not have access to pipelines of natural gas i.e. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan etc. Japan, South Korea and Taiwan have huge economies, and do not have access to pipeline networks, and they are the largest, the second largest, and the third largest importers of LNG respectively. See for example the figures for 2010.

Largest LNG Importers

LNG Imports

Per cent of total, 2010



Source: BP (2011)

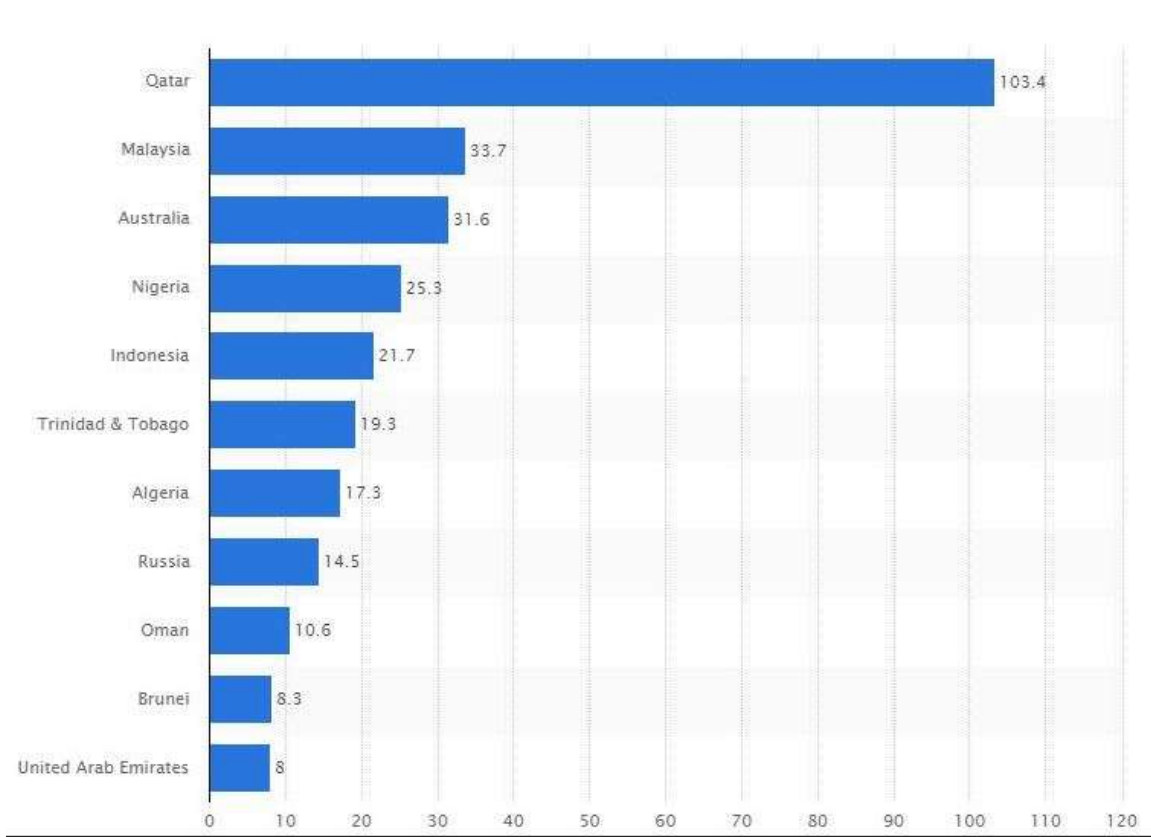
<http://www.rba.gov.au/publications/bulletin/2011/sep/images/graph-0911-3-05.gif>

In 2015 Japan was the third largest economy in the world, South Korea was the 11th largest, and Taiwan was the 22nd largest economy in the world according to GDP. Therefore they all have huge needs for oil and natural gas, especially after the nuclear accident of Japan in 2011 (Fukushima), which made everyone more reluctant towards nuclear energy.

These countries appreciate LNG more than the Europeans, because the European have access to pipeline networks from Russia, Algeria and Norway, and they might be willing to pay for the American LNG higher prices than the Europeans, and therefore nobody can say for sure how much of the 80 billion cubic meters of the American natural gas will reach Europe.

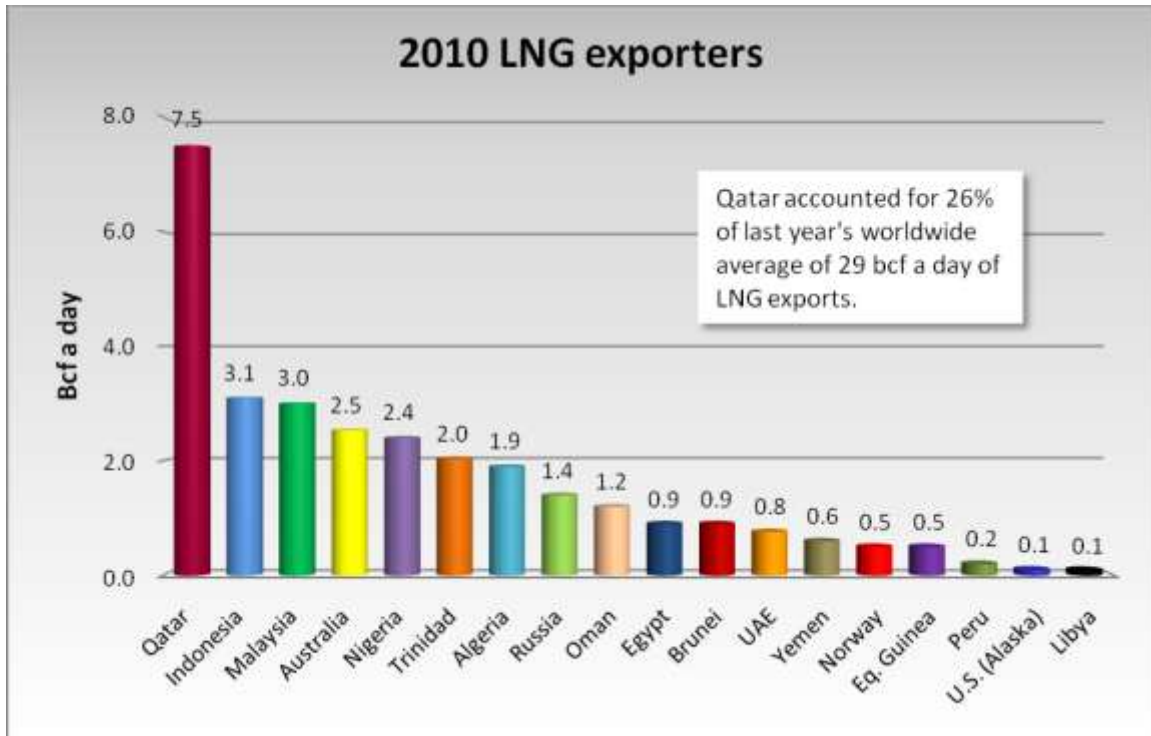
Also note that Qatar, Indonesia and Malaysia, all Muslim countries, are among the largest exporters of LNG, and they mainly export to Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, China and India, and they see the American LNG exports as a very big threat for their economies. At the following Statista diagram you can see that Qatar is the largest LNG exporter in the world, and Malaysia is the second (2014). If you have read the link I provided above about the financing of Hollywood's socialist propaganda, you have already read about Malaysia's financing of socialist propaganda in United States i.e. The Wolf of Wall Street.

Top LNG Exporters (2014)



<http://www.statista.com/statistics/274528/major-exporting-countries-of-lng/>

Top LNG Exporters (2010)



<https://oilandgaslogistics.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/lng-exporters.png>

Qatari LNG Exports

Qatar LNG exports by destination, 2014

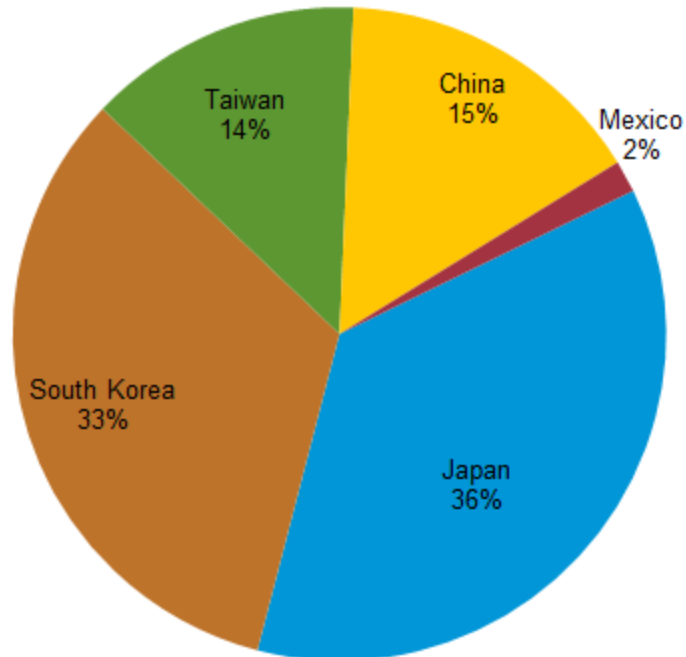
Region	Percent of total
Asia	72%
Europe	23%
other	5%

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, Cedigaz

<http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=QAT>

Indonesian LNG Exports

Figure 7. Indonesia LNG exports by destination, 2014



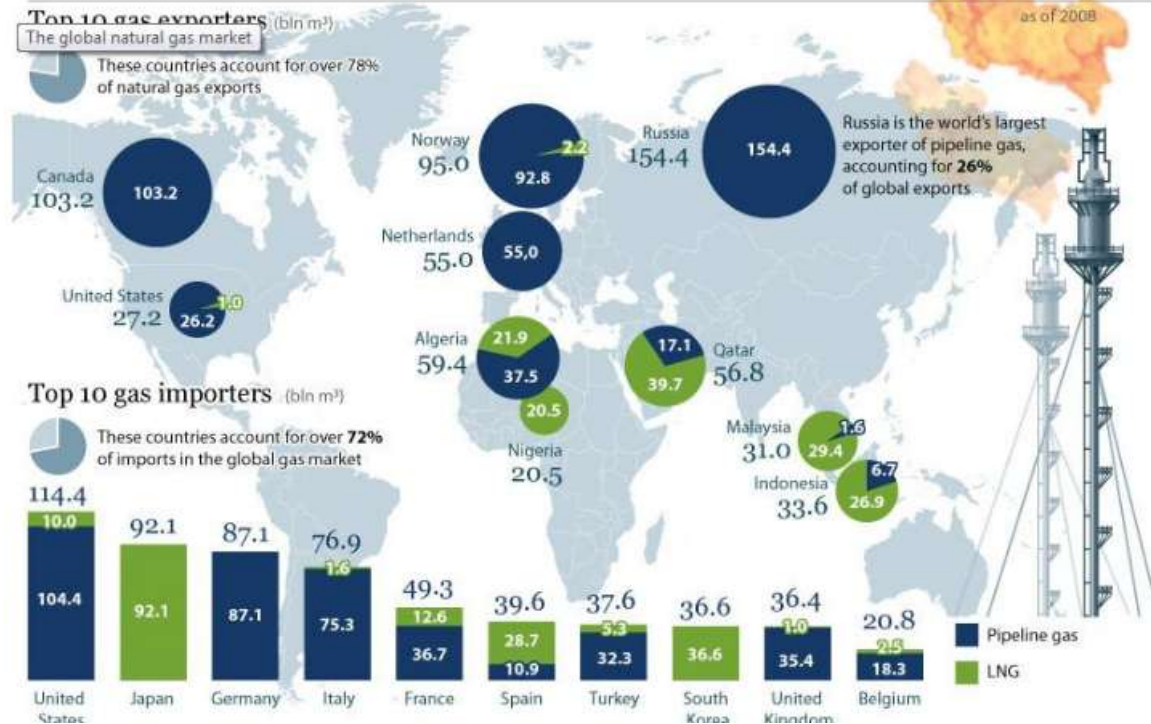
Note: Does not include LNG sent to regasification plants in Indonesia and negligible amount sent to Singapore starting in 2014.
Sources: U.S. Energy Information Administration, IHS Energy

http://drg.blob.core.windows.net/bunkerpricebody/images/stories/General_photos/111aaalng_exports_destination.png

At the following map you can see the global natural gas market. With circles you can see the main country exports. The blue part refers to the exports by pipelines, and the green part to LNG exports. The bars show the country imports, and the blue parts refer to imports by pipelines, and the green parts to LNG imports. Some countries have both exports (circles) and imports (bars).

The global natural gas market

The global natural gas market includes the pipeline gas market and the liquefied natural gas market



<http://sputniknews.com/infographics/20100426/158748785.html>

See also “The Map of Natural Gas”

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/01/14/the-map-of-the-natural-gas/>

and “The Map of War”

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/01/14/the-map-of-war/>

The Foreign Affairs also mentions Australia, which will significantly increase her LNG production in the next few years, and she will probably become the top LNG exporter in the world, and that’s more important for LNG prices than whether the American LNG will be sold to Europe or somewhere else. Note that Muslim oil and gas exporters who are threatened

by the Australian production are financing socialists in Australia, in order to flood the country with Muslim immigrants who can sabotage the Australian production with terrorist attacks. For the time being Australia has managed to defend the socialist propaganda and maintain a hard line towards immigrants who reach Australia through Indonesia, Malaysia etc. See for example Reuters “Australia reaffirms hard-line immigration policy”, May 2016.

Map Australia – Indonesia - Malaysia



I agree 100% per cent with the Foreign Affairs observations, and I do not think that the main thing of American LNG exports will be an American-Russian price war in Europe. The main war the Americans will have to fight

will be domestically, because Iran, the Arabs and Russia will support American socialists, in order to use them as a fifth column in the United States and jeopardize the American economy and society.

On the other hand the Russians will not be happy to see the American LNG arriving to Europe. It will be one more trouble for the Russians, even if it is not the main one.

Articles

“A U.S. Gas War With Russia”?, May 2016

1st Paragraph

April 21, the first Europe-bound shipment of U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG) left the Gulf of Mexico and crossed the Atlantic, a move that has been widely regarded as the first step in an impending gas war between the United States and Russia. As the theory goes, Russia has a grip on the European gas market, which it uses to bully its close neighbors and shush any major European states that push back on its geopolitical ambitions. U.S. LNG, it follows, will break Russia’s stranglehold. It is a cheaper and more reliable alternative. In turn, Russia will either lose market share or compete by lowering its prices. But either way, Europe wins, economically and geopolitically.

3rd Paragraph

By 2020, the United States could be sending roughly 80 billion cubic meters of LNG to Europe a year—about two-thirds of the volume that Russia exported to Europe in 2015 and just under a third of Europe’s entire gas consumption, which is 400 billion cubic meters per year (450 billion cubic meters, if one includes Turkey). It is no wonder that conflict seems imminent: if such a large share of U.S. LNG were to land in Europe, Russia would get pushed out of the market and lose a large chunk of the \$42 billion it earned by exporting pipeline gas in 2015.

8th Paragraph

On the supply side, Norway is the second-largest provider of gas after Russia. Algeria is third, although its market share is shrinking. This makes these two countries important players, at least for European countries on the coast, which have direct access to seaborne LNG. These coastal European countries are also where U.S. LNG is likely to land since the ability to move gas further inland is often limited by infrastructure and other obstacles. And yet no one is talking about a looming price war between the United States and Norway or Algeria. That's not as geopolitically exciting, even though it is far likelier to happen: U.S. LNG will compete in markets where Norway and Algeria are often larger players than Russia. Norway's exports to Europe have risen in recent years, but Algeria's have declined substantially. How these two countries react to the changing market environment in Europe will matter a great deal.

https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-05-15/us-gas-war-russia?cid=nlc-fatoday-20160516&sp_mid=51385877&sp_rid=aWFrb3ZvczEwMDBAeWFob28uZ3IS1&spMailingID=51385877&spUserID=MTA3MTc0NjI3NDIxS0&spJobID=921992339&spReportId=OTIxOTkyMzM5S0

“Australia reaffirms hard-line immigration policy”, May 2016

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-australia-immigration-idUSKCN0Y508H?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews>

The Dead End for the US in the Middle East and the Turn to Iran

The following map shows the dead end the Americans face in the Middle East, where the United States are left almost without allies, and it also explains the American turn towards Iran, or at least towards adopting a more neutral stance towards the countries of the Middle East.

Map 1



Saudi Arabia was the traditional American ally in the Middle East, at least after the rise of the pro-Soviet socialists in Iraq, and after the rise of the Islamic socialists in Iran. The Americans had promised to protect Saudi Arabia, and Saudi Arabia had promised to provide an uninterrupted flow of oil to the American economy (security for oil agreement).

But as I have said many times, at some point the United States reduced their imports from the Persian Gulf, due to their increased production from shale rock, and due to their increased oil and gas imports from Canada and Mexico, which are countries also very rich in shale rock. Saudi Arabia started looking at China, which is now the big economic player in the Persian Gulf, and Saudi funds started financing terrorist attacks against the United States, even though the Saudi Kings never dared to get personally involved in these attacks.

The United States, after the attack at the Twin Towers (9/11), they moved their military bases from Saudi Arabia to Qatar. Qatar was happy to accommodate the American military bases, because Qatar is a very small country, and it is bullied by Saudi Arabia and Iran. But Qatar, even though it has a huge liquidity, and it can buy jihadists at the battlefields and socialists at the European and American parliaments, it is only a small country in military terms, and it does not have the geopolitical might of Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq. Besides, Qatar is also exporting to Asia.

Iran, the other major player of the Gulf, has been an American enemy since the rise of the Islamic socialists to power in 1979, and the nationalization of the western energy companies. With the economic rise of China, Iran and China are very strongly connected, because Iran's main ambition is to export to China through the Iran-Pakistan-China economic corridor.

In Iraq things were not better than in Iran for the Americans. The Sunni socialist Saddam Hussein was a Soviet ally, and like the Iranians, during his leadership he supported many terrorist attacks against the United States.

What I describe is a very hostile environment for the United States, which was becoming more hostile the more the Americans were reducing their oil imports from the Gulf, and the more the Chinese were increasing theirs.

And like all that was not enough, there was also the cooperation between Turkey and Russia on the natural gas and nuclear energy sectors. Moreover Turkey is hoping to receive billions in Chinese investments as a strategic country on the New Silk Roads which are promoted by China.

Therefore the Saudi turn to China, and the energy cooperation between Turkey and Russia, and the cooperation between Turkey and China on infrastructure, left the United States without a strategic ally in the region. As a result the United States were no longer willing, neither they had a motive, to be an enthusiastic supporter of any country. In the past, the United States were decisively defending Turkey and Saudi Arabia, but they no longer had a motive to do so.

The American attack to Saddam Hussein and Iraq should be seen within this context. With the attack to Iraq in 2003, the Americans overturned the Sunni Arab minority, and brought to power the Shia Arab majority that was oppressed by Saddam Hussein, hoping to find a new friend. See “The Truth about the US Invasion of Iraq in 2003”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/12/02/the-truth-about-the-us-invasion-of-iraq-in-2003/>

With the attack against Saddam Hussein, the Kurds of Iraq, who have also been oppressed by Saddam Hussein, were strengthened too. The Kurds are perhaps the only strategic ally of the United States, even though the Americans have to compete with the Russians for influence over the Kurds.

Map 2 Kurdistan



From all the above, we can see that the new American approach, which is to play with everyone, might be quite beneficial from an American point of

view. By approaching Iran, the Americans made it much harder for Iran to support terrorist attacks against the United States, and Iran is one of the major supporters of international Islamic terrorism.

It is true that the Arab allies of the United States were infuriated by the Iran-US détente, but what can the Arabs do? They cannot quit the United States, even though they would like to do so, because China is closer to Iran, and because Russia is their main competitor in the oil and natural gas markets. If the Arabs were under Russian protection, they would have to listen to the Russians about where to sell and about what prices to sell. Therefore the Arabs of the Gulf need the Americans, no matter how much they hate them.

Israel was also infuriated with the US policy towards Iran, but what can the Israelis do? They can do nothing. Israel has allied with Russia against Turkey and Islamic terrorism, but Israel can not survive without the United States.

Therefore the traditional allies of the United States are infuriated with the new American policy in the Middle East, but they have nowhere else to go. And now Iran will be reluctant to support terrorism against the United States, and Saddam Hussein, a major international terrorist, is out of the equation.

Moreover, as long as the United States were fighting with Iran, Iran could not export its oil and gas to Europe, and thus it was not a threat for the Russian economic interests. Therefore, two natural rivals in the oil and gas markets, Russia and Iran, became allies because of the American-Iranian and

the American-Russian rivalry. Now that the economic sanctions against Iran are lifted, the Iranians are discussing with the Turks the possibility of exporting natural gas to Europe through Turkey, and the alliance between Iran and Russia starts having some cracks.

Moreover the Turks do not have to rely on the Russians, who for centuries have been their traditional rival in the region, and they also have the Iranian option. That is also causing some cracks on the Turkish-Russian energy cooperation.

This is not a “divide and rule” situation as some people think. The Ottomans, the Russians and the Persians (Iranians), are three traditional empires, that have been fighting in the Caucasus region and the Middle East for centuries. They have been fighting even before the United States existed as a nation.

Map 3 The Caucasus Region



With its rivalry with the Iranians, the Americans were eliminating the differences between these three different empires, and that was not beneficial for the Americans. And they decided to change their policy.

Moreover, by adopting a more neutral stance towards the countries of the Middle East, the United States do not have to incur the huge military cost of safeguarding the sea lanes of the Persian Gulf i.e. the oil lanes. It is not a secret that in the Persian Gulf the United States want to share influence and military cost with China, since it is China that mostly counts on the Persian Gulf. The Americans think that the Europeans and the Chinese are free riders, and all these years they have been enjoying the safety provided by the Americans, without making significant contributions, and with too much criticism for the United States.

Towards an Alliance Between Russia and ISIS?

New intense fighting has erupted between the NATO backed Free Syrian Army of Syria, and the NATO backed Kurds of Syria. The Free Syrian Army comprises the supposedly moderate Sunni Islamist fighters of Syria. The truth is that there are no moderate Sunni Islamist fighters in Syria. All these fighters have been supported in the past by Al Qaeda, ISIS or other terrorist organizations.



All the fighters in Syria are either Sunni Jihadists supported by Turkey, the Arabs and other Sunni countries, or Shia Jihadists, supported by Iran and Bashar al Assad. When we, the pro-Westernes, categorize them as “moderate” and “non-moderate”, we categorize them according to how hostile they are towards the Western World, because all of them think that

we are stealing their oil. They question how hostile they are towards the West.

We call “moderate” the Sunni Islamists of Syria who are supported by Qatar, and other countries with relatively good relations with the Western World. But these Sunni Islamists are no better or different than the ones supported by countries hostile to the Western World. They are exactly the same.

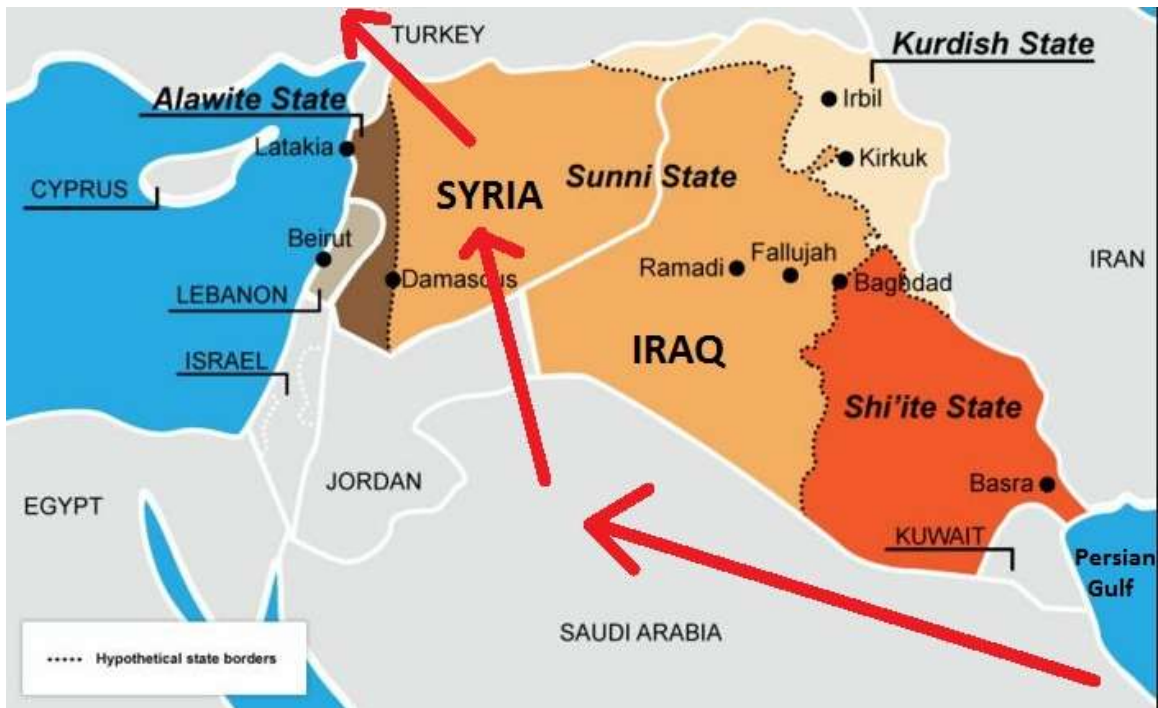
The top officers of ISIS in Syria and Iraq are ex people of Saddam Hussein. Saddam was a Soviet ally, and these people were receiving top training in the previous decades by KGB. The number 2 of ISIS, Abu Ali al Anbari, was a General of Saddam Hussein, and he was killed by the Americans in March 2016. One of the top 5 officers of ISIS, Abu Muslim al-Turkmani, was the head of Saddam’ intelligence servies. These people had close connections with the KGB, they were receiving top training from the KGB, and they had supported many terrorist attacks against the United States. Putin was also a member of KGB.

But during the last few years these people have been working with Turkey. They have been selling oil to both Turkey and Assad, they have been receiving military assistance from Turkey, and they were promoting the Qatar-Turkey pipeline. Remember that Turkey also had good relations with Saddam Hussein, and was importing a lot of Iraqi oil. Moreover, Turkey, together with Saddam Hussein, were hunting the Kurds of Iraq and Turkey. Now the Kurds of Iraq have the oil and gas of Northern Iraq and Turkey needs them, but at the time Saddam controlled the oil of Iraqi Kurdistan, and Turkey did not need the Kurds of Iraq. Therefore Turkey also had close

contacts with the people of Saddam Hussein, who were also Sunnis. Remember that Turkey, like the Arabs of the Persian Gulf, was infuriated when the Americans overturned Saddam Hussein in 2003, and the Shia majority of Iraq rose to power.

The point is that ISIS could have excellent relations with Russia, if it was not working with Turkey, and if it decided not to promote the Arab-Turkish pipelines i.e. Qatar-Turkey.

Map



Remember that the Americans were accusing the Russians of attacking the Free Syrian Army i.e. the Sunni Islamists of Syria that were mainly supported by the Arabs of the Gulf, and for not attacking ISIS. The Americans were right. The Russians had no reason to attack their ex-allies of

ISIS, as long as they stayed away from Assad. And they did stay away from Assad. If you check the maps you will see that ISIS stayed away from the coasts of Syria. It was the Free Syrian Army that was very close to Assad.

By not attacking ISIS, Russia did not hurt her relations with Turkey, at a time the two countries were discussing the Turk Stream Pipeline. Things changed of course once Turkey decided to down the Russian aircraft. Due to the rivalry between Turkey and Saudi Arabia, until the rise of King Salman in January 2015, the Turks would not really mind if the Russians were attacking Sunni gangs supported by Saudi Arabia and UAE in Syria. Remember that ISIS was also attacking Saudi Arabia.

However, after the rise of King Salman to power, the Turks and the Saudis decided to cooperate in Syria. Recently Turkey changed her stance towards ISIS, and started attacking ISIS. That's why ISIS is getting weaker in Syria. Remember that the Arabs of the Gulf, even though they preferred Saddam Hussein from the Iranians, hated and were afraid of Saddam Hussein as well.

I do not know if it would be wise for ISIS to go against Turkey, but it might have no choice, since Turkey seems to have decided to go against ISIS, alongside the Americans. But if the Turks start hunting ISIS, ISIS would have a motive to cooperate with Russia, and Russia would have a motive to cooperate with ISIS.

But can Turkey be serious in attacking ISIS? I don't know, but by aligning herself with the Americans and the Free Syrian Army, Turkey would have a great advantage i.e. to reduce the importance of the Kurds of Syria, because

the Kurds of Syria are the only ally the Americans have against ISIS in Syria. Therefore the Kurds of Syria are very valuable for the Americans.

In Iraq the Americans also have the Iraqi Shias against ISIS of Iraq, but in Syria the Americans only have the Kurds of Syria. The Americans are already in a difficult situation with the Kurds of Syria, because the Kurds of Syria are also supported by Russia, and they support the PKK, which carries terrorist attacks in Turkey, and Turkey is a US ally. The PKK also blocks the oil pipeline from Iraqi Kurdistan to Turkey, that is already running, and the future gas pipeline that will run from Iraqi Kurdistan to Turkey.

As you can read at the Business Insider article, after the intense fighting between the Free Syrian Army and the Kurds of Syria, the Americans are in a very difficult position, because both of them are their allies. What is for sure is that if the Turks join the Free Syrian Army and attack ISIS for good, they will cause cracks in the American-Kurdish alliance in Syria. But on the other hand they will hand ISIS to Russia. But by doing that the Turks will get more support from the United States.

I also want to say that the ex director of CIA, General Petraeus, said that United States has to support the moderate parts of Al Qaeda in Syria, in order to fight ISIS. As I said there are no moderate elements of Al Qaeda. What he means is that the United States should work with the parts of Al Qaeda that are supported by Qatar, Saudi Arabia etc, in order to attack ISIS i.e. the ex people of Saddam Hussein. Remember that Al Qaeda is a loose sum of Sunni gangs, who have a presence in many countries and are supported by many Muslim counties. Some gangs of Al Qaeda might

cooperate with Qatar today, but with Pakistan tomorrow etc. Or they can leave Al Qaeda, for ISIS or some other terrorist groups.

Articles

“There's a 'secondary conflict' brewing in northern Syria that 'could easily spin out of control”, May 2016

1st Paragraph

Two Syrian Kurds were shot dead by a former member of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) last weekend, in what the executioner said was a response to an incident last month in which the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) killed around 50 FSA fighters and transported them back to Kurdish territory in an open-top trailer.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/kurds-arabs-tension-syria-2016-5>

“Former CIA Director Petraeus Urging Cooperation with Al-Qaeda Against ISIS”, September 2015

1st, 2nd, 3rd Paragraphs

Former CIA director and retired Army general David Petraeus is suggesting America should team up with al-Qaeda to fight the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

That is the word from sources who relayed Petraeus' advice to the Daily Beast. To be more specific, Petraeus has been “quietly urging U.S. officials to consider using so-called moderate members of al Qaeda's Nusra Front to fight ISIS in Syria.”

Petraeus' idea may not be strategically foolish or indefensible. It is a variation on the old “enemy of my enemy is my friend” play, a tactic the Daily Beast likens to Petraeus urging cooperation with some rather unsavory Sunni militias in Iraq to fight al-Qaeda elements of the insurgency. The idea is that some members of the Nusra Front might be sufficiently distant from “core al-Qaeda” and the heirs to Osama bin Laden's bloody throne to make useful American proxies against the far greater menace of ISIS.

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2015/09/01/report-former-cia-director-petraeus-urging-cooperation-with-al-qaeda-against-isis/>

“The US didn’t create ISIS - Assad and Saddam did”, November 2015

<http://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/260645/us-didnt-create-isis-assad-and-saddam-did-daniel-greenfield>

The Kurds Between Russia and the United States

A very interesting article by Al Monitor, for the competition between the Americans and the Russians for influence over the Kurds of Syria. See “US, Russia compete to woo Syrian Kurds”, May 2016.

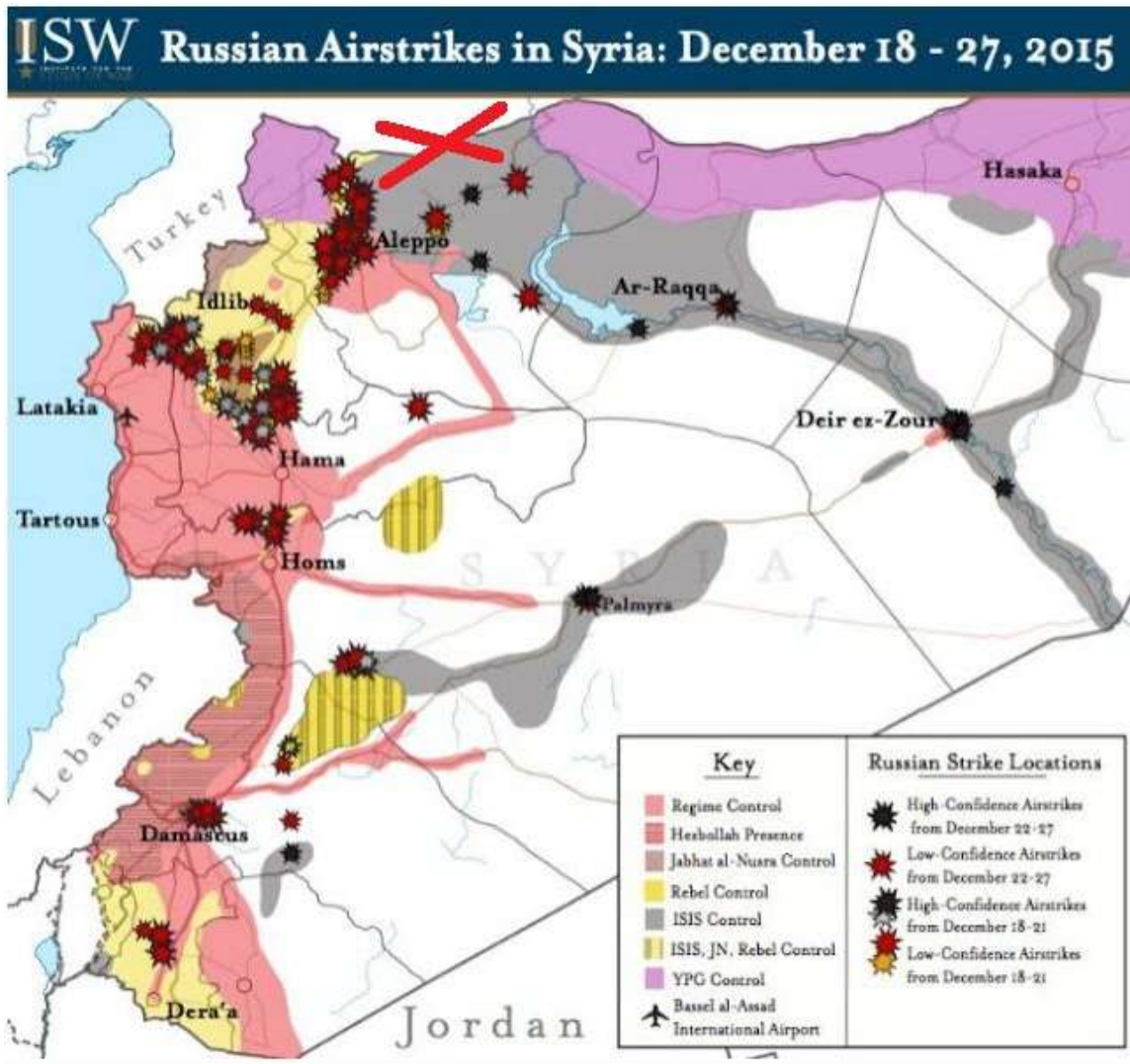
Image 1



The Americans keep saying that the Kurds of Syria (PYD and YPG) are different from the Kurds of Turkey (PKK). However, according to Al Monitor, the Americans see with uneasiness the growing coordination between the Kurds of Syria, the Russians and the Assad regime. The English Foreign Minister publicly said that the Kurds of Syria coordinate their forces with the Russians and the Assad regime, while the Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu called the Kurds of Syria “hired soldiers of Russia”.

For the Kurds of Syria Al Monitor says that they are grateful to the Russians for their assistance, but they do not want to alienate themselves from the Americans either. At the same time the Russians encourage the Kurds of Syria to move west of the Euphrates river, while the Americans ask them to stay east of the river.

Map 1



<http://static2.businessinsider.com/image/5687ef53c08a8017028b6545-824-770/screen%20shot%202016-01-02%20at%2010.35.27%20am.png>

Al Monitor also mentions the traditional alliance between Russia and the Kurds, from the 19th century, when the Russian Tsar supported the Kurds against the Ottomans, to the communist Russia. Stalin was the first one to call for the an independent Kurdistan in the Iranian Kurdistan, and at the time the leader of the Kurdish army was Molla Mustafa Barzani, the father of today's President of Iraqi Kurdistan, Massoud Barzani. But when the Russian army left from the Iranian Kurdistan, the Iranian army crushed the the Kurds, and Barzani escaped to Russia through the Kurdish mountains in order to save himself.

During the Cold War Russia's relations with the Kurds of Syria and Iraq were put on hold, but never collapsed, due to Russia's alliance with the Syrian and Iraqi socialists, who overturned the pro-Western kings. But Russia never broke her alliance with the Kurds of Turkey. After all the Arabs of Syria were supporting the Kurds of Turkey, because Syria and Turkey were bitter rivals. The Iraqis on the other hand were cooperating with the Turks against the Kurds, and they allowed Turkey to enter the Iraqi territory in order to hunt the Kurds.

But let me come back to the present. If the Kurds of Syria start cooperating closely with the Russians, Turkey might find room to improve her relations with the United States. The big thorn in the American-Turkish relations in Syria is the Kurdish issue. There is ISIS of course, but the Turks have said that if the Americans give up their support to the Kurds of Syria, they will assist the US against ISIS, and they will support more moderate Sunni elements in Syria, like the Free Syrian Army that was supported by NATO.

And we recently saw the Turks attacking ISIS, and ISIS throwing rockets to Turkey.

We should not forget that in Syria, leaving the Kurdish issue aside, the Turks and the Americans have closer interests than the Americans and the Russians. The Americans would like to see the Sunni pipelines (Qatar-Turkey and Iraq-Turkey), the Shia pipelines (Iran-Syria) and the Sunni-Shia pipelines (Iran-Turkey). Therefore if the Americans were willing to give up the Kurds of Syria, the Turks would give up ISIS, and they could together support the Free Syrian Army and fight the Russians and ISIS.

The Kurds of Syria find themselves in a strange situation, because they are lucky enough to have the Americans, the Russians and the Europeans supporting them against the Turks and the Sunnis of Syria, but they also find themselves in the middle of a Russo-American fight. Life is always difficult for the frogs when the bulls are fighting around them.

Theoretically it would be good for the Russians to allow the Americans to influence the Kurds of Syria, because the Kurdish-American alliance hurts the Turkish-American alliance. But the Turks are pounding the Kurds of Turkey, and the Russians have to support them through the Kurdistan of Syria. There is no other way to do that, because Iran would not do it, since it exports oil and gas to Turkey through Kurdistan, and the Kurds of Iraq would not do it either for the same reason. Therefore it is only through the Kurds of Syria that the Russians can support the Kurds of Turkey.

Map 2



The situation in Syria is also very difficult for the Americans in Syria. The Americans have a motive to cooperate with Russia, but if they do that they will push Turkey in the arms of Russia, and they will also have to give up on the pipelines that will connect the Middle East and Europe. The United States at some point will have to choose sides, while at the same time the Turks and the Russians can ally to send gas to Europe through the Turk Stream, if Turkey accepts to abandon her independent energy policy.

If the Americans cooperate with Russia in the Middle East and Europe, they will lose Turkey, but at the same time they will hurt the Russo-Chinese axis. Russia and China have many opposing interests, and a main reason for their alliance is their common rivalry with the United States. See “Russia VS China”

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/08/11/russia-vs-china/>

If the Americans help the Russians, they can alienate Russia and China. It is true that Russia exports oil to China, but Russia is mainly exporting to Europe. And in the future it will be more convenient for China to import from Central Asia (Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan) and the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar, Iraq) than to import from Russia, since it is not very easy to construct the Altai and the Power of Siberia Pipelines, in order to connect the rich oil fields of West Siberia to China.

Map 3



Russia can also export to Japan and South Korea, two strong American allies. And there has been some talks between Russia, Japan and South Korea for the construction of a pipeline. See “Russia VS North Korea”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/01/28/russia-vs-north-korea/>

Map 4



But as I said if the Americans ally themselves with the Russians they will lose Turkey. But you can not have everything. Turkey and Russia are two fascist countries, but at least Russia is a Christian country. Therefore the United States could choose to cooperate with Russia, and leave Turkey to China. After all the American allies in Europe, France and Germany, have much better relations with Russia than they have with Turkey.

Articles

“US, Russia compete to woo Syrian Kurds”, May 2016

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/05/turkey-russia-putin-godfather-of-kurdistan.html>

The Causes of the French Revolution

According to Stephen Walt, a Professor at Harvard University, the main cause of the French Revolution was the French fiscal collapse, which was due France's financial and military support to the war of the American Independence against the British (1775-1783). See "Revolution and War", chapter "The French Revolution".

The American colonies believed that it was unconstitutional to pay taxes to Britain, and in 1778 the Americans signed an alliance with the French King Luis XVI, according to which France would offer financial and military aid to the American rebels, in order to hurt her great enemy i.e. England, and to take revenge for her defeat in 1764 (Seven Years War).

The British were finally tired by the American War of Independence, and the British Parliament voted for abandoning military operations in America in 1782.

The French support to the American Revolution economically exhausted France, and the French King had to increase taxes, something that exhausted the French people and led to the French Revolution of 1789.

Napoleon the Great, an army officer, was one of the heroes of the French Revolution, and he became the new dictator of France. Napoleon the Great was for the 18th Century what Hitler was for the 19th Century. Like Hitler, Napoleon almost conquered all Europe.

Image 1



<http://www.beyond.fr/picssite/bonaparte-st-bernard01b.jpg>

On June 24th 1812 Napoleon started his campaign to Russia. On June 22nd 1941 Hitler started his campaign to Russia. Both dictators were hoping to conquer Russia before the Russian winter, and that's why they started their campaigns on June, but both were defeated by the Russians.

Image 2



<http://www.mixanitouxronou.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/images8.jpg>

In both cases the Russians initially allied with the dictators against the British, but in the end they changed sides and allied with the British against the dictators.

In the first case, Tsar Alexander signed with Napoleon the Treaties of Tilsit in 1807. However Napoleon did not allow the Russians to import goods from England, and England was the great industrial and economic power of the time. The Russians were at some point tired from Napoleon's restrictions and they broke the alliance with France by starting again to import goods from England, and Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812.

In the second case the Russian Communists allied themselves with the Nazis and Hitler in 1939 (“Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact”). But the oil that the Communists were shipping to the Nazis was not enough for Hitler’s army. Therefore Hitler broke the alliance with the Communists in 1941, and invaded Russia, in order to get hold of the oil of Azerbaijan, which at the time was a communist colony.

Articles

“Treaty of Alliance (1778)”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Alliance_\(1778\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Alliance_(1778))

“Seven Years' War”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Years%27_War

“American Revolutionary War”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolutionary_War

“Treaties of Tilsit”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaties_of_Tilsit

“Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Molotov%E2%80%93Ribbentrop_Pact

The War for Sugar

As I have said before, in their effort to avoid the Islamic blockade of the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, the Europeans were trying to find alternative routes to Asia. Vasco Da Gama reached India around Africa (1497), and Christopher Columbus reached the New World (America) in an attempt to find an alternative route to Asia (1492). See “The Islamic Iron Curtain of the 7th Century”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/04/26/the-islamic-iron-curtain-of-the-7th-century/>

When the Europeans found America, initially they were not very happy, because it was not Asia, neither it had the products they were looking for i.e. spices, silk etc. However the Europeans found other ways to profit from the New World. I was saying about the Spaniards, who took over what today is Mexico and Peru, and exchanged the gold and silver of Mexico and Peru for Asian goods at the Philippines. See “The Islamic World in 1500 C.E. and the Shift to the Atlantic”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/05/01/the-islamic-world-in-1500-c-e-and-the-shift-to-the-atlantic/>

The Spaniards (yellow) managed to grab a large part of the New World, and together with the Portuguese (khaki) were controlling South (Latin) America. See the following map. The English (pink) and the French (green) were strong in North America. The Dutch were also controlling small parts of North and South America.

Map 1

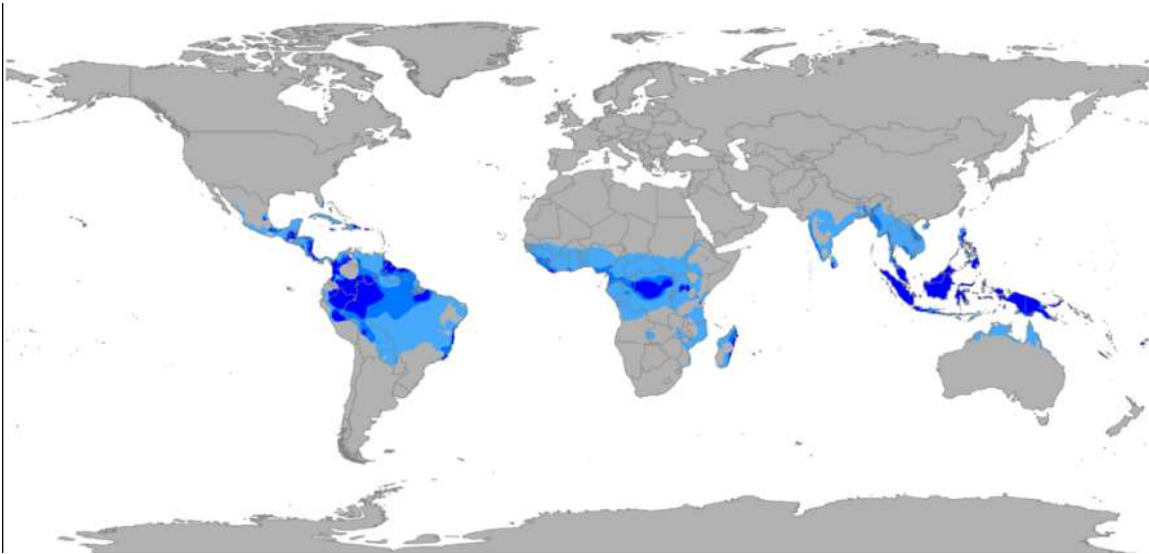


<http://www.philatelicedatabase.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Spanish-Colonies-In-America2.gif>

The Portuguese controlled what is today Brazil, and managed to convert Brazil to the largest producer of sugar. At least 18 months of warm weather and a lot of water is required to produce sugar. Therefore the northern countries are not adequate, because they are not warm, and the southern

countries are not adequate because they lack rainfalls. You need tropical climates to produce sugar.

Map Tropical Zone



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tropical_climate#/media/File:Koppen_World_Map_Af_Am_Aw.png

You can understand why Latin America, Africa, India and South East Asia were so important, and why everybody were killing each other for controlling these regions. And of course it is not only sugar production that needs tropical climate. The Portuguese almost monopolized the trade of sugar for the period 1570-1670. At the time sugar was a luxury. After 1800 sugar gradually became a necessity. Even today Brazil and India are the largest producers of sugar. See Bloomberg.

Image 1 Largest Producers of Sugar (2011)

The following is a table of the world's 10 largest sugar-producing nations for the 2010-2011 crop year. The data, measured in millions of metric tons, raw value, are from the London-based International Sugar Organization.

Country	Production
1) Brazil	38.745
2) India	26.000
3) China	11.475
4) Thailand	10.061
5) U.S.	7.210
6) Mexico	5.495
7) Pakistan	4.400
8) France	4.275
9) Australia	3.800
10) Germany	3.565

Before it's here, it's on the Bloomberg Terminal. 

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2011-10-06/world-s-top-10-sugar-producing-countries-in-2010-2011-table>

The Portuguese dominance over the trade of sugar were not well accepted by the other counties. The Dutch started cultivating sugar at the Caribbean Islands, and also started fighting the Dutch in Brazil, India and Africa. For the Dutch-Portuguese War of 1601-1661 see “Dutch-Portuguese Wars”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch%E2%80%93Portuguese_War

The war between the Dutch and the Portuguese was a war for trade, but to a large extent it was also a war for sugar.

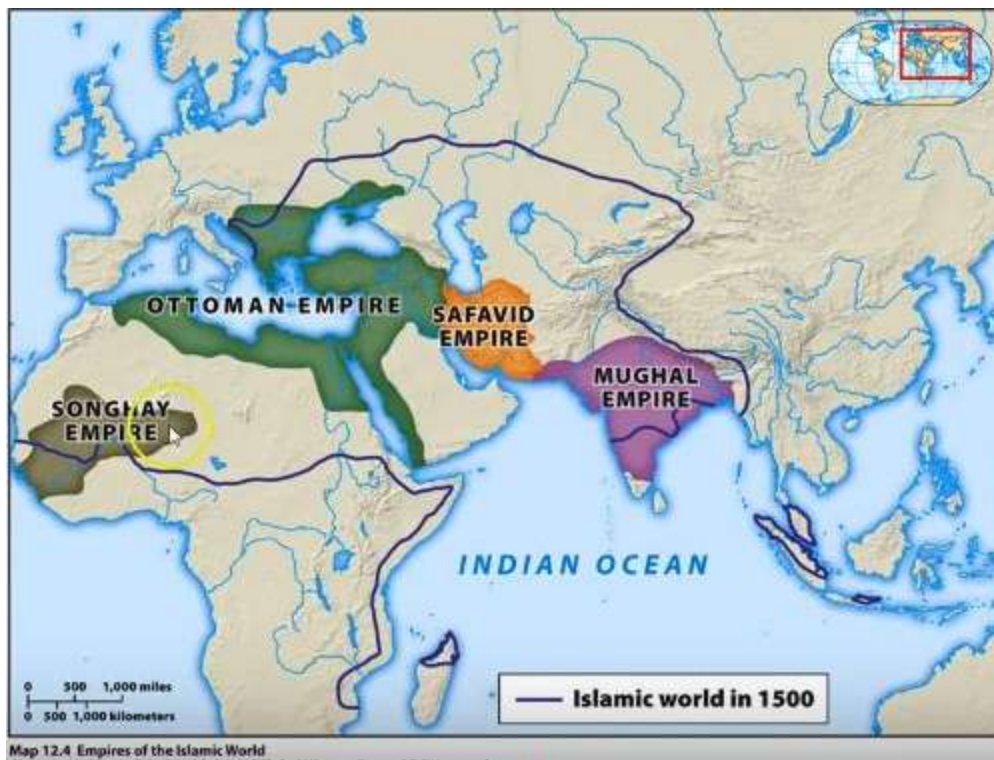
Map Caribbean Islands



The Islamic World in 1500 C.E. and the Shift to the Atlantic

At the following map you can see the Islamic World at around 1500 C.E. All the empires that you see colored on the map were Islamic empires. Moreover the Muslims were controlling the Straits of Malacca, which connect the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea. Even today the Chinese and the Americans are confronting each other at the Malacca Straits and the South China Sea, because China claims the whole of South China Sea, and the Americans do not accept that.

Map 1



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRyHbAHZpZY>

You can see how much pressure there was on Western Europeans i.e. the Portuguese, the Spanish, the French, the English and the Dutch. All of them had to buy from the Muslims the exotic goods of Asia i.e. silk, spice, porcelain etc. The Muslims would not allow them to exploit the trade routes for themselves, and they had to buy these goods from the ports of the East Mediterranean Sea, which were all controlled by the Muslims. This is the time before the English industrial revolution, which transformed Western Europe the factory of the whole world. At this point in time the European economy is still an agricultural economy, and the Western Europeans have to pay high prices to the Muslims to get hold of the exotic goods of Asia.

The Western Europeans turn to the Atlantic, and the Portuguese discover a route to India around Africa (Vasco Da Gama 1497), and the Spaniards, in their effort to find a route to Asia that would bypass the Islamic World, they discover America (Columbus 1492).

For the Western Europeans trade shifts from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, and power in Europe starts shifting from Venice, and the other Italian city states, to the European countries of the Atlantic. Venice, and the other city states of Italy were controlling the spice trade in the Mediterranean, and they were carrying the goods of Asia to Europe, from Alexandria (Egypt), Constantinople (today's Istanbul), and Beirut (today's Lebanon).

Map 2



http://www.iro.umontreal.ca/~vaucher/Genealogy/Documents/Asia/images/spice_route.gif

The Western Europeans will start fighting each other for influence in the New World (America), and for the new trade routes to the New World and to Asia. The Spanish found a very convenient way to get hold of the goods of Asia. They conquered Mexico and Peru in America, where they discovered mountains of silver and gold. They also conquered the Philippines, and they were sending their silver from Acapulco (Mexico) to Manila (Philippines), and in exchange they would get goods from China and Asia. The term Manila Galleons refers to the large commercial ships of Spain, that were carrying silver from Mexico to Philippines, and oriental goods from Philippines to Mexico. This Spanish business was taking place for the period 1565-1815.

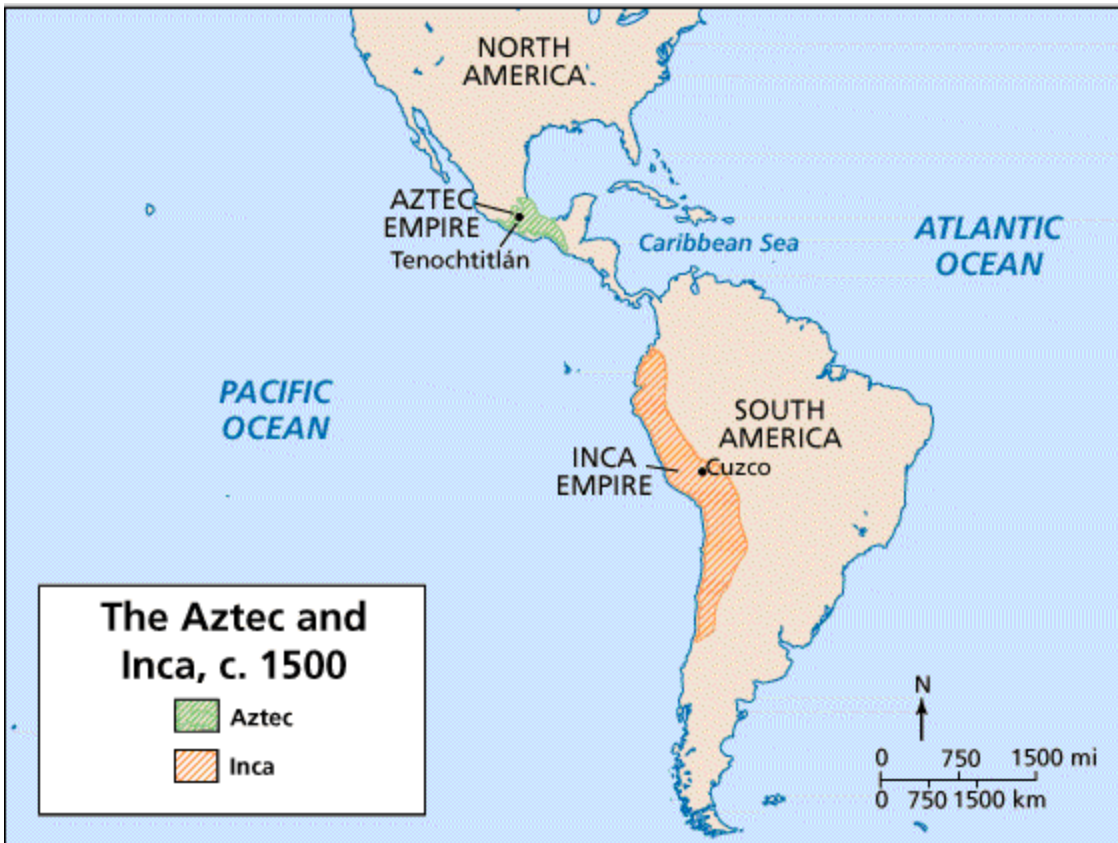
Map 3



<http://mandirigma.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/manila-accapulco-galleon-trade-kali-arnis-eskrima-fma.png>

When the Spaniards conquered Mexico and Perou, they defeated the Aztecs and the Incas. Both were very tough guys, who were hated by the other local populations who were oppressed by them. The Spaniards, who were by far outnumbered by the Incas and the Aztecs, allied with their enemies and defeated them.

Map 4

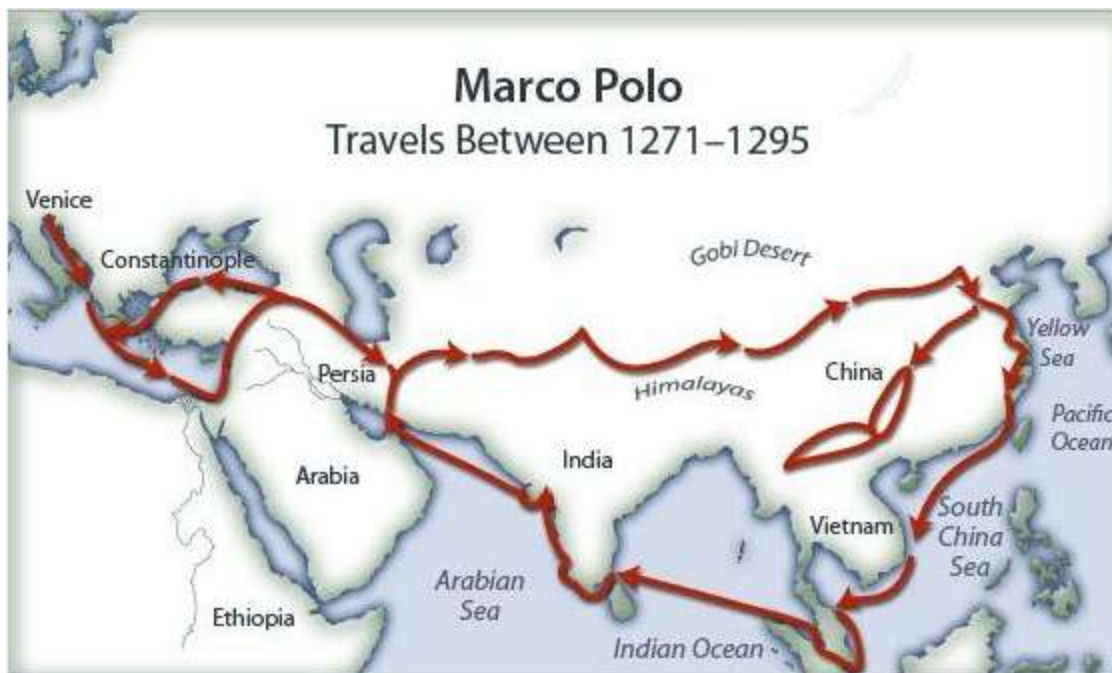


http://missbstimetravelers.weebly.com/uploads/2/3/5/1/2351886/6797746_or_ig.gif?325

The Travels of Marco Polo and the Silk Roads

Marco Polo was a merchant from Venice. He is one of the most famous merchants in history due to the writings he left about his travels at the Silk Roads.

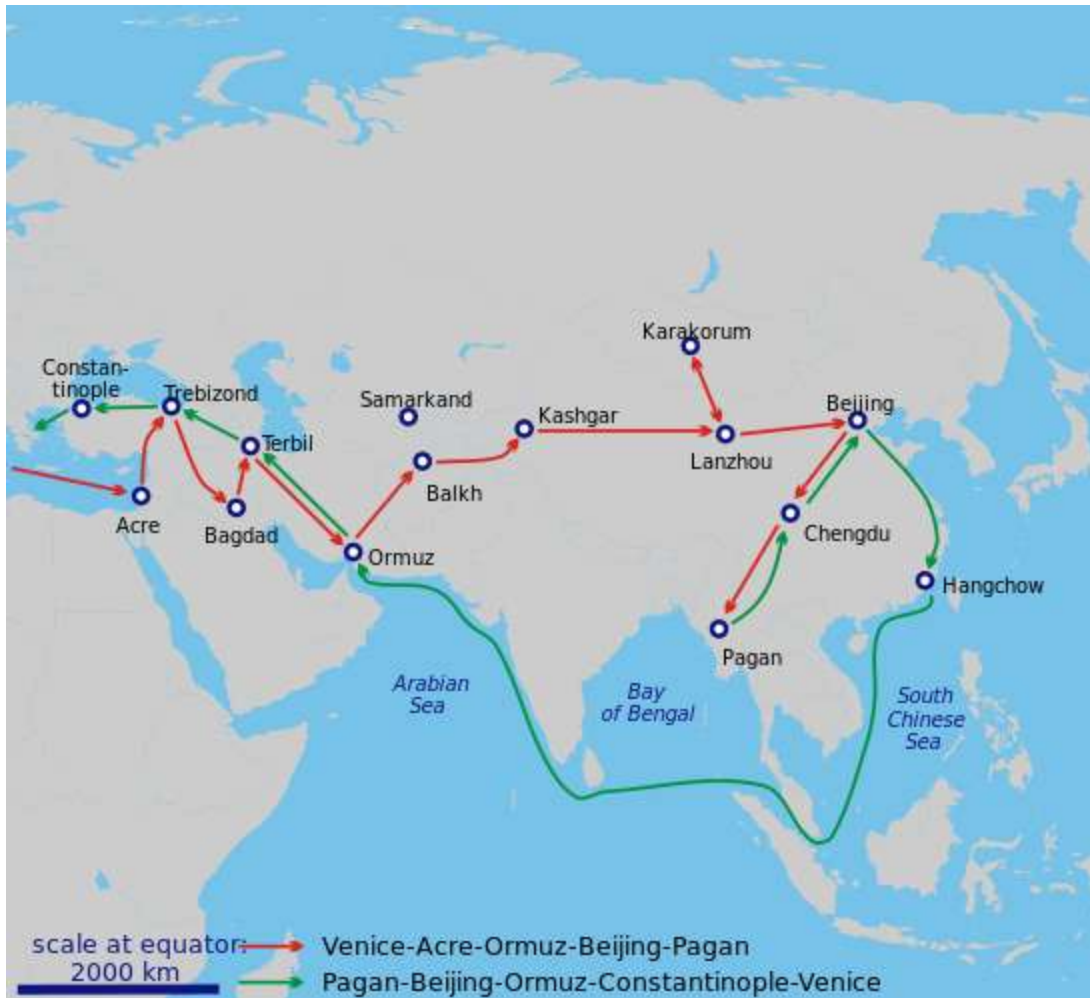
Map 1



<https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/27/52/04/275204dbb9453269e71d405b236bfb26.jpg>

The following map from Wikipedia shows the trade routes followed by Marco Polo.

Map 2



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Travels_of_Marco_Polo#/media/File:Travels_of_Marco_Polo.svg

For centuries Venice was the dominant naval and commercial power at the Mediterranean Sea. Most of the spice trade was carried out by the Merchants of Venice in the Mediterranean Sea. The Muslims would bring the merchandises to Egypt, and from there the merchants of Venice would transfer them to Europe.

Map 3



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a7/Mapa_-_Adriatic_Sea_map_-_Gulf_of_Venice.PNG

The riches of Venice to a large extent were generated by the Silk Roads and the Spice Trade. The Venetians would buy the spices from Alexandria

(Egypt), and if they managed to safely return home they would sell them at a price at least five times higher.

Image 1 Venice

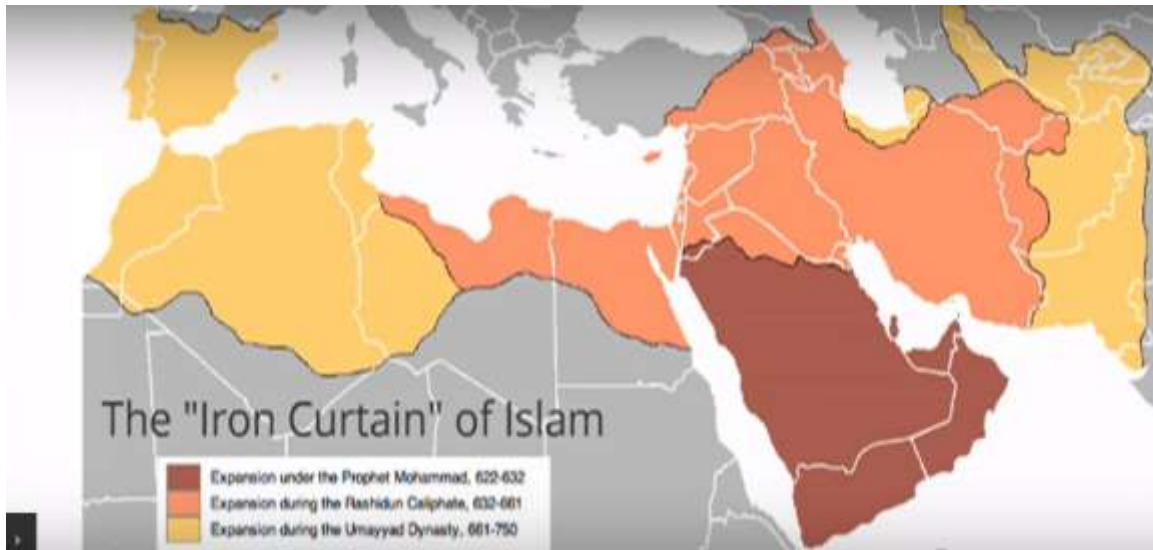


http://cdn.ek.aero/pl/Polish/images/Venice_tcm558-2437263.jpg

I was saying in my previous post that following the death of Muhammad the Prophet, the Iron Curtain of Islam was erected in the 7th and 8th centuries in front of the Europeans, and the Europeans were no longer allowed to reach the Indian Ocean. They would have to buy the merchandises of Asia from the Muslim traders in Egypt. See “The Islamic Iron Curtain of the 7th Century”.

<http://iakovosal.blogspot.gr/2016/04/7.html>

Map 4



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/72/Map_of_expansion_of_Caliphate.svg/2000px-Map_of_expansion_of_Caliphate.svg.png

Map 5



THE AGE OF THE CALIPHS

- Expansion under Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. 622-632 AD
- Patriarchal Caliphate 632-661 AD - the Caliphate of the Khalifah Rashidun ("Rightly Guided" Companions of the Prophet s.a.w) - Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali.
- The Umayyad Caliphate 661-750 AD, its dominance stretching from the Middle East to the Iberian peninsula.

<http://2.bp.blogspot.com/>

[SzB_IoOo9Ig/TlpJeqKeyVI/AAAAAAAAUA/x_K8gMtt1Dc/s1600/age+of+caliphs+2.png](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_SzB_IoOo9Ig/TlpJeqKeyVI/AAAAAAAAUA/x_K8gMtt1Dc/s1600/age+of+caliphs+2.png)

Things changed when the Mongols, who were non-Muslim populations, beat the Muslims and established their own empire.

Map 6



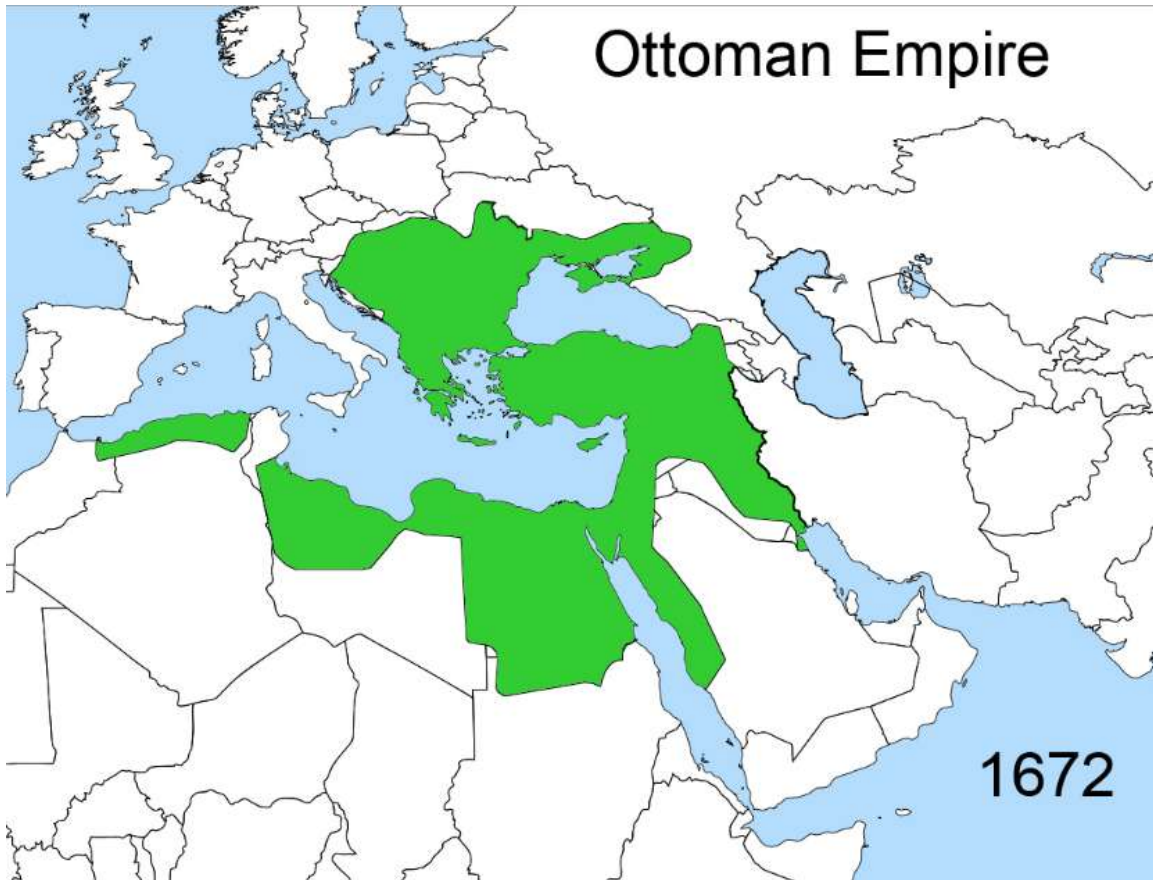
<http://www.mapsofindia.com/history/mongol-dynasty-map.jpg>

For some reasons the Mongols allowed the Europeans to use the Silk Roads. Maybe because the Islamic Caliphate, which was standing between the

Europeans and the Mongols, was perceived by them as a common enemy. I don't really know. However it was during the Mongol period that Marco Polo traveled at the Silk Roads. Therefore the Mongols, even though very barbaric, allowed the Westerners to reach Asia once more.

However after the death of Genghis Han, who was the leader of the Mongols, the Mongols were gradually converted to Islam, and their empire was replaced by the Ottoman Empire. When in 1453 the Ottomans took over Constantinople i.e. Istanbul, they obtained full control of the Silk Roads, and they started using monopolistic methods again, and that created tensions with the Europeans. There were even wars between the Venetians and the Ottomans i.e. see "Ottoman-Venetian Wars".

Map 7



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/09/Territorial_changes_of_the_Ottoman_Empire_1672.jpg

Due to the great naval power of the Venetians, and the Muslim blockade at Egypt, the other Europeans were looking for ways to achieve more favorable terms of trade, in order to avoid the taxes and commissions of the Muslims and the Venetians. In an effort to find an alternative route for the Spanish, the Italian explorer Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492. In 1497 the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama managed to sail around Africa and reach India.

Articles

“Spice Trade”

13th Paragraph

From there, overland routes led to the Mediterranean coasts. From the 8th until the 15th century, the Republic of Venice and neighboring maritime republics held the monopoly of European trade with the Middle East. The silk and spice trade, involving spices, incense, herbs, drugs and opium, made these Mediterranean city-states phenomenally rich. Spices were among the most expensive and in-demand products of the Middle Ages, used in medicine. They were all imported from Asia and Africa. Venetian merchants distributed then the goods through Europe until the rise of the Ottoman Empire, that eventually led to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, barring Europeans from important combined land-sea routes.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spice_trade

“Silk Road”

37th, 38th Paragraph

The Mongol expansion throughout the Asian continent from around 1207 to 1360 helped bring political stability and re-established the Silk Road (via Karakorum). It also brought an end to the dominance of the Islamic Caliphate over world trade. Because the Mongols came to control the trade routes, trade circulated throughout the region, though they never abandoned their nomadic lifestyle.

The Mongol diplomat Rabban Bar Sauma visited the courts of Europe in 1287–88 and provided a detailed written report to the Mongols. Around the same time, the Venetian explorer Marco Polo became one of the first Europeans to travel the Silk Road to China. His tales, documented in The Travels of Marco Polo, opened Western eyes to some of the customs of the Far East. He was not the first to bring back stories, but he was one of the most widely read. He had been preceded by numerous Christian missionaries to the East, such as William of Rubruck, Benedykt Polak, Giovanni da Pian del Carpine, and Andrew of Longjumeau. Later envoys included Odoric of Pordenone, Giovanni de' Marignolli, John of Montecorvino, Niccolò de' Conti, and Ibn

Battuta, a Moroccan Muslim traveller who passed through the present-day Middle East and across the Silk Road from Tabriz between 1325–54.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silk_Road