

The Geopolitics of Energy & Terrorism

Part 9

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Introduction

The following chapters are independent essays written in June and July 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.

12. 7. 2016

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The 2 Faces of the Taliban

At the following map you can see the Pashtun areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Pashtuns are a martial Sunni tribe, and they are the largest ethnic group of Afghanistan, while they are the second largest group of Pakistan. Punjabis are by far the largest ethnic group of Pakistan.

Map Pashtuns



http://iakovosal.blogspot.gr/2016/05/blog-post_66.html

According to Wikipedia 30 millions of the Pashtun population live in Pakistan, and 14 millions live in Afghanistan. But Pashtuns very often cross the borders, and therefore the distribution of their population is not stable.

The Pashtun Population

Pashtuns

پښتانه

Paṣṭānə

Total population	
(Approx. 49 million (2009) ^[1])	
Regions with significant populations	
 Pakistan	30,699,036 (2015) ^[2]
 Afghanistan	13,750,117 (2008) ^[3]
 UAE	338,315 (2009) ^[4]
 United States	138,554 (2010) ^[5]
 Iran	110,000 (1993) ^[6]
 United Kingdom	100,000 (2009) ^[7]
 Germany	37,800 (2012) ^[8]
 Canada	26,000 (2006) ^[9]
 India	13,000 (2009) ^[10]
 Russia	9,800 (2002) ^[11]
 Australia	8,154 (2006) ^[12]
 Malaysia	5,500 (2008)
 Tajikistan	4,000 (1970) ^[6]
Languages	
Pashto	
<i>Urdu, Dari and English as second languages</i>	
Religion	
Islam (Sunni)	
<i>with small Shia minority</i>	

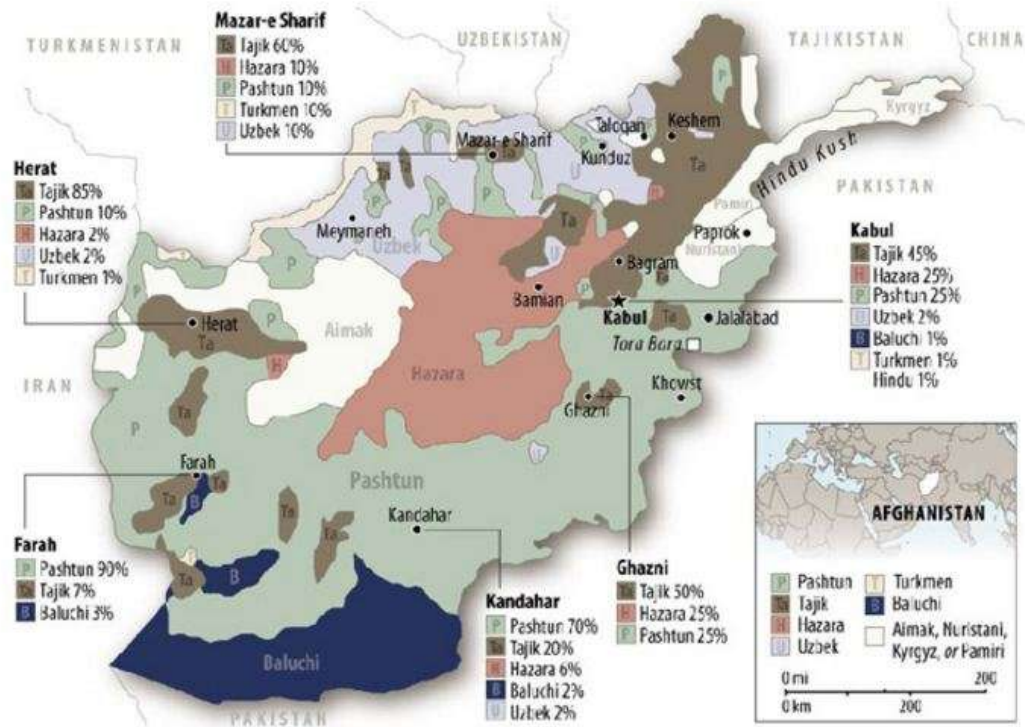
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pashtuns>

What is very important is that even though there are fewer Pashtuns in Afghanistan than in Pakistan, Pashtuns are the largest ethnic group of

Afghanistan and therefore they dominate Afghanistan. On the contrary while there are more Pashtuns in Pakistan than Afghanistan, the Punjabis dominate Pakistan since they are by far the largest ethnic group.

At the following map you can see the ethnic groups of Afghanistan. With light green the Pashtuns, from whom come the Afghan Taliban, a Pakistani ally, with somon the Shia Hazara, an Iranian ally, with brown the Sunni but of Iranian origin Tajics, who most of the time cooperate with Iran, with purple the Uzbeks, who also often cooperate with Iran, and at the south with blue the Baloch. The Baloch would like to see an independent Balochistan, by uniting the Balochistan of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. Therefore the Iranian and Indian allies in Afghanistan are located on the north whereas the Pakistani allies are on the south of Afghanistan.

Map of Afghanistan

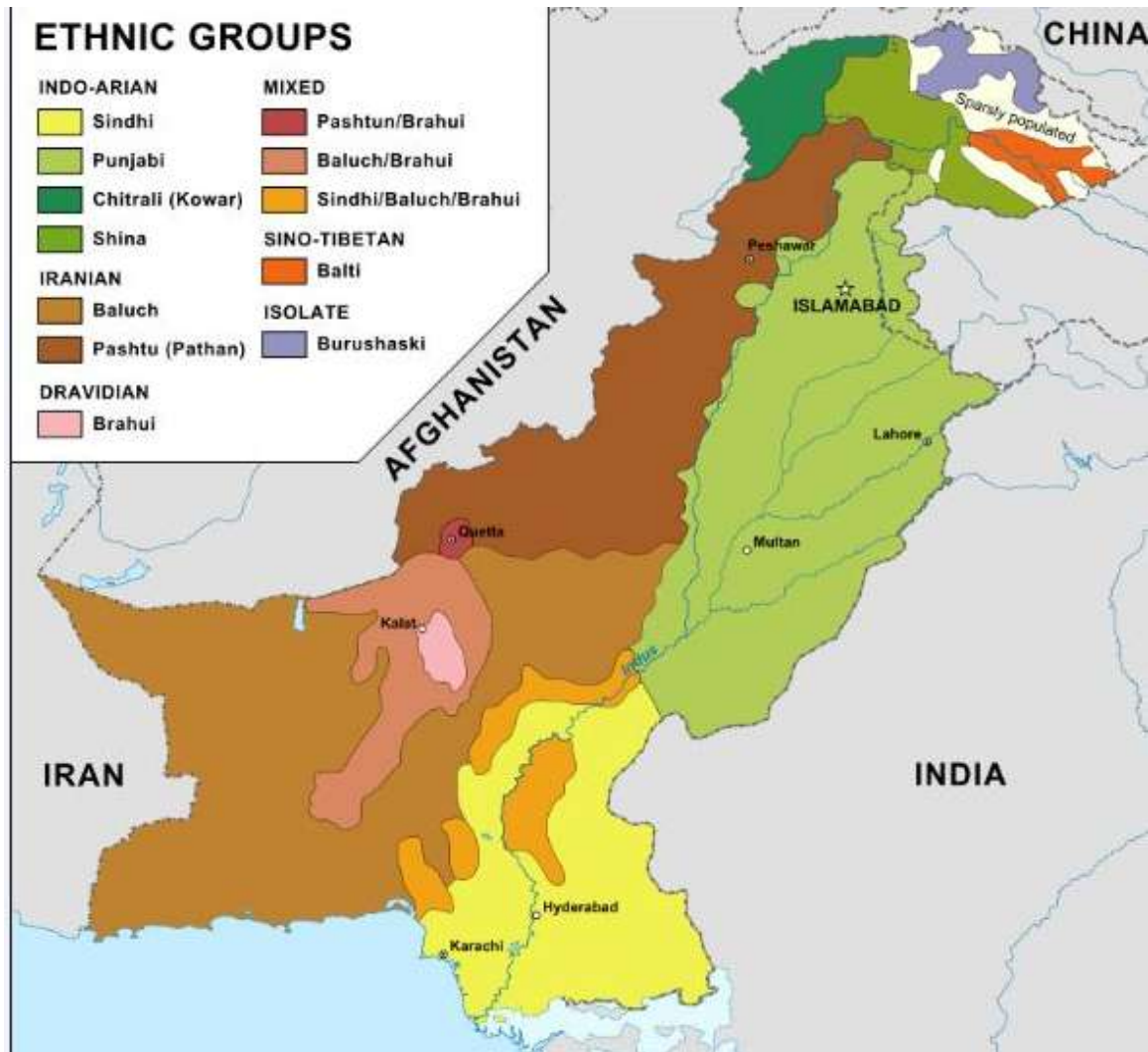


Courtesy Congressional Research Service

<http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/taliban-afghanistan/p10551>

At the following map you can see the ethnic groups of Pakistan. With light green you can see the largest group i.e. the Punjabis, with dark brown the Pashtuns, with light brown the Baloch, who think they are exploited by the Punjabis, and with yellow the Sindh people, some of whom want an independent Sindhudesh.

Map Pakistan



https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_groups_of_Pakistan#/media/File:Pakistan_ethnic_map.svg

At the following map you can see Balochistan, most of which lies in Pakistan and Iran.

Map Balochistan



There is also the issue of Kashmir, which is claimed by both Pakistan and India, and which would give India access to Central Asia bypassing her great rival Pakistan. India controls a part of Kashmir, and Pakistan another part of it.

Map Kashmir



<http://media.web.britannica.com/eb-media/05/64605-004-1CB809FC.gif>

Map Kashmir 2



http://www.wefightcensorship.org/sites/default/files/20110521_bbm960_kashmir.jpg

Next to Pakistan and Afghanistan you can see Xin Jiang, the sensitive Muslim province of China, where there are Muslim separatists.

The following map shows how the Tibetan, the Uyghur and Mongol separatists see China. The map does not represent my views. I just include the map because it is a visualization of the problems that China faces.

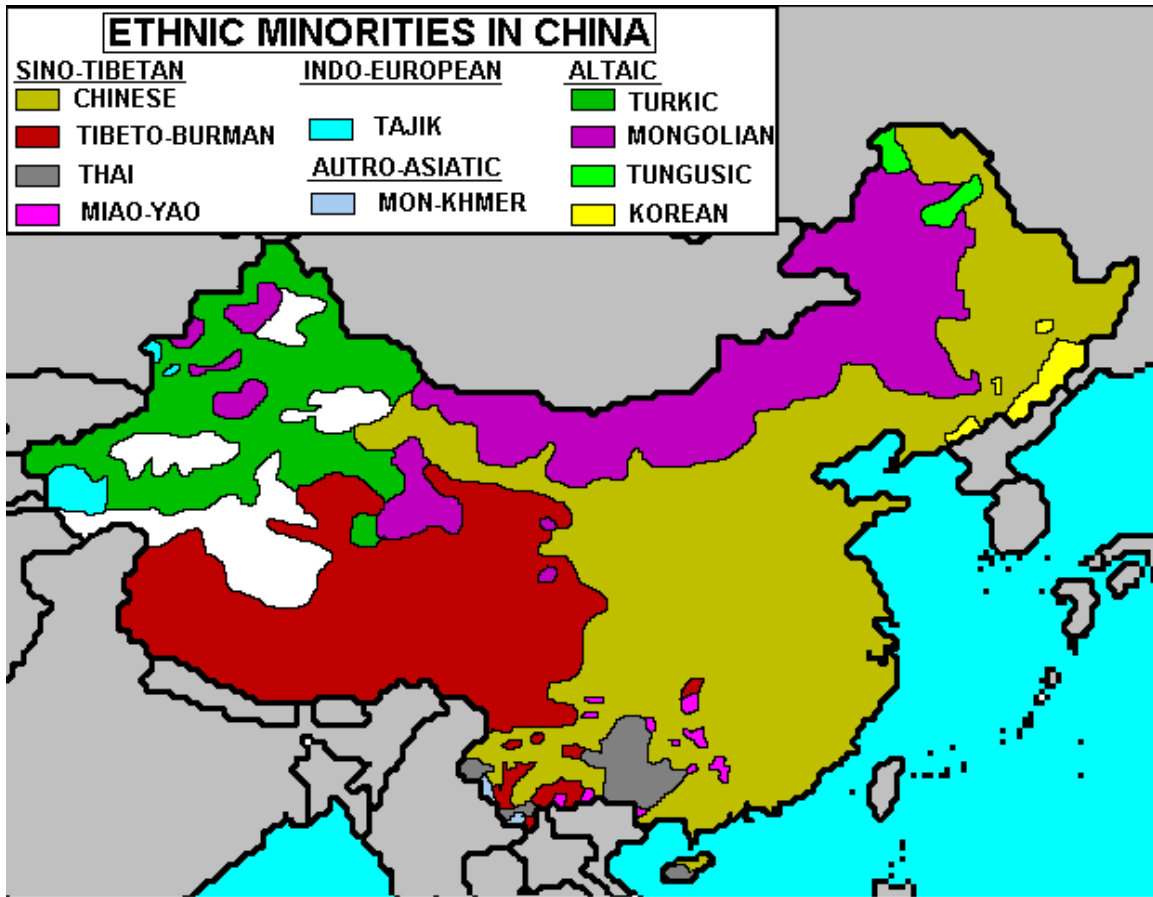
Map of Xin Jiang and Tibet



http://admin.americanthinker.com/images/bucket/2015-07/194965_5_.png

http://www.digitaljournal.com/img/2/4/8/3/0/3/i/7/1/5/o/map_xinjiang_tibet.jpg

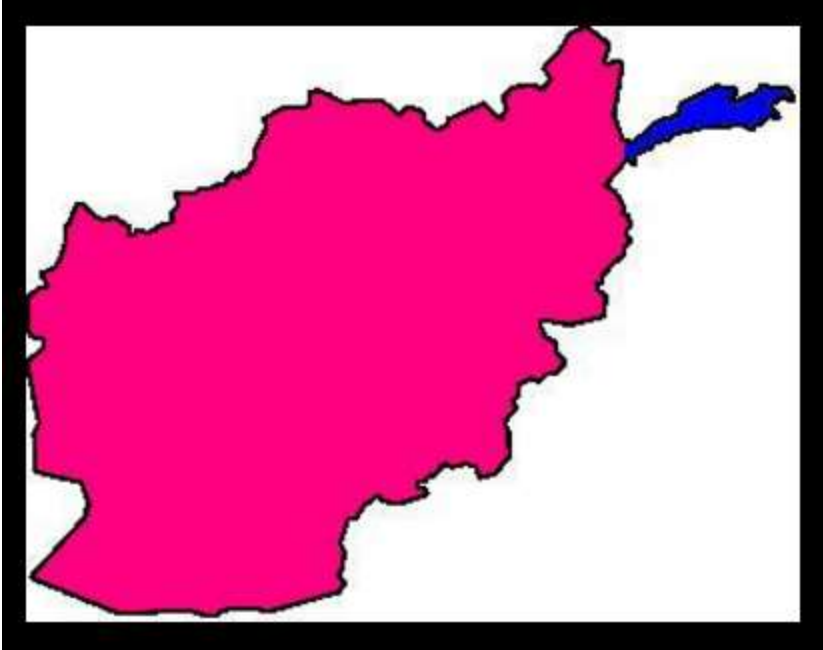
Map Ethnic Groups of China



<http://www.chinatouristmaps.com/assets/images/chinamaps/chianethnic.gif>

You cannot see it with the first glance, but Afghanistan and China have common borders.

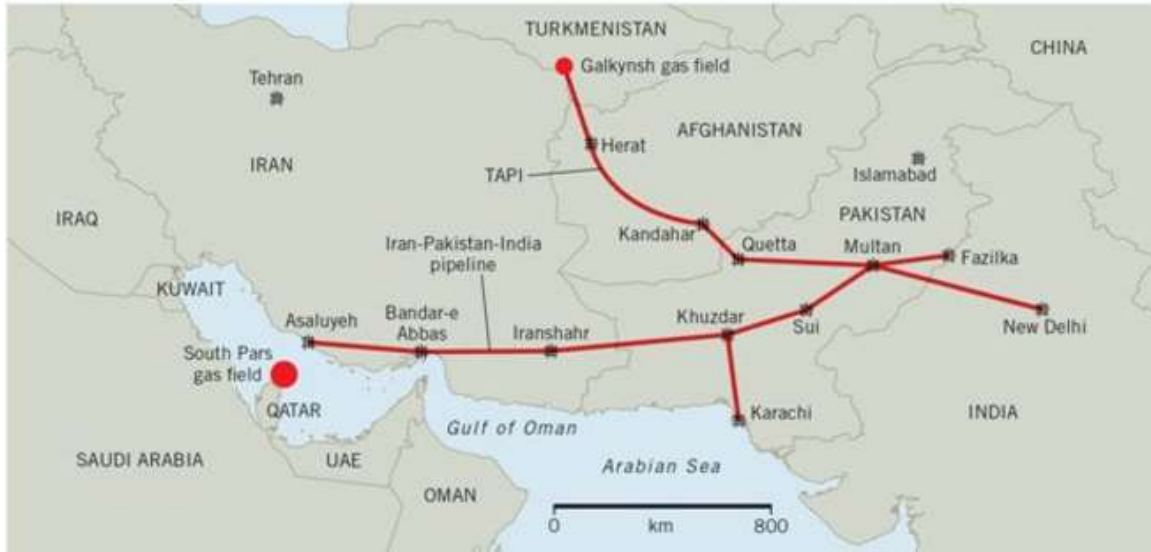
Map Chinese-Afghan Borders



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wakhan_Corridor#/media/File:Corridoio_del_Vacan.JPG

I have many times mentioned how important is the oil and natural gas of Central Asia, and the big rivalries for this oil and gas. For example there is the issue of the TAPI VS the Iran-Pakistan pipeline.

Map Iran-Pakistan and TAPI Pipelines



<http://www.ogj.com/articles/print/volume-114/issue-5/transportation/tapi-pipeline-progresses-but-future-uncertain.html>

That's the picture of Central Asia. But let me go back to the Taliban. To understand the Taliban you need to understand the Pashtuns. The border line between Pakistan and Afghanistan is the border line that the British had with Afghanistan when India was their colony, and Pakistan was part of India.

When India became independent in 1947, Pakistan was separated from India as her Muslim part, and also became independent. Therefore Pakistan's borders with Afghanistan were the British borders with Afghanistan, and Pakistan included the part of Pashtunistan that was under British control.

But when the British left, the Afghans started claiming the Pakistani Pashtunistan, and the Pakistanis were not willing to accommodate their claims. Note that Pashtunistan and Balochistan are very important for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Afghanistan is a very poor country, and therefore the Afghan Pashtuns want the Pakistani Pashtunistan. But the Pakistani Pashtuns have no motive to leave Pakistan, a richer country, in order to join Afghanistan, which is a much poorer country. Therefore the Pakistani Pashtuns are struggling with the Punjabis not because they want an independent Pashtunistan, but because they want more power in Pakistan. While the Afghani Pashtuns struggle with the Punjabis because they want to take the Pakistani Pashtunistan. That's not a rule, it is just the general idea. Note also that there are separatists among the Sindh people who are asking for an independent Sindhudesh. Therefore there is the issue of Balochistan, Pashtunistan and Sindhudesh.

The Pakistani army is made from Punjabis, while the Taliban are made from Pashtuns. Most Taliban are Pashtuns, but not all Pashtuns are Taliban. The Punjabis want to have good relations with the Pashtuns, in order not to have terrorist attacks in the Pujnabi areas, and to avoid Pashtun nationalism i.e. an independent Pashtunistan.

But as I said the Afghan governments traditionally claim the Pakistani Pashtunistan as their territory. Even the Afghan Taliban, which were created by Pakistan in the 90s, they did not recognize the Afghan-Pakistani borders when they took control of Afghanistan in 1996. And the question is which Afghan government will accept the Pakistani-Afghan borders, if even the Taliban, who were created by Pakistan, did not recognize them.

The thing with the Taliban is that they are not nationalist Pashtuns, i.e. Pashtuns who ask for a greater Pashtunistan, but rather they are Islamists

who are calling for an Islamic Afghanistan. That's why they were so convenient for the Pakistanis. But as I said even the Taliban did not accept the Afghan-Pakistani borders when they formed a government in 1996, which was very disappointing for the Pakistanis.

Therefore Pakistan feels more secure when Afghanistan is in war, because the Afghan Pashtuns, and the Afghan Taliban, will need Pakistan to fight their rivals, and they will be too busy to ask for a greater Pashtunistan. If on the other hand there is a stable Afghan government, she might start creating problems in the Pakistani Pashtunistan.

And that's a dilemma for Afghanistan, because on one hand Pakistan wants the oil and gas of Central Asia to flow through Pakistan, because they would please the Americans, and they would have many investments in Pakistan, but on the other hand Pakistan worries for the Pakistani Pashtunistan, and it prefers Afghanistan to be in war. The idea of an Afghanistan that would be friendly to Iran or India really scares Pakistan.

Iran faces a similar dilemma. On one hand Iran wants a stable and peaceful Afghanistan, in order to have security at the Iranian-Afghan borders, but on the other hand Iran wants war in Afghanistan, in order to block the oil and gas of Central Asia from reaching India. Iran wants the natural gas and oil of Central Asia to go to China or to pass through Iran if it is to flow to Europe or South Asia.

Map Iran and Central Asia



Therefore there is this tragic situation in Afghanistan, with two of its most important neighbors enjoying benefits from a war torn Afghanistan, each one for different reasons i.e. Iran for its energy policy and Pakistan for its national security.

The Pakistanis are using the Afghan Taliban against the allies of India and Iran in Afghanistan, and the enemies of Pakistan use the Pakistani Taliban against the Punjabis in Pakistan.

And that's the 2 faces of the Taliban, because even though all Taliban come from the Pashtuns, the Afghan Taliban are Pakistani allies while the Pakistani Taliban are Pakistani enemies.

For one more time I will say that most Taliban, whether Afghan or Pakistani, are Pashtuns, but not all Pashtuns are Taliban.

The New Great Game

The term “Great Game” refers to the period 1800-1900 and the confrontation between Great Britain and the Russian Empire in Central Asia.



Great Britain was the greatest naval power of the time, and through the tropical zones of India, which was their colony, they British were getting cotton, tea etc, all very important to their economy. Remember that the British made the Industrial Revolution in the previous century.

The Russians could not match the British as a naval power, but they were using the local populations to attack Britain in India. At the same time Russia was gaining more and more influence in Central Asia, approaching India, the most important British colony. At the time Pakistan was the Muslim part of India.

The British-Russian rivalry was mainly taking place in Afghanistan and Iran, and it was about railways and not about oil and natural gas pipelines. Oil rose as the greatest geopolitical factor in the 20th Century or maybe a bit earlier.

The British and the Russians temporarily put aside their difference in 1907 in order to fight the Germans and the Turks in the First World War (1914-1918)

A sequel of the Great Game took place in 1979, when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, but this time it was the Americans who were fighting the Soviets in order to protect the Persian Gulf, this time with the help of the Arabs and the Pakistanis.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Muslim colonies of Russia in Central Asia became independent Communist dictatorships, and the New Great Game begun.

The Americans were trying to send the oil and gas of Central Asia to Europe, through Turkey, and to the Indian Ocean, through Afghanistan, in order for Central Asia not to be dependent on their rivals (Russia, China, Iran).

The Chinese were heavily investing in these countries, while avoiding to establish a military presence, in order not to upset Russia, and not to cause problems in their Muslim province of Xin Jiang. China was absorbing the oil

and gas of Central Asia, becoming the dominant economic power. Soon China will be the dominant military power too in Central Asia.

India is desperately trying to antagonize China in Central Asia, but she is blocked by Pakistan. If India was to win the disputed area of Kashmir, she would open a corridor to Afghanistan avoiding Pakistan.

The Russians were trying to remain the main military power of Central Asia, and at the same time block the oil and gas of the region to reach Europe and hurt their own exports. At the same time they were trying to use these countries to export oil and gas to South Asia, which was a new market for them.

The Arabs and the Iranians were trying to antagonize Russia in Central Asia, and with the use of Al Qaeda and the Taliban they were trying to block the oil and natural gas of the region from reaching the Indian Ocean, something that would hurt their own exports.

Turkey saw a great opportunity of reviving Pan-Turkism, i.e. of establishing a union of Turkic countries from East Mediterranean Sea (Turkey) to the Muslim Chinese province of Xin Jiang. That would make Turkey a super power with huge oil and natural gas reserves.

Germany's Role in the Rise of Lenin and the Russian Communism

I really like the way Winston Churchill described the German support to Lenin and the Russian Communists before World War 1. The Russian Empire was a great rival of the German Empire, and the Germans were trying to destroy it by supporting and financing the Russian Communists.

Image 1 Winston Churchill



You can read Churchill's exact words from the site of Churchill Center:
"Lenin was sent into Russia by the Germans in the same way that you might send a phial containing a culture of typhoid or cholera to be poured into the water supply of a great city, and it worked with amazing accuracy".

See:

“The Creeds of the Devil”: Churchill between the Two Totalitarianisms,
1917-1945 (1 of 3)

16th Paragraph

“Lenin was sent into Russia by the Germans in the same way that you might send a phial containing a culture of typhoid or cholera to be poured into the water supply of a great city, and it worked with amazing accuracy”.

<http://www.winstonchurchill.org/support?catid=0&id=725>

I would like to give a few more details about the German support to Russian Communists. After France’s defeat by Germany in 1871, the industrial zones between France and Germany came under German control, and Germany proved that she was the dominant industrial and military power of the European mainland. Germany was ready to dominate the region from France to Russia, and from the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean Sea.

Map 1 Geographical Map of Europe



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/38/Europe_topography_map_en.png

With her alliance with the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman Empires (Baghdad Railway), Russia could threaten the English in Iraq and India, and the Russians at the Caspian Sea. Moreover, with her alliance with Italy, Germany could reach the raw materials of Africa and dominate the Mediterranean Sea, if she had managed to construct a navy that could challenge the British one, as she was trying to do.

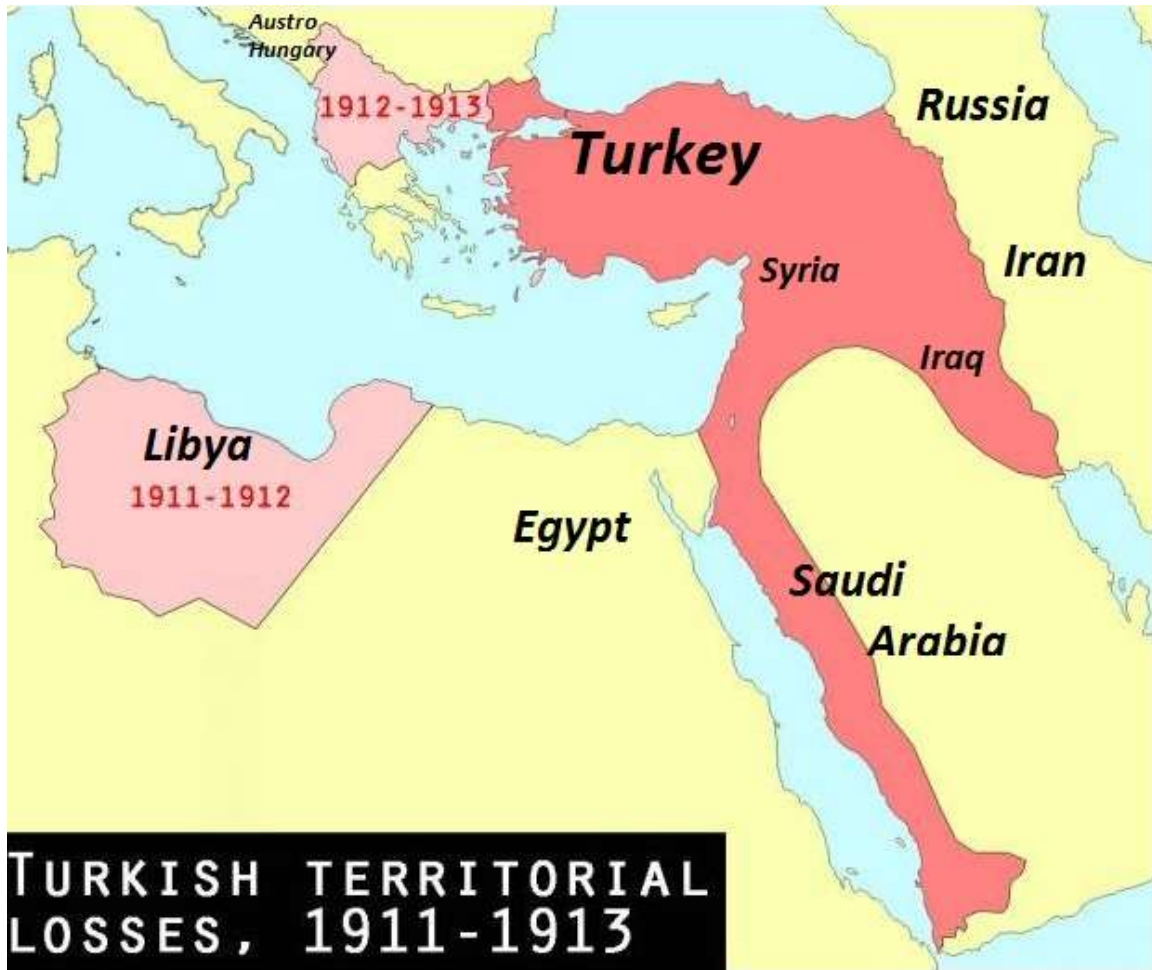
I have to say that Italy was not a very reliable ally, and even though she was a German ally, she decided not to officially take part in the beginning of WW1, and at a later stage she allied with England, France and Russia.

The English, the French and the Russians had great differences, but they decided to put their differences aside for a while, in order to fight Germany, which was perceived as a threat for all of them.

Map 2 Europe 1900



Map 3 Ottoman Empire 1900



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

Even though the Germans lost the First World War, they were paid back for their “investment” to the Russian Communists. In 1917, one year before the end of WW1, the Russian Communists grabbed the chance and attacked the weakened Russian army, they managed to rise to power, and with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk they made peace with the Germans, the Ottomans and the Austrians, and they exited the war. At the same time the Russian Communists made public the agreements that were signed by the British, the French and the Russians, about how the three countries would allocated the

Ottoman colonies in English, French and Russian spheres of influence in case of victory i.e. what later became Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine (Israel+Jordan), Saudi Arabia.

Therefore we could say that the German “investment” in Lenin and the Russian Communists really paid off, even though it was not enough for the Germans to win the War, since the English and the French lost their major ally at the East front once the Russian Communists rose to power. It is said, and I am sure it is true, that Pravda, the Russian Communist newspapers that was founded in 1912, two years before the outbreak of WW1, was founded with German money.

Pravda was the main source of Communist propaganda during the Soviet era, and it is still published, and it is still a Communist newspaper full of propaganda and conspiracy theories. It cannot be a coincidence that Pravda was first published in 1912, just two years before the outbreak of WW1, and just five years before the Russian Communists attacked the Russian army with the support of Germany.

The Nazi conspiracy theories normally say that it was the Jews who financed Communism, but that’s nonsense. It was Germany that financed Russian Communism, in order to destroy the Russian Empire, which was one of her great rivals. If the Russian Communists cared about the Jews, they would have never left the War, and they would have never signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the Germans, the Austrians, and the Ottomans, because in 1917 the English had promised to allow the creation of a Jewish State in the Ottoman colonies in case of victory (Balfour Declaration 1917). By

leaving the War the Russian Communists made it much harder for the English and the French to win the War, even though they finally did win it.

If the Russian Communists cared about the Jews, they would have supported the English, who had promised to give a part of the Ottoman colonies for the creation of a Jewish state. But they did exactly the opposite because they could not care less. All Communists hate religion, and the Jewish Communists are not an exception.

On the other hand it is reasonable to assume that the Communist Propaganda was appealing to some Russian Jews, because in Czarist Russia the Russian Jews had very limited political rights. But whether the Communist propaganda could charm a part of the Russian Jewry is one thing, and who was financed and supported the Russian Communists is another. And it was Germany that was financing the Russian Communists in order to weaken the Russian Empire i.e. in the same way you “pour cholera or Typhus in a city’s water supplies” as Winston Churchill put it in his memories.

I have to say that I would not be surprised if the Austrians and the Ottomans were also supporting the Russian Communists in order to undermine the Russian Empire, because the Russians were facing the Ottomans at the Caspian Sea and the Bosphorus Straits, and the Russians were also supporting the Orthodox Serbs, and Serbia was at the time a colony of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. But I guess Churchill emphasizes the German support to the Russian Communists because Germany was the main economic and military power, and the one that would be more willing and able to pay more to undermine the Russian Empire.

We should not be surprised at all by the German support to Lenin and Russian Communism. It is very common for rivaling countries to finance political parties in their rivals in order to undermine them. We recently found out that Venezuela and Iran were financing the Spanish communist party Podemos, in order to undermine Spain. Venezuela and Iran are both exporters of natural gas and oil, and Spain connects the oil and gas deposits of Africa with the hungry for energy countries of the European Continent (Nigeria, Algeria, Libya). Spain is also promoting a natural gas pipeline to France, and it is already importing large quantities of Qatari LNG, and it plans to import American LNG too.

Turkey and Qatar are also financing the Greek Communists in order to undermine Greece, a traditional rival of Turkey. As soon as the Greek Communists rose to power in January 2015, the Greek Communists and the Turkish Islamists started flooding Greece and Europe with Muslim immigrants. See “Germany’s Defeat by the Turkish Islamists and the Greek Communists”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/12/08/germanys-defeat-by-the-turkish-islamists-and-the-greek-communists/>

Also remember that it was the Iranians that supported the Turkish Islamists against the Turkish Kemalists in Turkey, because the Turkish Kemalists were strong allies of United States and Israel. Indeed, when the Turkish Islamists came to power, the Turkish-Israeli alliance was destroyed, and the Turkish-American alliance was put to the test. But on the other hand, the doctrine of Neo-Ottomanism brought forward by the Turkish Islamists,

which calls for Turkish influence in the Middle East, led to a war between Turkey and Iran in Syria.

The Turkish Kemalists were focused on the security of the Turkish Kurdistan, and were not challenging the Russians and the Iranians in the Middle East, in order to avoid retaliation by them in the form of support to the PKK in Turkish Kurdistan. I am trying to say that by financing political parties in your rival countries you can ensure that your rivals are weakened, but you can not guarantee that they will forever do what you want them to do. But if you make sure that you finance the “correct” political parties in your rival countries, you can make sure that your rival countries are becoming weaker, and if you still have to face them in the future, you will face a weaker rival.

Another example of weakening your rival is the Arab and Iranian support to the Jewish Communist Bernie Sanders in United States. Bernie Sanders is also supported by all the American enemies in Latin America i.e. Venezuela, Bolivia etc. Bernie Sanders has promised to ban oil and natural gas production from shale rock in United States, and that will lead to much higher prices for the Arab, Iranian, Venezuelan, Bolivian and Russian oil and natural gas. See “The Financing of Hollywood’s Socialist Propaganda”.

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

There are many examples of countries supporting political parties in rival countries in order to undermine them. But I think the German support for Russian Communism is a very interesting example.

The Afghan Oil Pipeline and the US-Taliban Negotiations

I always mention the TAPI Pipeline (Turkmenistna-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India), which would unlock the natural gas of Central Asia (Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan), and send it to India and the Indian Ocean.

Map 1



But together with the TAPI pipeline the Americans were also promoting the Afghan Oil Pipeline, which would also unlock the oil of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan) and send it to the Indian Ocean oo. See Wikipedia link below.

Besides the obvious reasons, by unlocking the oil and gas of Central Asia, and by sending it to India, the Americans would ensure that Central Asia would no longer be dependent on Russia, Iran and China. The best thing was that the Communist dictators of the new countries wanted exactly the same thing, even though they were afraid of Russia and Iran.

Russia and Iran are competing with these countries in the oil and gas markets, and China has almost monopsony power over them and can get their oil and gas at lower than normal prices, since they Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan have no real alternatives.

Iran and Russia block Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan when they try to send their oil and gas to Europe through Turkey. Especially they block Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan by not permitting the under-water Trans-Caspian Pipeline, which would connect Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. From the south the Islamist militants who are supported by Iran and the Arabs of the Gulf are blocking in Afghanistan the countries of Central Asia from reaching India.

When the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 1996, only Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates recognized their government. The Americans were asking from the Taliban to allow the construction of the pipelines, and in return the Americans were willing to recognize their government.

Iran, together with the Arabs of the Gulf, was trying to sabotage the negotiations, but at the same time Iran was almost at war with the Taliban,

due to their close relationship with Pakistan and the Arabs of the Persian Gulf. The Taliban had ignored the Islamists of Afghanistan who were supported by the Iranians, mainly the Shias of Afghanistan, who are 20% of the population, and who had formed an alliance with some Tajics and Uzbeks of Northern Afghanistan, the so called Northern Alliance. The Northern Alliance was also supported by Russia and India, while the Taliban were supported by Pakistan and the Arabs of the Persian Gulf.

Map 3



While the Americans were negotiating with the Taliban, Al Qaeda, an ally of the Taliban, was trying to sabotage their negotiations. Al Qaeda was providing financial and military assistance to the Taliban, and in 1998 Al Qaeda attacked the American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. Two hundred people lost their lives, and another four thousands were injured.

From that moment the negotiations between the Americans and the Taliban took another turn, and the Bill Clinton administration started pushing the Taliban to hand them Osama bin Laden, and to denounce Al Qaeda. But that was very difficult given that Al Qaeda was supporting financially and militarily the Taliban.

The fact is that the attacks on the American embassies had exactly the result that Al Qaeda wanted, which was to undermine the negotiations between United States and various Taliban factions. At the same time due to the Arab money the corrupt Taliban leaderships were not willing to allow the construction of the pipelines, which would be good for all the countries, except of course for Iran and the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf.

As I said after the attacks on the American embassies the negotiations between the Clinton administration and the Taliban went very badly, but when George Bush came to power in January 2001 he started fresh negotiations with the Taliban. But Al Qaeda came back with the attack at the Twin Towers (9/11), and the negotiations were over.

The Americans attacked Afghanistan in 2001, and they overturned the Taliban government, by supporting the Northern Alliance, which was Iran's ally. Even though Iran, together with Iraq (Saddam) and Sudan, had supported the Saudi terrorists who carried out the attack on the Twin Towers too. But the attack on the Twin Towers was mainly a Saudi assault, even if the Saudi King was not involved.

The United States and Iran managed to form a government in Afghanistan, under the leadership of Karzai, even though the Iranians preferred the Tajik Rabbani to return to power. Karzai was a Pashtun, but a Durrani Pashtun, and Pakistan does not have good relations with Durrani Pashtuns of Western Afghanistan. The Pakistanis mainly support the Ghilzais Pashtuns of Eastern Afghanistan.

It is very difficult for the United States to find a reliable ally in Afghanistan, because like the Arabs, the Iranians are not willing to allow them to unlock the reserves of Central Asia. Only China could be a reliable ally for the Americans in Afghanistan, because China wants peace in Afghanistan too, but for other reasons of course (i.e. new silk roads, peace in Xin Jiang etc).

A peaceful Afghanistan could cost China her monopsony power over the Central Asian countries, but I believe that China would be willing to accept a bit higher prices in order to have a peaceful Afghanistan.

The United States and China have put a lot of pressure on Pakistan, in order to use its influence over the Taliban for peace to be achieved. Under the US and Chinese pressure the Pakistanis had to try, and that gave Iran the opportunity to form a limited alliance with the Taliban in Afghanistan. Iran is supporting opposing sides in Afghanistan. Now the Russians said that they want to cooperate with their old enemy the Taliban.

A great article about the American-Taliban negotiations during the Clinton and Bush administrations, and the Al Qaeda efforts to undermine these negotiations is “Al-Qaida monitored U.S. negotiations with Taliban over oil

pipeline”, June 2002. Salon is a very big American website, and the author, Jean Charles Brizard, is a well known French expert on international terrorism.

PS CentGas

CentGas was the consortium that was trying in the 90s to send the natural gas of Turkmenistan to Pakistan. It was made up of Unocal (US), Gazprom (Russia), Delta (Saudi Arabia), two Japanese energy companies, one South Korean, and one Pakistani company.

Do not confuse the private Saudi company Delta with the state owned Saudi Aramco, which is the queen of Saudi Arabia.

As you can see the Americans had managed to include the Russians in the project, because Russia was not exporting natural gas to South Asia. Japan and South Korea, two US allies, were also included, because they do not have access to natural gas from pipelines, and they buy expensive LNG. Japan and South Korea, with their huge economies, are the two largest LNG importers in the world.

See “CentGas”

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

PS 2 The Unocal Announcement for the 9/11 Attack

After the 9/11 attack leftist conspiracy theorists who were paid by the Islamists and the Communist dictators of Latin America were saying that it was the Americans who carried out the attack, and not Saudi terrorists with the support of Iran, Sudan, Iraq and Pakistan.

The American energy company Unocal had to publicly announce that it had stopped negotiations with the Taliban after the bombings of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. And that's true. Both Unocal and Gazprom withdrew from the consortium after the bombings of the American embassies in 1998.

“Company not Supporting the Taliban in Any Way”

<https://www.chevron.com/stories/unocal-statement-company-not-supporting-taliban-in-any-way>

Articles

“Al-Qaida monitored U.S. negotiations with Taliban over oil pipeline”, June 2002

A 1998 memo written by al-Qaida military chief Mohammed Atef reveals that Osama bin Laden's group had detailed knowledge of negotiations that were taking place between Afghanistan's ruling Taliban and American government and business leaders over plans for a U.S. oil and gas pipeline across that Central Asian country.

The e-mail memo was found in 1998 on a computer seized by the FBI during its investigation into the 1998 African embassy bombings, which were sponsored by al-Qaida. Atef's memo was discovered by FBI counter-terrorism expert John O'Neill, who

left the bureau in 2001, complaining that U.S. oil interests were hindering his investigation into al-Qaida. O'Neill, who became security chief at the World Trade Center, died in the Sept. 11 attack.

Atef's memo shines new light on what al-Qaida knew about U.S. efforts to normalize relations with the Taliban in exchange for the fundamentalist government's supporting the construction of an oil and gas pipeline across Afghanistan. As documented in the book I coauthored with Guillaume Dasquie, "Bin Laden: The Forbidden Truth," the Clinton and Bush administrations negotiated with the Taliban, both to get the repressive regime to widen its government as well as look favorably on U.S. companies' attempts to construct an oil pipeline. The Bush White House stepped up negotiations with the Taliban in 2001. When those talks stalled in July, a Bush administration representative threatened the Taliban with military reprisals if the government did not go along with American demands.

The seven-page memo was signed "Abu Hafs," which is the military name of Atef, who was the military chief of al-Qaida and is believed to have been killed in November 2001 during U.S. operations in Afghanistan. It shows al-Qaida's keen interest in the U.S.-Taliban negotiations and raises new questions as to whether the U.S. military threat to the Taliban in July 2001 could have prompted al-Qaida's Sept. 11 attack.

Atef's memo is not about the pipeline alone, though it mentions the project several times. It is an analysis of the political situation facing the Taliban. It documents the movement's rise, its leadership, the geopolitical importance of Afghanistan, the Taliban's relationship with Pakistan, as well as the movement's relationship with the Arab mujahedin. The document's intended readership is unclear. But it reveals that the pipeline was seen as a strategic offering toward the West, in order to make the Taliban government acceptable to the United States and Pakistan, as well as to reduce military and investigative pressure on the country to rein in or even extradite bin Laden.

Atef explains that the United States wants "to take control of any region which has huge quantities of oil reserves," and "the American government is keen on laying the oil and gas pipelines from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan." Atef concludes that al-Qaida's "duty toward the movement [Taliban] is to stand behind it, support it

materially and morally, especially because its regional and international enemies are working night and day to put an end to it and make it fail.”

It seems clear the military chief didn't expect the pipeline negotiations to bear fruit. Referring to Pakistanis as “nonbelievers,” and noting that the pipeline “will be under American control ... and it also goes through the territories of Pakistan which are allied to America,” Atef implies that the Taliban has no intention of ultimately cooperating with the project, but is trying to string along the Americans and Pakistanis to win some breathing room for its unpopular government.

The Atef memo is the latest piece of evidence documenting a murky chapter in recent American history — the overtures of the last two American administrations to the repressive Taliban regime. Several U.S. oil companies, most notably Unocal, had been advocates of diplomatic overtures to the Taliban, in order to facilitate the building of a pipeline from the Caspian Sea region to Pakistan and the Persian Gulf through Afghanistan. In 1996, Unocal vice president Chris Taggart described the fall of Kabul to the Taliban regime as a “very positive step” and urged the U.S. to extend recognition to the new rulers in Kabul and thus “lead the way to international lending agencies coming in.”

Just 10 days after the Taliban seized power in Kabul, Zalmay Khalilzad, former National Security Council official and Unocal consultant who was appointed special envoy to Afghanistan by President George W. Bush at the end of 2001, argued in a Washington Post opinion article that the U.S. should try to work with the mullahs and form a broad-based government that included other factions. “The Taliban does not practice the anti-U.S. style of fundamentalism practiced by Iran — it is closer to the Saudi model ...” Khalilzad contended, concluding that “we should use as a positive incentive the benefits that will accrue to Afghanistan from the construction of oil and gas pipelines across its territory ... These projects will only go forward if Afghanistan has a single authoritative government.”

Soon after, the State Department spokesman Glyn Davies told the New York Times he had hope that “the new authorities in Kabul will move quickly to restore order and security and to form a representative interim government that can begin the process of reconciliation nationwide.” Davies also said the United States “wanted to send

diplomats to Afghanistan to meet with the Taliban and held out the possibility of re-establishing full diplomatic ties with the country,” according to the Times.

In November 1997 Unocal invited a Taliban delegation to Texas and, in early December, the company opened a training center at the University of Nebraska, to instruct 137 Afghans in pipeline construction technology. The company also donated to the university’s Center for Afghanistan Studies. Unocal CEO John Imle estimated that the company spent between \$15 and \$20 million on its Central Asia oil pipeline (CentGas) project — on preliminary feasibility studies, humanitarian projects and other efforts to lobby the Taliban (Unocal equipped the regime with satellite phones, for instance.)

In February 1998, Unocal’s vice president for international relations, John Maresca, told a House subcommittee hearing on U.S. interests in the Central Asian Republics that an oil pipeline “would benefit Afghanistan, which would receive revenues from transport tariffs, and would promote stability and encourage trade and economic development.” Emphasizing that “the proposed Central Asia Oil Pipeline (CentGas) cannot begin construction until an internationally recognized Afghanistan government is in place,” he urged the administration and the Congress “to give strong support to the United Nations-led peace process in Afghanistan.”

Until the 1998 al-Qaida embassy bombings, the Clinton administration’s approach toward the Taliban was much the same as Unocal’s: All parties agreed that the political stabilization of Afghanistan was crucial to the region, and was also a way to gain access to oil reserves of the Caspian Sea region. Though bin Laden had been in the country since 1996, the U.S. had not pressured the Taliban to hand him over.

The embassy bombings in August 1998 changed everything. The Clinton administration denounced the regime and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright turned up the heat on Taliban human rights abuses. The United Nations imposed sanctions, freezing Afghanistan’s foreign assets and limiting its citizens’ travel. The U.S. continued to talk to the Taliban, but the emphasis was on extraditing bin Laden in exchange for international recognition; the pipeline was off the table. Unocal, which had been close to finalizing its pipeline deal before the embassy bombings, cancelled it.

When George W. Bush took office in 2001, his administration made new overtures to the Taliban, and the pipeline deal gained renewed support, as an incentive to get the Taliban

to make political concessions and form a broader government. U.S. representatives met with Afghanistan's former King Shah, to see if he might be included in a new government. And American companies began exploring the failed 1998 pipeline project. A report by an Afghan-born Enron manager in July 2001, for instance, illustrates that company's deep interest in some sort of pipeline deal. Enron had begun funding the same sorts of humanitarian projects as Unocal had three years earlier.

In March 2001, several Taliban officials, including Sayed Rahmattullah Hashimi, Mullah Omar's personal advisor, were invited to Washington by their U.S. lobbyist, Leila Helms, the niece of former CIA Director Richard Helms. The agenda included discussions of extraditing bin Laden as well as facilitating American companies' access to oil reserves in central Asia. The delegation met with representatives of the Directorate of Central Intelligence (DCI) and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the State Department. This visit provoked concern and criticism in Washington over how Hashimi obtained a visa, a plane ticket, security clearance and access to American institutions — including the State Department and the National Security Council — despite travel restrictions on Taliban leadership imposed by U.N. sanctions (the official answer was that Hashimi fell below the rank of senior official covered by the sanctions.)

Four months later, American diplomats met with Taliban emissaries as well as representatives from Pakistan, Iran and Russia for four days of talks in Berlin in mid-July. Again, the message was that if the Taliban would extradite bin Laden and form a broad-based national government, it could win international recognition and reap extensive economic subsidies from the construction of a pipeline. The meeting was one of several convened by Francesco Vendrell, a Spanish diplomat who serves as the U.N.'s chief representative on Afghanistan. The delegates at the July meeting included Robert Oakley, former U.S. ambassador and Unocal lobbyist; Karl "Rick" Inderfurth, former assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs; Lee Coldren, head of the Office of Pakistan, Afghan and Bangladesh Affairs in the State Department until 1997; Tom Simons, former U.S. ambassador to Pakistan and the most recent official negotiator with the Taliban; Niaz Naik, former Foreign Minister of Pakistan; Nikolai Kozyrev, a former Russian special envoy to Afghanistan; and Saeed Rajai Khorassani, formerly the Iranian representative to the U.N. The Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul Salam Zaeef,

attended several sessions with some of the delegates in Berlin, according to Naif Naik, though officially the Taliban had not been invited. Naik was expected to carry the U.S. message to the Taliban.

According to Naik, the point of the meeting was that “we would try to convey to them that if they did certain things, then, gradually, they could win the jackpot, get something in return from the international community.” It might, Naik said, “be possible to persuade the Taliban that once a broader-based government was in place and the oil pipeline under way, there would be billions of dollars in commission, and the Taliban would have their own resources.”

It was at the July meeting, according to Naik, that Tom Simons suggested that Afghanistan could face an open-ended military operation from bases in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan if it didn’t accede to U.S. demands. “Ambassador Simons stated that if the Taliban wouldn’t agree with the plan, and if Pakistan was unable to persuade them, the United States might use an overt action against Afghanistan,” Naik says. The words used by Simons were “a military operation,” according to Naik. Another participant reportedly said the Taliban’s choice was clear: either accept a “carpet of gold” riches from the pipeline or “a carpet of bombs,” meaning a military strike.

Lee Coldren, a member of the U.S. delegation, also confirmed to the British newspaper the Guardian the American position at the Berlin meeting. “I think there was some discussion of the fact that the United States was so disgusted with the Taliban that they might be considering some military action.”

In statements to newspapers, Simons has offered ambiguous explanations of his statements at the July meeting. In September, he told the British Guardian: “I’ve known Naik and considered him a friend for years. He’s an honorable diplomat. I didn’t say anything like that and didn’t hear anyone else say anything like that. We were clear that feeling in Washington was strong, and that military action was one of the options down the road. But details, I don’t know where they came from.”

Yet in a November interview with Le Monde, Simons seemed to confirm that there had been some talk of U.S. military action. “It is true that the Taliban was asked to deliver bin Laden and form a [broader] government,” Simons told Le Monde. “We said in July that we were investigating the attack against the USS Cole in Yemen, and that if there

were solid evidence of the implication of bin Laden, one had to expect a military answer. One can always inflate such a declaration to see a global threat against the Taliban. But the American declaration related only to the response to the USS-Cole.

“As for the ‘carpet of gold and the carpet of bombs,’ we actually discussed the need for a plan for rebuilding for Afghanistan, which would follow a political agreement,” he said, adding that “It’s possible that a mischievous American participant, after several drinks, may have thought it smart to evoke gold carpets and carpet bombs. Even Americans can’t resist the temptation to be mischievous.”

The last known meeting between U.S. and Taliban representatives took place in August, five weeks before the Sept. 11 attacks, when U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Central Asian affairs Christina Rocca met with the Taliban’s ambassador to Pakistan Abdul Salam Zaeef.

It would be unfair to suggest that the U.S. threat in July led to the al-Qaida strike. But while Simons doesn’t admit that he personally threatened the Taliban with reprisal, he confirms that only a few weeks before Sept. 11, American diplomats warned of military action against Afghanistan if its leaders did not meet U.S. economic and political demands. It is worth asking whether, had this threat been widely known, U.S. intelligence agencies might have analyzed the information they were receiving about bin Laden’s plots against the U.S. differently.

Now the newly discovered Atef memo makes clear that in 1998, at least, al-Qaida was well informed about negotiations between the Taliban and the U.S. on the oil pipeline and other American concerns. The memo also shows that those negotiations were the Taliban’s gambit to extend its power; Mullah Omar’s government never had any intention of allowing U.S. firms to construct an oil pipeline, or letting the U.S. dictate the members of its ruling body. Given the inside knowledge al-Qaida had about U.S.-Taliban negotiations, it’s reasonable to suspect bin Laden’s group also received and understood the U.S. threat of military action delivered in late July as a threat of war.

In the end, though, the U.S. got its way. Interim Afghan leader Hamid Karzai decided on May 30 to revive the pipeline project with Pakistan and Turkmenistan, signing an agreement under which the three governments agree to implement a pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan through Afghanistan. Would that U.S. intelligence agencies’

investigations into al-Qaida activities in the months before Sept. 11 had such a productive ending.

http://www.salon.com/2002/06/05/memo_11/

“Afghanistan Oil Pipeline”

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

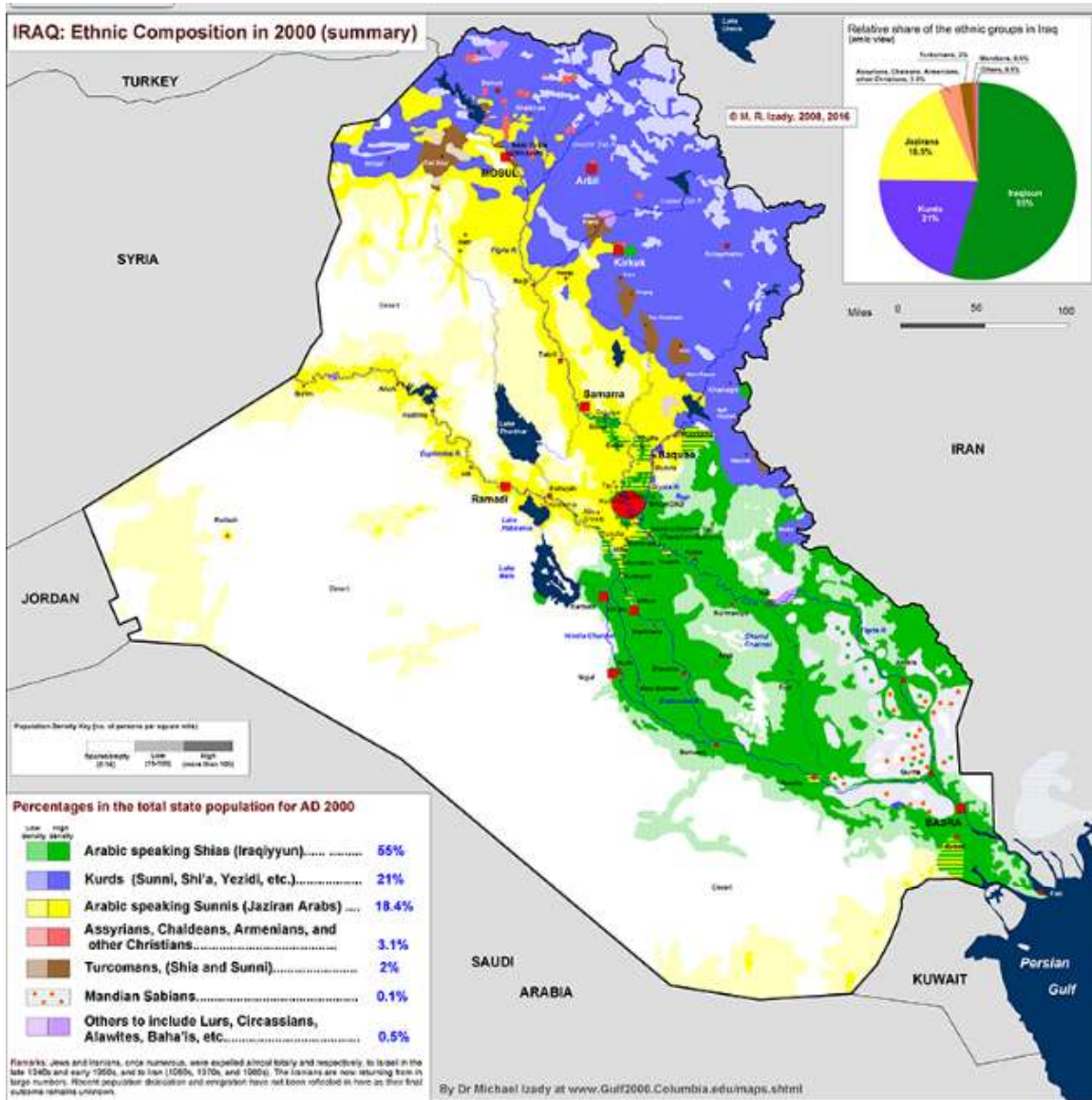
The Geopolitics of ISIS

To understand ISIS we need to understand that ISIS top people are the ex-people of Saddam Hussein i.e. the dictator of Iraq, who was overturned by the Americans in 2003. ISIS first appeared as Al-Qaeda of Iraq in 2004. The appearance of Al Qaeda of Iraq was an attempt of the ex-people of Saddam Hussein to fight the Americans and the Shiites.

The people of Saddam Hussein are the Sunni Arab minority of Iraq, who were oppressing the Shia Arabs (60-65%) of South Iraq, and the Sunni Kurds of Northern Iraq (10-15%). Most of the oil and gas of Iraq is located in the Shia and the Kurdish parts of the country. However it was the Sunni elite i.e. ISIS, which was exploiting this oil.

At the following map you can see with blue the Kurdish region of Iraq, with green the Shia part, and with yellow the Sunni part. The white parts are deserts with few inhabitants, and they are mainly controlled by the Sunni Iraqis.

Map of Iraq (Ethnic Groups)

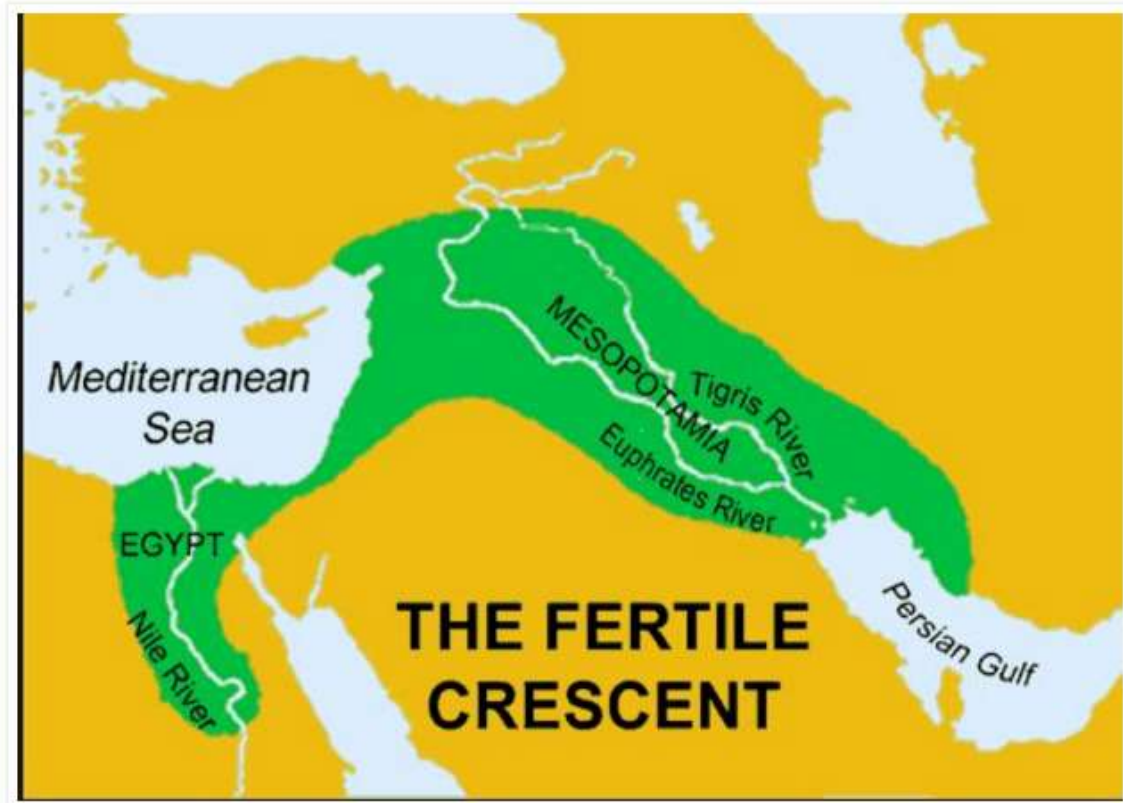


http://gulf2000.columbia.edu/images/maps/Iraq_Ethnic_sm.png

Note that Iranians (Persians) were Sunnis, but in 1.500 A.D. the Iranian leaders converted their people to Shia Islam, in order to have a distinct identity and fight the Sunni Ottomans. The Iranians (Persians) and the Ottomans were fighting among other things for the fertile lands of Mesopotamia i.e. the region between the rivers Euphrates and Tiger.

That's why there is a mix of Sunnis and Shias in Mesopotamia. See "This 16th Century Battle Created the Modern Middle East", August 2014.

Map Mesopotamia



<http://www.mrdowling.com/603mesopotamia.html>

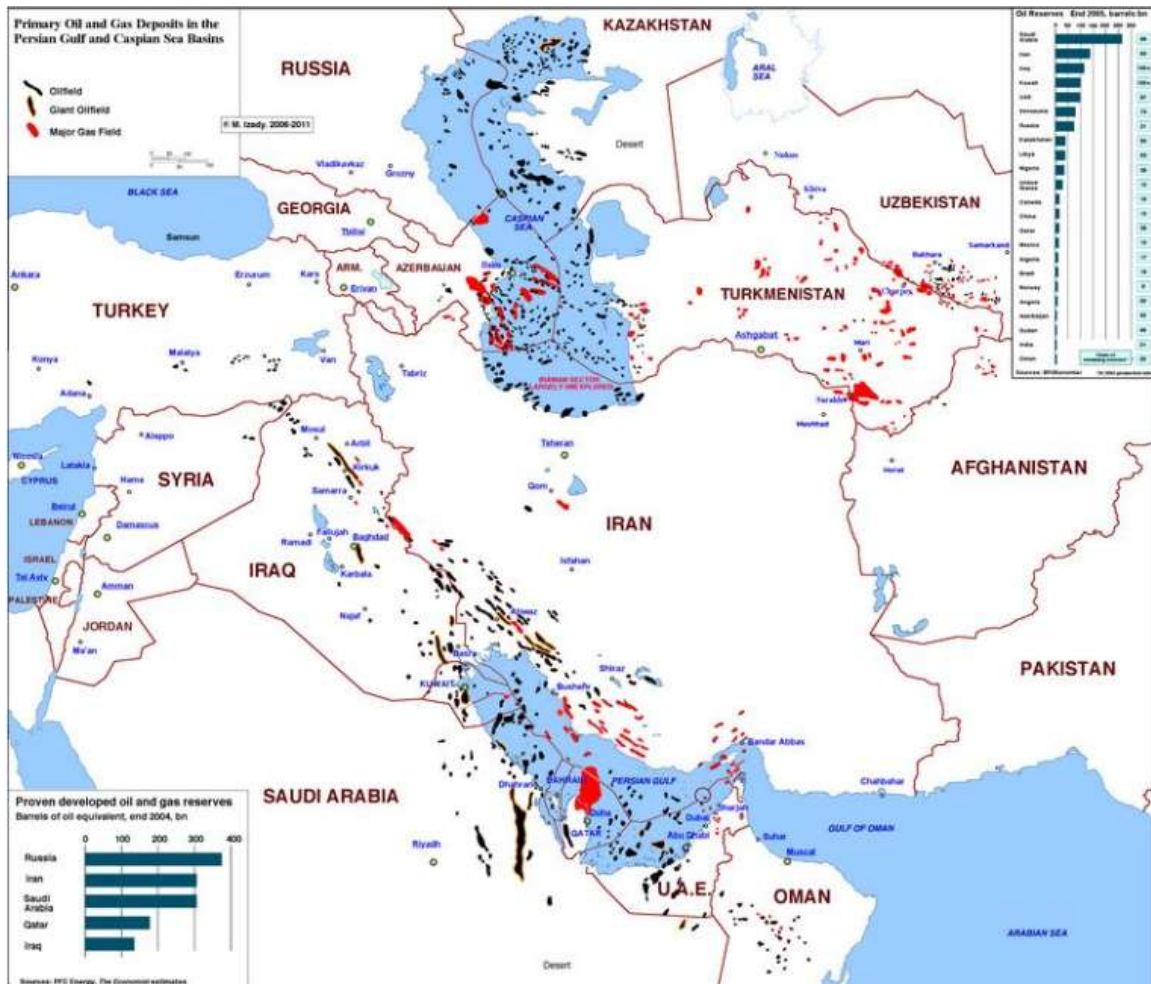
To understand ISIS one first needs to look back at the relations of the ex-people of Saddam Hussein with their neighbors.

Iran

Saddam and his people were enemies of Iran. They were competitors in the oil markets.

The two countries fought the brutal war of 1980-1988. Iran was also supporting the Shia majority of Iraq, while Iraq was trying to take from Iran the Khuzestan province at the Iranian-Iraqi borders. Khuzestan is one of the richest regions of Iran in oil and natural gas, and has an Arab majority.

Map of Oil (μπύρο) and Natural Gas (red) of the Middle East



Moreover Iran and Iraq were fighting each other for the Shatt al Arab river, which is the conjugation of the rivers Tiger and Euphrates, and it is the last border between Iran and Iraq at the Persian Gulf.

Map Shatt al Arab



http://fouman.com/history/img/Iran_Euphrates_River_Map.jpg

However the two countries were sharing the war against the United States. Moreover both countries counted on their oil exports to pay the public servants who support their regimes, and they both saw Saudi Arabia as a problem, because the oil fields of Saudi Arabia are very “easy” and the Saudi oil can be produced at very low cost and in huge quantities.

The Iranians and the Iraqis also shared their common anxiety about an independent Kurdistan. However due to their rivalry at times they both supported the Kurds of the opposite site.

Map Kurdistan



Finally both countries do not want to see the oil and gas of Central Asia reaching India, and they both supported Al-Qaeda against the United States, even though Iran has been associated with Al-Qaeda a lot more than Iraq.

Turkey

The people of Saddam were in very good terms with Turkey, even though Turkey was an American ally, and Iraq was a Soviet ally. Turkey bought a large part of her oil from Iraq, and the two countries were jointly hunting the Kurds of Iraq and Turkey. Moreover they both shared Syria as a common enemy.

Saudi Arabia

Saddam had very problematic relations with Saudi Arabia. They were both exporters of oil, and the Saudis produced too much and at very low costs. All exporters of oil have this problem with Saudi Arabia.

On the other hand the Saudis provided Saddam with funding to fight Iran. Even though the Saudis did not like Saddam, they hated the Iranians.

Syria

Saddam Hussein was a great enemy of Syria, which was a very strong Iranian ally since the Islamic revolution of 1979.

Syria had very few Kurds and could also support the Kurds of Turkey and Iraq.

The Iranians were also supplying free oil to Syria, in return for the Syrians fighting Iraq and for not allowing Iraq to export oil through Syria.

Jordan

A very close ally of Saddam Hussein was Jordan. Iraq desperately needed the Jordanian port of Aqaba, in order to have access to the Red Sea, both to export oil and to import arms avoiding Iran and the Persian Gulf.

Map Iraq and Jordan



Moreover 2-3 out of the 10 millions of the population of Jordan were Arabs who fled Israel during the Arab-Israeli Wars. With the war against Israel Saddam Hussein was very popular in Jordan, and he really needed Jordan.

Jordan supported Saddam Hussein even during the 1991 war with Kuwait, infuriating both the Arabs of the Gulf and the United States.

Jordan was an American ally, and Iraq was a Soviet ally, but Saddam needed the Jordanian port of Aqaba and Jordan needed Iraq's free oil, and that made them very good friends.

Israel

Israel was a great enemy of Saddam Hussein, because through Jordan and Israel Saddam could reach the Mediterranean Sea. Moreover Saddam needed the war against Israel to influence the Palestinians of Jordan, and to become popular in the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, who were American allies and could not be as aggressive as Saddam towards Israel.

Kuwait

Saddam considered Kuwait to be part of Iraq, and wanted the oilfields of Kuwait, and he did take them in 1990 with his invasion.

Saddam thought that Kuwait produced too much oil and it was hurting the Iraqi economy. Saddam set the oilfields of Kuwait on fire before leaving the country after the Americans attacked him in 1991.

The Americans were outside Baghdad in 1991, but they did not overturn Saddam because that would increase Iran's influence over the Iraqi Shiites, and that would be a problem for their Saudi allies. But in 2003 things were very different and the Americans did not hesitate to take Saddam Hussein out. Things have changed.

What ISIS can Do?

Therefore when ISIS was still Saddam's people, it had good relations with Jordan and Turkey, very problematic relations with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and very hostile relations with Iran, Syria and Israel. Moreover Saddam was a soviet ally, and his people were trained by KGB. That's why the top ISIS people are trained by KGB. See "Towards an Alliance Between Russia and ISIS"?

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/05/22/towards-an-alliance-between-russia-and-isis/>

These were the friends and enemies of the people of Saddam, who became Al-Qaeda of Iraq in 2004, and gradually became ISIS, and they even denounced Al-Qaeda in 2014.

What were the options of Saddam's people when they became ISIS? Their first option was obviously to take control of the Sunni part of Iraq, or at least form an organization to fight the Americans and the Shias of Iraq.

Keep in mind that the American attack to Saddam was a disaster for the Saudis, but it did not please the Iranians either. The Iranians suddenly saw the American army next to them, and they could be next. After all they too had supported the Al Qaeda's attacks against the Americans.

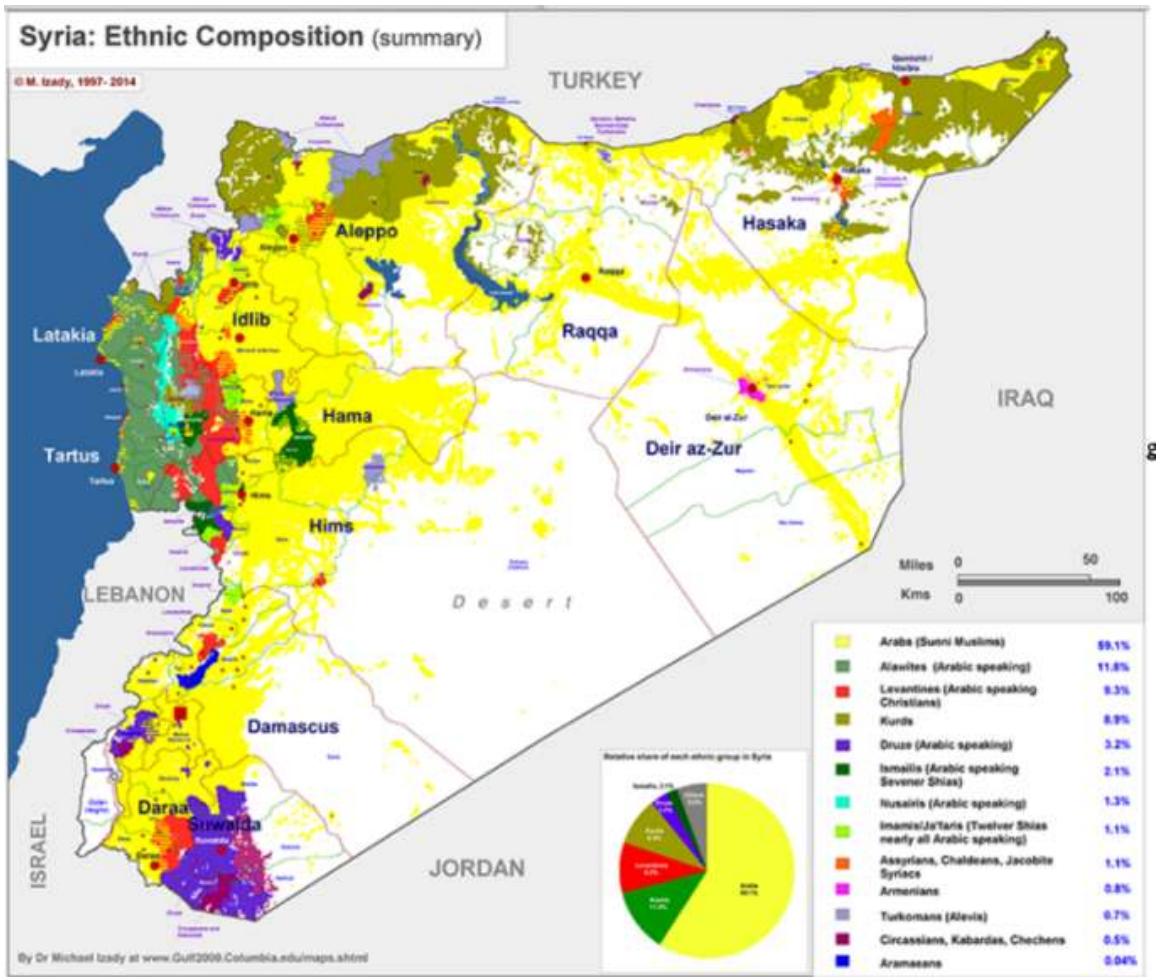
Moreover the Iranians knew that once Saddam was overturned the Shia majority of Iran and the Kurds would see the Americans as liberators, and the oil of Iraq would soon start flowing to the world markets. And it did. It is the Chinese who are the number one producer of oil in Iraq, but the oil of Iraq does flow. During Saddam's rule Iraq was under economic sanctions.

I am saying that the attacks of Al-Qaeda of Iraq against the Americans, at least in the first years of the American attack, could have been supported by Iran too. I do not know if they were, I am just saying they could.

ISIS big opportunity was when the Turks and the Arabs decided to take the Sunni part of Syria, in order to create a Sunni energy corridor (Turkey-Qatar) and to block Iran from reaching Syria (Saudi Arabia, UAE). ISIS cultivated the Islamic Caliphate ideology, in order to absorb the Sunni part of Syria, and if they could take the Alawite part of Syria they could reach the Mediterranean Sea.

At the following map of Syria you can see with yellow the Sunnis of Syria, with green the Alawites at the coasts, and with Khaki the Kurds. With white you can see the Syrian Desert.

Map



<http://www.geocurrents.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Syria-Ethnicity-Summary-Map.png>

Moreover ISIS could take the weak and Sunni Jordan. ISIS also claims Gaza from Israel and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, which would give ISIS total control of the Gulf of Aqaba, which would be an alternative Silk Road, and through Gaza it would take ISIS to the Mediterranean Sea.

Map



The Israelis, the Egyptians and the Saudis, three old enemies, are cooperating at the Sinai Peninsula against ISIS. ISIS no longer has the oil and natural gas of Shia and Kurdish Iraq, and would need a sponsor to fight Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia at the same time, even through a war of terror.

Three countries could help ISIS. The first one is Russia, the second is Iran and the third is Turkey. Russia is in good terms with Israel and Egypt, and she has an understanding with Saudi Arabia, and therefore she is excluded.

Iran, which would be very happy to attack Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, is currently at war with ISIS in Syria and Iraq. We have seen many times two parties fighting in one place and cooperating in another, so it could be possible to see Iran supporting ISIS in Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula, while still fighting in Iraq and Syria. After all ISIS is very weakened in Iraq and

Syria. But a strong cooperation between Iran and ISIS, like the one between Iran and Hezbollah is difficult, at least for now. Unless Saddam's people stop attacking the United States and they focus on Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Then they could be good friends with the Iranians.

About a year ago the Turks would also have been very happy to attack Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. But now the Saudis had given lots of money to Turkey, and the Turks are trying to reach an agreement with Israel and Egypt, with Russia's blessings, in order to import natural gas from Eastern Mediterranean Sea.

Moreover Turkey has promised the Americans to fight ISIS in Syria, and in return the Americans will not supply the Kurds of Syria with arms, since the Kurds will not be threatened by ISIS, since ISIS will not be supported by Turkey. It is a circle. The circle of war.

Moreover I don't know if ISIS vision is compatible with the vision of Erdogan. ISIS would have to accept Erdogan as the Sultan of the Chaliphate for the Sultan to support ISIS in the future.

But not now that Erdogan has promised to fight ISIS with the Americans and he is trying to reach a detent with the Israelis and the Egyptians it is not possible. If the Turks do not find a solution with the Israelis and the Egyptians, and ISIS stops attacking the United States, Erdogan could support ISIS against Israel and Egypt. For the vision of Erdogan see "Assessing the Sultan".

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/07/06/assessing-the-sultan/>

Therefore at the moment it does not seem that there is a strong country that could and would be willing to support ISIS's vision. Therefore ISIS can get some money from here and there to carry out some terrorist attacks, but it will not be strong enough to fight for its chaliphate. At least not for now.

Articles

“This 16th Century Battle Created the Modern Middle East”, August 2014

<http://thediplomat.com/2014/08/this-16th-century-battle-created-the-modern-middle-east/>

“ISIS: Everything you need to know about the rise of the militant group”,

February

2nd, 3rd Paragraphs

The group began in 2004 as al Qaeda in Iraq, before rebranding as ISIS two years later. It was an ally of -- and had similarities with -- Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda: both were radical anti-Western militant groups devoted to establishing an independent Islamic state in the region. But ISIS -- unlike al Qaeda, which disowned the group in early 2014 -- has proven to be more brutal and more effective at controlling territory it has seized.

ISIS is putting governing structures in place to rule the territories the group conquers once the dust settles on the battlefield. From the cabinet and the governors to the financial and legislative bodies, ISIS' bureaucratic hierarchy looks a lot like those of some of the Western countries whose values it rejects -- if you take away the democracy and add in a council to consider who should be beheaded.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/14/world/isis-everything-you-need-to-know/>

“Al-Qaeda Claims Jordan Attacks”, November 2005

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4423714.stm

“The Effects of the Amman Bombings on U.S.-Jordanian Relations”, July 2016

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Paragraphs

But anti-U.S. tensions lurk beneath the surface. Experts say the two biggest thorns in the U.S.-Jordanian relationship are the war in Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Jordanians came out in droves to protest the 2003 Iraq war. Similarly, a July poll by the Pew Global Attitudes Project found that 38 percent of Jordanians surveyed said the main cause of Islamic extremism is U.S. policies in the Middle East—namely its support for Israel. More than half of Jordan's citizens are of Palestinian descent—270,000 of whom reside in refugee camps. Meanwhile, according to the same poll, support for al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden in Jordan has jumped from 55 percent in 2003 to 60 percent in 2005 the only Muslim country where al-Qaeda's leader has not lost popularity besides Pakistan. A number of the most notorious terrorist leaders in recent years have hailed from Jordan, including Abu al-Zarqawi, leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq and the now-deceased rebel Khattab in Chechnya. “Jordan is a very important base for the development of local jihad,” says Reuven Paz, an Israeli expert on Islamic terrorism.

Experts say another disturbing trend in Jordan, highlighted in the July Pew poll, is that Jordan is the only Muslim country where support for suicide bombs against innocent civilians in defense of Islam has risen, not dropped; a majority of Jordanians—some 57 percent—now say they support suicide bombing, as opposed to 42 percent in 2002. It's unclear what effect, if any, the recent trio of suicide attacks, which left at least fifty-seven dead and hundreds wounded, will have on public views of these kinds of bombings. “I think it will empower the existing relationship [between the United States and Jordan],” says Samer Abu Libdeh, a Jordanian scholar and visiting research fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. “But it must also quicken the reform and democratization process in order for the king to gain more support among the mass majority and avoid more young radicals and their sympathizers to rise up.”

A Brief History of U.S.-Jordanian Relations

Historically, the Sunni Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has been a small, resource-poor country that in recent years has relied increasingly on the support—both monetary and political—of the United States. From 1953 until 1999, Jordan was ruled by King Hussein, a moderate by Middle Eastern standards but still an authoritarian. Besides the so-called Black September crackdown against Jordan-based Palestinian rebels in 1970 that left thousands dead, Jordan has remained relatively stable despite the escalating violence that encircled its borders. Throughout the 1980s, Amman backed Iraq during its war with Iran. In 1990-91, Jordan remained neutral during the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Then in 1994, thanks to nudging from the United States, King Hussein signed a peace treaty with Israel—a move widely criticized by most Jordanians. In the following years, money from the United States poured into the country, making Jordan, behind Egypt and Israel, the region's third largest recipient of U.S. aid.

Since succeeding his father in 1999, King Abdullah, King Hussein's eldest son, has pursued what the Economist calls a policy of “studied neutrality.” Despite the war's unpopularity, Jordan officially backed the Iraq war in 2003, although it only provided logistical support and allowed no U.S. military presence on its soil (more recently Jordan has served as a training ground for Iraqi security forces). The war was not only unpopular among Jordanians for political reasons but also for economic ones: Jordan had received subsidized oil from Saddam Hussein's regime, not to mention a large sector of Jordanian businessmen lost jobs in Iraq because of the war.

<http://www.defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/the-effects-of-the-amman-bombings-on-us-jordanian-relations/>

“The Cheneys’ claim of a ‘deep, longstanding, far-reaching relationship’ between al-Qaeda and Saddam”, July 2014

1st, 2nd, 3rd Paragraphs

“It is undisputed, and has been confirmed repeatedly in Iraqi government documents captured after the invasion, that Saddam had deep, longstanding, far-reaching relationships with terrorist organizations, including al Qaeda and its affiliates. It is

undisputed that Saddam's Iraq was a state based on terror, overseeing a coordinated program to support global jihadist terrorist organizations. Ansar al Islam, an al Qaeda-linked organization, operated training camps in northern Iraq before the invasion. Abu Musab al Zarqawi, the future leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, funneled weapons and fighters into these camps, before the invasion, from his location in Baghdad. We also know, again confirmed in documents captured after the war, that Saddam provided funding, training, and other support to numerous terrorist organizations and individuals over decades, including to Ayman al Zawahiri, the man who leads al Qaeda today."

We became interested in this passage after our former colleague Warren Bass, now at The Wall Street Journal, tweeted that the 9/11 Commission report disputed that there was a "deep, longstanding, far-reaching" relationship between Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda.

Bass, who had been on the commission staff, quoted from the 9/11 report: "The reports describe friendly contacts and indicate some common themes in both sides' hatred of the United States. But to date we have seen no evidence that these or the earlier contacts ever developed into a collaborative operational relationship. Nor have we seen evidence indicating that Iraq cooperated with al Qaeda in developing or carrying out any attacks against the United States."

Liz Cheney then responded to Bass, noting that "we have learned much more since then about the relationship between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda based on Iraqi intelligence documents captured after the report came out." She specifically cited a five-volume collection published by Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA), a think tank for national security agencies.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2014/07/17/the-cheney-claims-of-a-deep-longstanding-far-reaching-relationship-between-al-qaeda-and-saddam/>

“Zarqawi's Amman Bombings: Jordan's 9/11”, November 2015

1st , 2nd , 3rd , 4th Paragraphs

The November 9th bombing of three hotels in Amman is Jordan's 9/11. The simultaneous attacks, claimed by Abu Musab Zarqawi's "al-Qaeda in Iraq" terrorist network, killed 57 people, most of them Jordanians. Despite speculation about Jordan's continued stability, the attacks, and the widespread revulsion that they have triggered among Jordanians and other Arabs, may actually bolster King Abdullah's government. In Jordan and perhaps elsewhere, this may be a turning point in the war against terrorism. By indiscriminately attacking fellow Muslims, al-Qaeda may have stripped the sheen from its image, lessening the appeal of extremism among younger Muslims.

The Iraqi branch of al-Qaeda, led by the Jordanian militant Zarqawi, has claimed responsibility for the bombings. Although Zarqawi's organization has roots in Jordan, it recruited four Iraqi suicide bombers, including a husband and wife team, to execute the attacks, perhaps to preserve its Jordanian members for future attacks inside that country. The woman's bomb failed to explode, and she was later captured after al-Qaeda's statement claiming responsibility for the atrocity alerted Jordanian authorities to her participation.

The operational shortcomings of the bombings were accompanied by political miscalculations. Many Jordanians have long supported suicide bombings against Israel and against U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq. Zarqawi was a local hero to Jordanian Islamic militants and even to some Jordanians who did not share his radical ideology but were impressed by his high profile attacks inside Iraq.

But the Amman bombings, which slaughtered dozens of Jordanian men, women, and children who were celebrating a wedding, have outraged Jordanians of all stripes. Jordan's Palestinian majority, which might have reacted with schadenfreude toward an attack that targeted King Abdullah's government (resented since its 1994 peace treaty with Israel) were shocked by the deaths of many Palestinians who perished in the bombings. Among the dead were the head of the Palestinian Authority's military intelligence and the brother of the speaker of the Palestinian National Assembly. For several days after the bombings, Jordanians took to the streets to participate in large demonstrations, shouting, "Burn in hell, al-Zarqawi."

10th Paragraphs

Zarqawi traveled to Afghanistan in 1989, where he met bin Laden. Although he had much in common with the Saudi millionaire, Zarqawi considered bin Laden too moderate. He retained his independence from al-Qaeda and set up a separate training camp in Afghanistan for his own terrorist group, Tawhid wal Jihad (Unity and Holy War). After the Taliban's 2001 defeat, he fled through Iran, apparently with the cooperation of the Iranian government, and set up operations in Iraq before the war, with the suspected support of Saddam Hussein's regime. In 2004, Zarqawi merged his group with bin Laden's and was named the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. Although he still has ideological differences with bin Laden, including a fierce hostility to Shiites that has led his group to bomb Shiite mosques in Iraq, Zarqawi now ranks second only to bin Laden in the eyes of many Sunni Islamic extremists.

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2005/11/zarqawis-amman-bombings-jordans-9-11>

“ISIS Comes to Gaza”

23rd Paragraph

Mahmoud Abbas and the leaders of the Palestinian Authority can continue to talk all they want about a Palestinian state that would be established in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem. But when ISIS-inspired groups are active in the Gaza Strip and there are no signs that the Hamas regime is weakening, it is rather difficult to imagine a Palestinian state. Abbas has not been able to set foot in the Gaza Strip since 2007. Even his private residence in Gaza City is off-limits to him. But Hamas is just the beginning of the story for Abbas. The jihadi groups clearly seek to create an Islamic emirate combining the Gaza Strip and Sinai. The Palestinian Authority president might thank Israel for its presence in the West Bank -- a presence that allows him and his government to be something other than infidel cannon fodder for the jihadis.

<http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/8431/isis-gaza-sinai>

“ISIS Meets its Match? How Jordan Has Prevented Large Scale Attacks”,
February 2016

1st Paragraph

At first glance, Jordan would appear to be a prime target for the self-proclaimed Islamic State (also known as ISIS). For one, ISIS has struck almost all of Jordan's neighbors. In May 2015, there was the bloody attack in a Saudi Arabian mosque; in November, a Russian plane in Egypt came under attack. ISIS hit an Iraqi shopping mall in January 2016, and it has targeted Syrian regime troops for two years now. Since 2014, ISIS has killed 18,000 Iraqi civilians. In 2015 alone, it killed approximately 2,000 Syrians.

4th Paragraph

ISIS' 2015 immolation of captured Jordanian pilot Muath Kasasbeh inside Syria was a unifying moment for the country. Whereas a month before the attack only 72 percent of Jordanians believed that ISIS should be considered a terrorist group, after Kasasbeh's death the proportion jumped to a staggering 95 percent of the population. Jordan's influential Muslim Brotherhood, meanwhile, called the killing "heinous" and "criminal."

7th Paragraph

Even Jordan's military prowess, however, can't fully explain how the country has so far avoided ISIS attacks. Egypt has a large and well-funded military, too, yet Egyptian militants affiliated with ISIS have successfully carved out territory in the Sinai. Here, Jordan's relatively more open political space is key. During the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings, Amman adopted a peaceful approach that avoided significant casualties, whereas the Syrian and Libyan regimes used overwhelming force to quash political rivals (later alienating vast parts of the country and leaving ISIS with resentments to exploit). For example, in response to anticorruption protests, King Abdullah of Jordan quickly dismissed Prime Minister Samir Rifai along with the cabinet. The government moved up parliamentary elections by two years in January 2013, and security forces largely avoided a lethal crackdown on protesters, unlike in Damascus and Benghazi.

11th Paragraph

Further, in contrast with the bloody struggles between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian government, King Abdullah and Jordan's branch of the Muslim Brotherhood have established more tolerant relations. For one, although it seeks reform, the Muslim Brotherhood has not called for the end of Jordan's monarchy. And Amman has not

followed Saudi Arabia's path of labeling Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood as a "terrorist organization" and has allowed Jordanians interested in nonviolent political Islam a place to operate safely.

13th Paragraph

And this is where ISIS' own priorities come in. As Rantawi explained, "Jordan so far is not on the [list of] top priorities of ISIS targets in the region. They have more important targets for the time being." ISIS has loyalist fighters across the Middle East, but the group has not announced a Jordanian branch. Adnan Abu Odeh, former royal court chief and UN ambassador, cited Jordan's negligible Shiite population as a factor. ISIS has frequently hit Shiite targets in Lebanon and Yemen. The group also appears more intent on its ideological clash with Riyadh over who represents the true Islam, so it might be more interested in targets in Saudi Arabia.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/jordan/2016-02-17/is-is-meets-its-match>

"ISIS in Gaza", January 2016

4th, 5th Paragraph

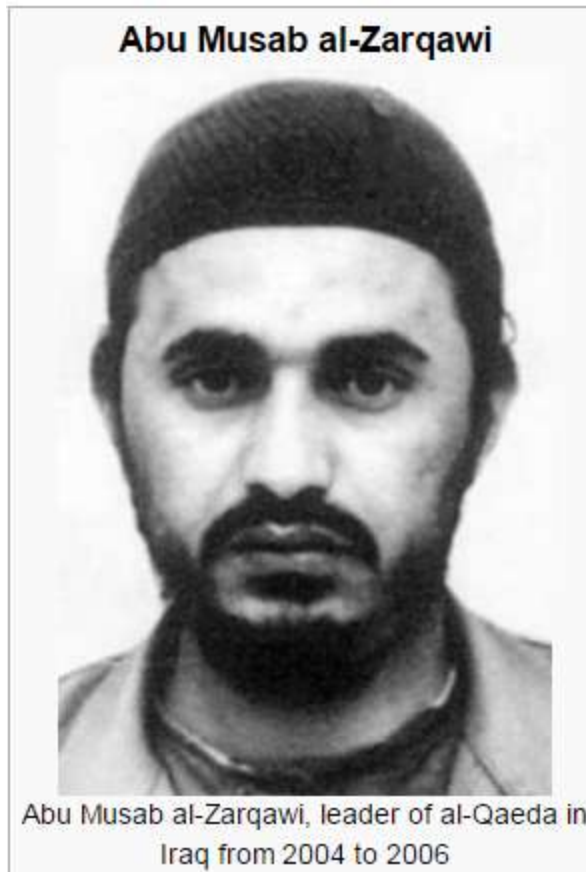
Since 2007 Hamas has been the de facto government of Gaza, albeit under Israeli rule—a rule implemented nowadays by means of a military and naval blockade by air, land, and sea, which is described by the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, as "a collective penalty against the people of Gaza." Hamas is itself an Islamist resistance movement, with a resistance "army" called al-Qassam, but Hamas members are seen as infidels by ISIS since they place the nationalist battle for a Palestinian state before the campaign for a caliphate. Hamas's willingness to negotiate with Israel and to agree to a cease-fire last summer was seen by ISIS as the latest demonstration of its collaboration. ISIS supporters inside Gaza have shown their opposition and tried to break the cease-fire by firing rockets into Israel, thereby angering Hamas and risking heavy Israeli retaliation.

In recent months, Hamas has tried to crush groups of Salafi jihadists in Gaza, some of whom declare open support for ISIS and are in touch with its networks in Syria. As well

as rounding them up Hamas has “persuaded” moderate Salafi sheikhs to help convince jihadists that their interpretation of Muhammad’s wishes is wrong. One of these sheikhs is Omar Hams.

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2016/01/14/isis-in-gaza/>

“Abu Musab al-Zarqawi”



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Musab_al-Zarqawi

“Saddam Hussein : The Father of ISIS in Iraq”

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/01/08/saddam-hussein-the-father-of-isis-in-iraq/>

Assessing the Sultan

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/07/06/assessing-the-sultan/>

“How Saddam Hussein Gave Us ISIS”, January 2016

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/23/opinion/how-saddam-hussein-gave-us-is-is.html>

“Flashback: the 1991 Iraqi revolt”, August 2007

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2888989.stm

“Saddam has Koran written in his blood”, December 2002

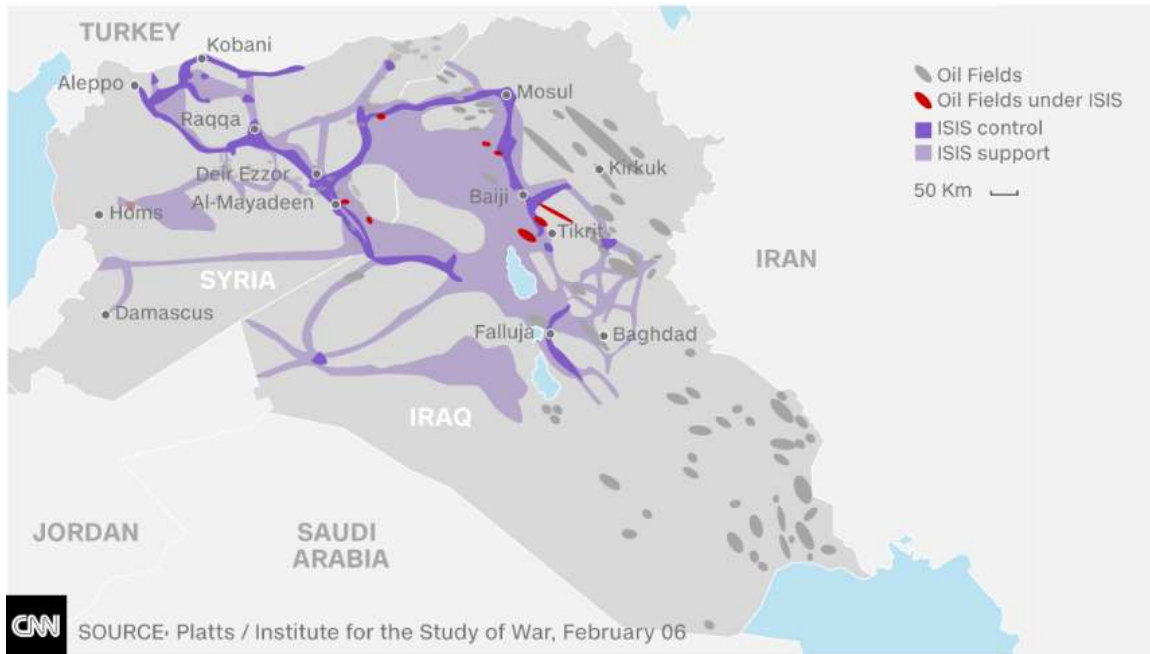
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iraq/1416155/Saddam-has-Koran-written-in-his-blood.html>

ANATOMY OF ISIS



CNN Source: Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/14/world/isis-everything-you-need-to-know/>



<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/14/world/isis-everything-you-need-to-know/>

Is the Reconciliation of Turkey and Israel Viable?

In one day Turkey announced reconciliation with both Russia and Israel. See Huffington Post “Turkey Moves To Restore Relations With Russia And Israel On The Same Day”, June 2016.

Obviously this reconciliation is closely related to cooperation of these three countries in the natural gas sector. In order to assess the viability of the reconciliation between Turkey and Israel one definitely needs to examine the prospects of their cooperation in the natural gas market.

The first thing that we know is that Turkey wants to buy natural gas from Israel’s largest gas field Leviathan, in order to obtain access to cheap natural gas for Southern Turkey. An Israeli-Turkish pipeline would provide Southern Turkey with much cheaper gas, when compared to natural gas from Russia, Azerbaijan, Iraq and Iran, and it would also avoid Kurdistan.

Map 1 Turkey – Natural Gas



The other thing that we know is that in August 2015 the largest natural gas field of the East Mediterranean Sea was discovered in Egypt i.e. the Zohr field, and therefore the plan of Israel and Russia of jointly exporting natural gas to Egypt was no longer viable in the long run. Turkey was the only other country of the East Mediterranean Sea that could absorb large quantities of natural gas. Lebanon, Cyprus and Greece consume very small quantities of natural gas.

A long time ago Turkey proposed Israel to buy natural gas from Leviathan, in a “strictly business” agreement, without the two countries becoming friends again. Israel had natural gas to sell, Turkey wanted to buy natural gas for Southern Turkey, and that’s what it takes for a deal.

Israel would have accepted, but there was a problem. The problem was that Israel would then go to a war with Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon, and

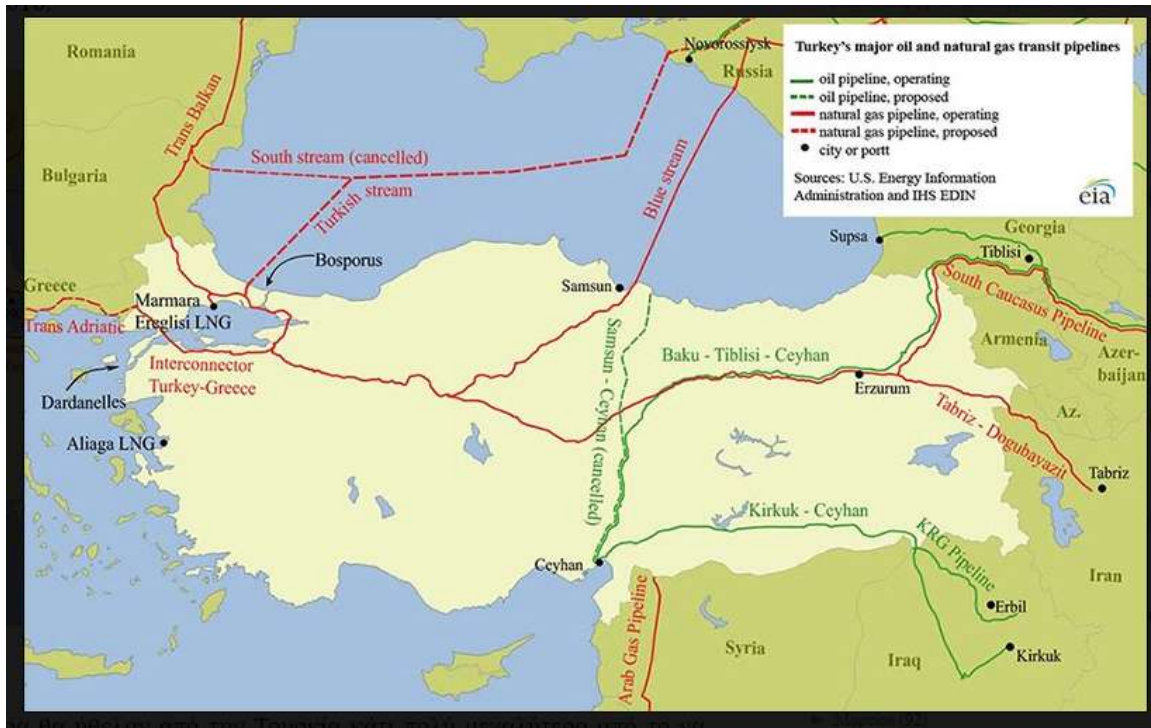
Hezbollah would not only be supported by Iran, but also from Russia. That's why Israel was not willing to enter this kind of agreement with Turkey.

But recently Russia changed her stance about a Turkish-Israel reconciliation. See Haaretz "In Change of Direction, Russia Welcomes Israel-Turkey Reconciliation Talks", June 2016.

The explanation is that either Turkey accepted to buy natural gas from Israel even if Gazprom had a stake in Leviathan, or Turkey and Russia had reached an agreement about the new Russian-Turkish natural gas pipeline i.e. the Turk Stream, and in return Russia allowed Israel to sell natural gas to Turkey.

Note that the Turk Stream does not have to be the large Turk Stream with the 4 legs and the 63 billion cubic meters of gas per year. It can be a smaller Turk Stream with 2 legs and 30 billion cubic meters, or even a smaller one with 15 billion c.m, like the Blue Stream pipeline.

Map 2



What is important is that for some reason Russia accepted the establishment of Turkish-Israeli diplomatic relations.

The question that arises is whether this reconciliation between Turkey and Israel is viable. According to the Foreign Affairs magazine it is not very viable, and it is very likely that problems between Turkey and Israel will appear soon. See Foreign Affairs “Terrorism and Turkey's Deal with Israel”, June 2016.

According to Foreign Affairs, when there will be a new war in Gaza, and sooner or later there will be one, Erdogan will have to recall his ambassador from Israel. The article also mentions the pressure the Egyptian socialists put on Israel in order to adopt a tougher stance for Turkey in Gaza.

What the Foreign Affairs is trying to say is that Hamas in Gaza is also supported financially by Qatar and militarily by Iran, and if Iran, or Qatar, causes a new war with Israel, Erdogan will be in a very difficult position, since he wants to be the leader of the Muslim World. Therefore he will have to recall his ambassador from Israel, and become very aggressive towards Israel, and that will cause a new collapse in the relations between the two countries.

What the Foreign Affairs say really makes sense. But remember that if in the meantime an agreement is signed between Turkey, Israel and Russia for Leviathan, the Israeli gas will flow to Turkey, even if Turkey and Israel become enemies again. This is a mutually beneficial agreement, and the problem for closing the deal was not that Turkey and Israel were enemies, but that Russia would not allow it. Now that Russia allows the deal to go ahead, for whatever reasons, Turkey and Israel can close the deal, even if there is a very high chance of the two countries becoming enemies again.

Remember that what Erdgoan really wants is to form a Muslim oil and natural gas cartel, which will be sponsored and protected by Turkey. That's why Erdogan wants Shias and Sunnis to be united, and the same for the Arabs, the Persians and the Turks. If Qatar and Iran reach an agreement they can send their gas to Turkey, and Turkey can send it to Europe. Erdogan wants to be the leader of the Muslim World against the "crusaders", something that hurts Turkey's relations with the West, but it increases Erdogan's prestige in the Muslim World. See "Pan-Arabism VS Pan-Islamism".

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/05/21/pan-arabism-vs-pan-islamism/>

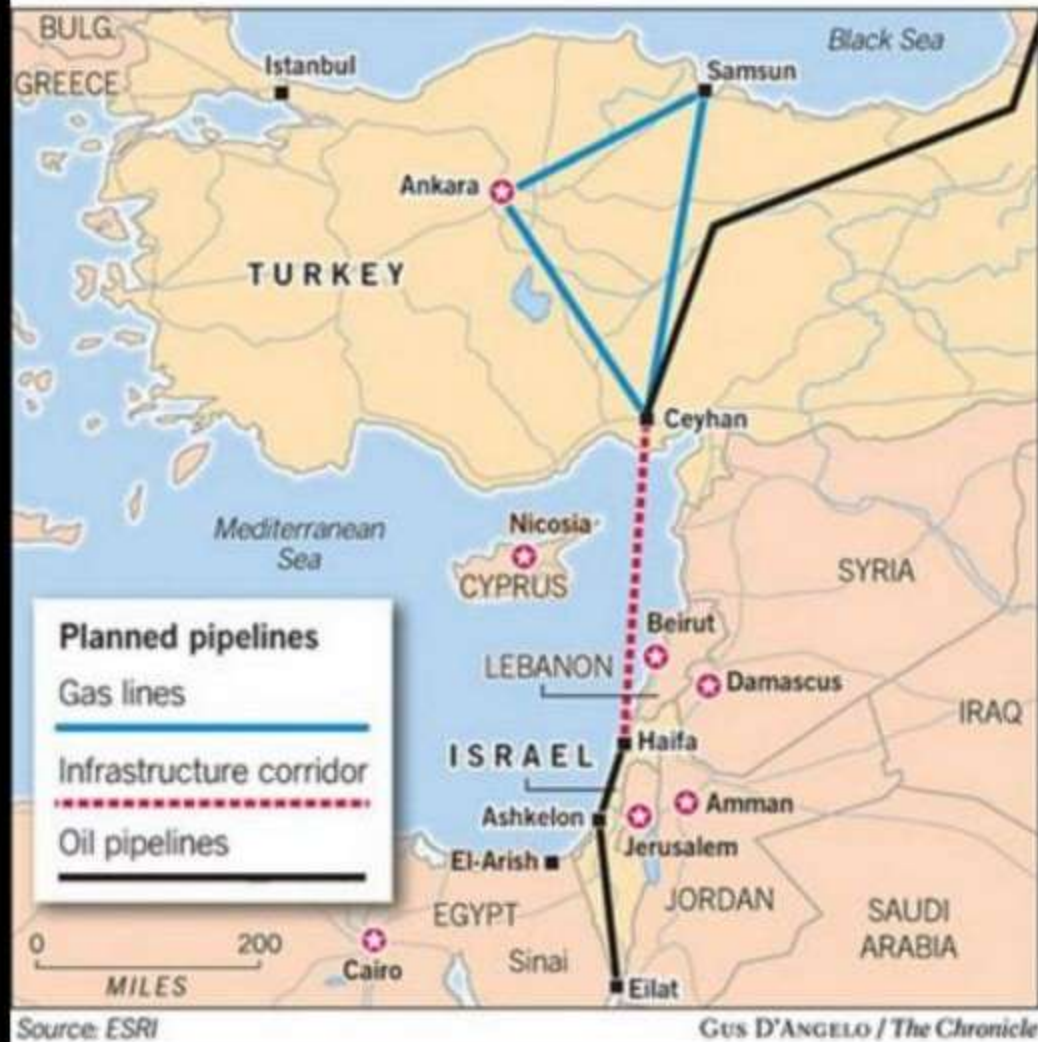
Therefore the Foreign Affairs article definitely has a point. Remember that the Iranians are Shia Muslims, and Shia Muslims are only 10-20% of the global Muslim population, while Sunni Muslims are 80-90%. Therefore the war on Israel has traditionally been the ace in Iran's sleeve, when trying to gain influence in the Muslim world against Saudi Arabia, which was an American ally, and Turkey, when the Turkish Kemalists were Israel's allies. If Erdogan wants to be the leader of the Muslim World it cannot afford to be a friend of Israel while Iran supports a holy war against the Jews. He will have to follow Iran's aggression on Israel. And that's what the Foreign Affairs article really means.

And I agree 100% with the Foreign Affairs, except for one thing. There is the issue of the Russia-Turkey-Israel pipeline that was discussed in 2006, and which was abandoned when the Leviathan gas field was discovered in 2010, and the relations between Turkey and Israel collapsed.

Map Russia-Turkey-Israel Pipeline

Projected Mideast pipelines

Israel and Turkey are teaming up to construct four parallel pipelines beneath the Mediterranean Sea capable of carrying crude oil, natural gas, electricity and water more than 500 miles into the heart of the Mideast.



If such a pipeline is constructed, then Turkey and Israel can send Russian natural gas to Asia, becoming natural gas hubs, through the Ashkelon-Eilat pipeline in Israel, and an LNG terminal in the Israeli Eilat port in the Red Sea.

Map



Remember that India wants to import 30 billion of Russian natural gas per year. See “India may import Russian gas via Iran swap or TAPI pipeline”, December 2015.

India is a traditional Russian ally, but Russia is upset due to the warming in the American-Indian relations. India and the US are forming an alliance against China. India wants to import natural gas avoiding Pakistan, her main enemy, and Iran is discussing the possibility of sending gas to India through Oman, and an underwater natural gas pipeline which will bypass Pakistan.

An alternative would be for India to import gas from the East Mediterranean Sea. Israel and Egypt jointly have 3 trillion cubic meters of gas reserves, nothing when compared to the 48 trillion of Russian gas, or the 33 trillion of Iranian gas, or even compared to the 25 trillion of Qatari gas. But if the Russian gas was to reach East Mediterranean Sea, through Turkey, and then

the Red Sea through Israel, it could be liquified at Eilat port and sent to India, or other countries of Asia.

Russia could send her gas to India through the TAPI pipeline (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India), if it could pass from the turbulent Afghanistan and the Taliban terrorists. But then again Pakistan would be involved and India would not be happy.

Or Russia could send her gas to India through Azerbaijan and Iran, but Azerbaijan and Iran are Russia's rivals in the gas market. On the other hand Turkey and Israel are not Russian rivals in the natural gas markets, because they are very poor in natural gas reserves, at least when compared to Russia.

Also remember that Israel and India are allies against Pakistan. Turkey's relations with India are problematic, due to Turkey's traditional support for Pakistan, but from 2013 the Turkish-Indian relations were improved, when India promised Turkey to construct oil refineries in Turkey, and jointly exploit the gas and oil fields of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan in the Caspian Sea. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are Turkic countries and have very good relations with Turkey, even though they are also influenced by Russia, since they were members of the Soviet Union. See "India's Turkish opportunity", November 2015.

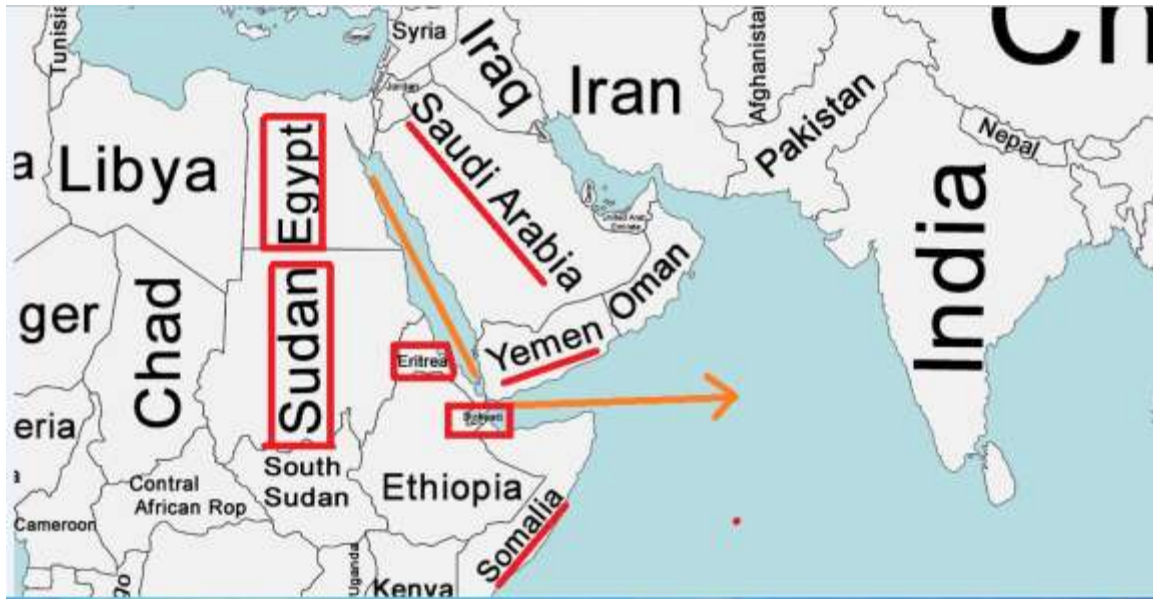
See also "India and Turkey: Friends Again?", July 2013.

Also remember that Egypt has very good relations with Russia. Moreover Saudi Arabia is not very interested in natural gas, because she is not as rich

as Iran, Russia and Qatar in natural gas. Saudi Arabia domestically consumes the natural gas she produces. Saudi Arabia is interested about her oil exports, but Russia mainly exports oil to Europe, while Saudi Arabia mainly exports oil to Asia. For Saudi Arabia it is a lot more important that Turkey does not support the Muslim Brotherhood in Saudi Arabia, together with Qatar and Iran, or that Russia does not support Iran against Saudi Arabia. Remember that Russia and Saudi Arabia have agreed that Russia will construct in Saudi Arabia factories for the production of nuclear energy. I mean that Saudi Arabia would not be very disturbed if Russia, Turkey and Israel were to send natural gas to Asia. Iran and Qatar would be very upset.

Moreover the Red Sea seems quite safe for such a project, at least if Saudi Arabia was to allow it. Israel and Egypt would be involved in the project. Sudan, after being the strongest Iranian ally in Africa for decades, in 2015 change sides and allied with Saudi Arabia. Moreover Saudi Arabia will open a military base in Djibouti, and Eritrea is also a Saudi ally. Ethiopia has very good relations with Israel, and anyway Ethiopia does not have access to the Red Sea.

Map The Red Sea



There is of course the war in Yemen, where Iran is supporting the Shia Houthi rebels, and there is also the issue of Al Shabbab, the terrorist organization of Somali. Al Shabaab controls a large part of Somalia, and has been traditionally armed by Iran. See “Al Shabaab : The Strongest Terrorist Organization of East Africa”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/02/20/al-shabaab-the-strongest-terrorist-organization-of-east-africa-and-its-funding/>

But remember than Turkey is preparing in Somalia her first military base in Africa. See the Daily Sabah “First Turkish military base in Africa to open in Somalia”, January 2016.

What I am saying is that I agree that there are many problems in the Turkish-Israeli rapprochement, and even though a cooperation of the two countries in Leviathan will be mutually beneficial it will not guarantee normalization. If

only Leviathan is involved the relations between the two countries will probably collapse again.

But if Russia, Turkey and Israel do indeed decide to send Russian gas to Asia, then they will hurt vital Iranian and Qatari interests, and Turkey and Israel will have to cooperate a lot more closely against Iran, because Iran will start supporting terrorist attacks against both countries. This is more important for Turkey, because Iran is already doing it to Israel.

Map Turkey-Iran-Qatar



Therefore even though I find the Foreign Articles very to the point, I would like to wait and see what kind of deals will be reached by Russia, Turkey and Israel. Is it going to be just Leviathan and Turk Stream, or Asia will also be involved? I think it makes a difference.

Map



Articles

“Turkey Moves To Restore Relations With Russia And Israel On The Same Day”, June 2016

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/turkey-russia-israel-relations_us_57716029e4b017b379f6b5cd?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=World+Post+062716&utm_content=World+Post+062716+CID_ba287544e704ce98dc38115b8ef7eacf&utm_source=Email+marketing+software

“In Change of Direction, Russia Welcomes Israel-Turkey Reconciliation Talks”, June 2016

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.723675>

“Terrorism and Turkey's Deal with Israel”, June 2016

On Tuesday, three machine gun-wielding suicide bombers attacked Istanbul's Atatürk Airport, killing 41 and injuring hundreds. News of the attack quickly overshadowed the week's other major development in the country: a deal to normalize relations between Turkey and Israel after a six-year falling out. Although the two events might seem unrelated, they are connected in that one of the major factors driving reconciliation was cooperation on intelligence and counter-terrorism. Whether the deal will survive long enough for such benefits to be realized is a question that only becomes more urgent after the horrific terrorist attack.

Israel and Turkey's announcement that they had agreed on the terms of their reconciliation came after years of false starts. Under the deal, Israel will pay Turkey \$20 million in compensation for the nine Turkish citizens killed during the raid on the Mavi Marmara flotilla in 2010, allow Turkey to send humanitarian supplies to Gaza via the Israeli port city of Ashdod, and permit Turkey to support building projects in Gaza, including a hospital, power plant, and desalination plant. In return, Turkey has promised to end the lawsuits still pending in its courts against four high-ranking Israeli military officials involved in the flotilla raid, stop Hamas from launching or financing terrorist operations against Israel from Turkish territory, and intercede with Hamas on Israel's behalf to secure the return to Israel of two Israeli civilians and the bodies of two Israeli soldiers being held in Gaza. Both sides have also agreed to return their ambassadors to the other country and to drop any remaining sanctions against each other.

On paper, this all sounds great, and there is no question that reconciliation can theoretically help both sides. The drivers of past aborted attempts at normalization, namely potential energy cooperation and coordination on Syria and counter-terrorism, are still at work, and there are benefits for both sides to be realized. Nonetheless, the celebrations in Jerusalem and Ankara are more likely than not to be short-lived for two reasons: the parameters of the deal may be more difficult to abide by than appears at first glance, and the entire structure could well fall apart at the first sign of the inevitable next round of fighting in Gaza.

Because Israel formally apologized to Turkey in March 2013 and only now has to now transfer the money for compensation, its side of the bargain is unlikely to face many hurdles, particularly after Israel's security cabinet on Wednesday voted seven to three in

favor of the deal. Israel had already offered to facilitate the passage of Turkish humanitarian supplies to Gaza through Ashdod subject to Israeli inspection, and so, although snags may occur, Israel's commitments under the agreement are relatively straightforward.

Turkey's commitments to Israel, however, are bound to run up against the limits of Turkish domestic politics and Turkey's regional influence. For example, Ankara has repeatedly requested that its courts drop the lawsuits against Israeli officers. The courts have refused because the families of those aboard the Mavi Marmara and the IHH—the group that organized the flotilla and that has been accused of having ties to al Qaeda—have refused to drop them. The Turkish government has no standing in the case. To get around that problem, Turkey intends to simply pass legislation invalidating any current lawsuits against IDF officers and soldiers stemming from the flotilla. Although this is a creative solution, it is bound to be enormously controversial in Turkey, where the victims' families and the IHH both have massive public support. In fact, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is already taking fire over the accord in Turkey, where #IsrailinDostuErdogan (Erdogan, friend of Israel) has been trending on Twitter, and not in a complimentary way. Although Erdogan tends to get what he wants, the public outcry may make passage of the legislation in the Grand National Assembly less automatic than other presidential priorities.

Even thornier will be fulfilling the parts of the deal pertaining to Hamas. Turkey held the line on expelling Hamas from Turkey altogether (something Israel wanted). The negotiators instead promised to rein in Hamas' activity, but how its efforts will be monitored or enforced is anyone's guess. Should there be terrorist attacks in Israel that Jerusalem suspects were planned and executed from Istanbul, Turkey will be hard pressed to definitively prove that Israel is mistaken. Further, with Erdogan having cultivated a close relationship with Hamas chief Khaled Meshaal for the better part of a decade, it is doubtful that the Turkish president will be more inclined to be harsh with Hamas than to maintain plausible deniability in the face of any evidence about Hamas attacks emanating from Turkish territory. Finally, Turkey's pledge to pressure Hamas into returning the Israeli civilians and bodies of the soldiers is based on a calculation that Hamas' political wing, with which Turkey has influence, is the ultimate arbiter of

this issue, rather than its military wing, which tends to operate according to its own whims. That seems like a risky bet.

Even if Turkey is able to fulfill its promises regarding Hamas activity, the deal still has a fatal flaw: it depends on continued quiet in Gaza, which is a long shot. The two years of quiet since Operation Protective Edge enabled this deal, but conditions in Gaza have not improved since the last round of fighting, and, in recent times, fighting has broken out every two years. That neither side is eager to rejoin the battle may not matter; the last Gaza war, which lasted 50 days in the summer of 2014, was one that neither Israel nor Hamas appeared to want but were unable to stop.

Although no one can predict with certainty when another war in Gaza will break out, another round of fighting seems inevitable, and with it will come the end of the current Israeli-Turkish detente. The Turkish public still has low opinions of Israel, and Erdogan will be forced to recall his ambassador at the first sign of Palestinian civilian casualties, not to mention what will happen if any nascent Turkish building projects are struck by Israeli fire. Israel, meanwhile, would be hard pressed to retain normal relations with Turkey once Erdogan began his instinctual verbal broadsides against Israel, which in the past have included comparing Israel to Hitler and calling Zionism a crime against humanity. Turkish-Israeli rapprochement, in short, is resting on a house of cards that will be easily blown over at the first sign of Israeli-Palestinian trouble.

And even before fighting breaks out, Egypt will put pressure on Israel to back away from closer relations with Turkey given the current tensions between Cairo and Ankara. If there is one regional ally that Israel will go out of its way not to antagonize, it is Egypt. That Turkey will now be launching construction projects in Gaza is bound to cause even more friction between Erdogan and the Abdel Fattah el-Sisi government, which wants to limit Turkish influence in Gaza and also wants to avoid opening any escape hatch for Hamas. Egypt will no doubt make its displeasure known to Israel. Although such an eventuality did not prevent the deal from being finalized, Egypt's ability to play spoiler should not be discounted.

Normalization of ties between Israel and Turkey is a good thing, but expectations should be kept in check. It is unlikely that the rapprochement will play out the way both sides intend, and it may not be too long before we are once again talking about how to

get Israel and Turkey back together. The Istanbul terrorist attack only reinforces that renewed ties between the two is more important than ever, and it will be up to both governments to keep this in mind each time events inevitably transpire that subject closer relations to a renewed rupture.

https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2016-06-29/terrorism-and-turkeys-deal-israel?cid=nlc-fatoday-20160630&sp_mid=51728956&sp_rid=aWFrb3ZvczEwMDBAeWFob28uZ3IS1&spMailingID=51728956&spUserID=MTA3MTc0NjI3NDAxS0&spJobID=944339509&spReportId=OTQ0MzM5NTA5S0

“Turkey, Israel to build Mediterranean pipeline / 4 legs would carry crude oil, electricity, natural gas and water”, April 2006

<http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Turkey-Israel-to-build-Mediterranean-pipeline-2498862.php>

“India may import Russian gas via Iran swap or TAPI pipeline”, December 2015

1st, 2nd Paragraphs

India has proposed to import up to 30 billion cubic meters of gas a year from Russia either via swap with Iran or through the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline, Russian Deputy Energy Minister Yury Sentyurin told Interfax.

He said the proposals were made last month at a meeting of a working group that is studying the feasibility of a Russia-India hydrocarbon pipeline system.

http://rbth.com/news/2015/12/04/india-may-import-russian-gas-via-iran-swap-or-tapi-pipeline_547593

“Russia and the TAPI Pipeline”, December 2015

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Paragraphs

On December 13, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India broke ground on the constructions of a new natural gas pipeline that will carry Turkmenistani gas eastward toward the other three partner countries (Tribuneindia.com, Tribune.com.pk, December 13; Timesca.com, December 14). The Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India (TAPI) pipeline project, in one form or another, has been on the books for twenty years, going back to an abortive effort by the Union Oil Company of California (Unocal) and the Taliban in 1995 to formulate it. Given its location and ability to alleviate many critical economic and energy problems in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, the TAPI pipeline has been the subject of enormous geopolitical rivalry and maneuvering throughout this period (see EDM, [December 14, 2010](#); [February 16, 2011](#)).

Inasmuch as this pipeline has received steady political support from the United State because it would enable Turkmenistan to find another alternative to dependence on Russia for exporting its gas, Russia has been very skeptical about the project (“[Central Asia, Afghanistan and the New Silk Road Conference Report](#),” The Jamestown Foundation, November 14, 2011). Yet, in mid-2010, Moscow cautiously came around to ostensibly support as well as promise to cooperate with the founding members on the TAPI project (Central Asia Newswire, October 25). But even then its offer was insufficient. Although Moscow apparently put forward four different possible frameworks for its participation, Ashgabat refused them all (Eurodialogue.eu, November 17, 2010). As a result, Russia is now promoting various alternatives to the TAPI pipeline. These new proposals are clearly aligned with recent developments in Russian foreign policy, specifically efforts to retain India’s friendship and support while increasingly reaching out to Pakistan. In particular, Moscow is offering the two traditional main weapons of its foreign policy—i.e., energy and arms sales.

Consequently, in September 2015, Russia proposed building a South–North natural gas pipeline in Pakistan. This Russian pipeline would extend almost 1,100 kilometers, from the port of Karachi northward to Lahore, and carry Iranian gas shipped to Pakistan across the Arabian Sea via liquefied natural gas (LNG) tankers. The entire scheme would reportedly be based on swaps between Iran and Russia for the original gas (Peq.com.pk, December 2; Russia-insider.com, September 9). As such, however, this project directly contradicts the entire logic of the TAPI pipeline as well as the US strategic objective of

blocking both Iran and Russia from dominating energy flows to South Asia. At the same time, Moscow is discussing with New Delhi the possibility of exporting 30 billion cubic meters (bcm) a year of gas to India through Iran by means of a swap or, alternatively, by transporting it via the TAPI pipeline (Russia Beyond the Headlines, December 4).

Thus, characteristically, Moscow is attempting to have its cake and eat it at the same time by entertaining simultaneous proposals to send gas through the TAPI pipeline or to circumvent it and thus minimize its potential. Undoubtedly, Moscow realizes that while the pipeline is now formally under construction, completion and operation are by no means certain since there are major questions connected with securing enough financing for it. And ensuring a stable and secure environment in Afghanistan also remains an issue of concern. Therefore, from Moscow's standpoint, it is equally if not more useful to have an alternative ready to offer that would increase Russia's influence in Pakistan as well as maintain its position in India. Especially in view of the urgent energy needs of both India and Pakistan and Moscow's abiding desire to retain as much leverage as possible over Turkmenistan's gas, this policy makes excellent sense for Russia, even if it directly contradicts both Turkmenistani and US interests and policies.

http://www.jamestown.org/regions/southasia/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=44919&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=679&cHash=0bef6dc5fba4bda0f67120bdac93f7ad#.V3ARuvmLRdg

“India and Turkey: Friends Again?”, July 2013

1st, 2nd Paragraphs

A crucial diplomatic engagement will take place this weekend when Salman Khurshid becomes the first Indian External Affairs Minister to visit Turkey in a decade. The three-day trip will be followed by the first visit by an Indian President in 15 years, when Pranab Mukherjee sets foot in Turkey this October.

Bilateral ties between the two countries remained tense over much of this period due to Turkey's close support for Pakistan's stand on Kashmir at international forums. However, the emergence of both countries as regional powers has resulted in a shared interest in their respective capitals to ensure peace and stability in the Middle East and South Asia.

7th Paragraph

However, Turkey's long-standing partnership with Pakistan could hold back ties. Ankara reportedly put up hurdles to India's membership in the Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG), a 46-member international cartel that regulates global nuclear trade over "non-proliferation" concerns. Following an agreement with the U.S. in 2008, the NSG granted India – a non-signatory of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty – a unique exemption to engage in civilian nuclear trading without having to give up its nuclear arsenal.

<http://thediplomat.com/2013/07/india-and-turkey-friends-again/>

“India's Turkish opportunity”, November 2015

1st Paragraph

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Turkey for the G-20 summit in November could have injected a degree of momentum to otherwise largely stagnant relations. Even though India has emerged as Turkey's second largest trading partner, bilateral relations seems to be marked by sporadic political engagement. Indo-Turkish relations have been largely informed by Ankara's long-standing partnership with Islamabad, often translated into support to Pakistan over the Kashmir dispute. A definitive test of Modi's diplomatic outreach to Turkey would be his ability to leverage the geo-economic partnership to moderate Islamabad's influence in Ankara.

4η Παράγραφος

The Turkish construction sector is one of the most coveted globally and can play a pivotal role in the development of Indian infrastructure. Turkish Ambassador to India Burak Akçapar has conveyed Ankara's keenness to participate in Modi's "Make in India" initiative, particularly in the civil aviation sector. Turkey's strategic location offers India a platform to boost its economic presence in Central Asia and the two countries inked a Memorandum of understanding in 2005 for oil and gas exploration cooperation in the Caspian basin, among other regions. Projects to build Indian oil refineries in Turkey have also been in the pipeline since 2006 but have not come to fruition yet.

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/indias-turkish-opportunity-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=91672&NewsCatID=396>

“First Turkish military base in Africa to open in Somalia”, January 2016

<http://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2016/01/19/first-turkish-military-base-in-africa-to-open-in-somalia>

“Observers See Several Motives for Eritrean Involvement in Yemen”, January 2016

1st, 2nd Paragraph

The conflict between Saudi Arabia and Houthi rebels in Yemen is drawing in participants from across the Red Sea.

Eritrea last month officially announced its "readiness to support the initiative without reservations and to extend its contribution to the alliance" of Saudi Arabia and its Gulf state allies. The typically tight-lipped Eritrean government, however, has not publicly elaborated on its military involvement in the Gulf.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/observers-see-several-motives-eritrean-involvement-yemen/3138689.html>

“Saudi Arabia ‘to open military base in Djibouti”, March 2016

1st, 2nd Paragraphs

Manama: Djibouti is looking forward to signing an accord with Saudi Arabia to set up a Saudi base in the Eastern African country, its ambassador in Riyadh said.

Dhia-Eddin Bamakhrama said that he expected the signing to take place soon, adding that relations between the two countries have been steadily improving and that their security, military, economic and political cooperation have now reached unprecedented levels.

<http://gulffnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/saudi-arabia-to-open-military-base-in-djibouti-1.1686291>

Drug Trafficking and Terrorism in Latin America

A few weeks ago I uploaded a great article from Gatestone Institute, about the presence of the Shiite terrorist organization of Hezbollah in Venezuela, in order to do business with the drug cartels of Mexico. The article was written by Clare Lopez, an ex-CIA employee. See “The Hezbollah-Al Qaeda Axis”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/05/22/the-hezbollah-al-qaeda-axis/>



http://www.classzone.com/cz/ot/political_maps/images/u3_Latin-America-Map.gif

This time I want to upload another great article about the connection between terrorism and drug trafficking from Gatestone Institute. See “Iran Trains Terrorists in Venezuela”, May 2011.

The article is written in 2011, before the improvement in the US-Iran and the US-Cuban relations, but it is a great article about the way terrorism and drug trafficking interact. The article writes about the very strong alliance between the Islamic socialists of Iran and the Communists of Venezuela and Cuba.

Iran, together with Venezuela, Cuba and Bolivia, have been supporting FARC, the communist terrorist and drug-trafficking organization of Colombia. The Communist narcoterrorists of FARC control the Colombian drug trade, and attack the American friendly government of Colombia. The Communists of FARC are mainly operating in south-eastern Colombia, in the jungles of the Amazon river, and in the north-western Colombia, at the mountain chain of the Andes (see following map).

Map 2 Latin America – The Jungles of Amazon and the Andes



<http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-hVCnqLsuh7M/T8WqOzzSBGI/AAAAAAAAAC0/k9JZQkKOWE0/s1600/map.SAgeographical.png>

Map 3



http://www.tiwy.com/pais/map_la.gif

The Communist narcoterrorists of FARC are controlling Colombia's drug trafficking in the same way the Islamist narcoterrorists of Taliban are controlling the drug trafficking of Afghanistan. I think the main product of FARC is cocaine, while the main product of the Taliban is opium (heroin), but that's of little importance. The Communist narcoterrorists of FARC are

supported by the Islamosocialists of Iran, and the Communists of Venezuela, Cuba and Bolivia, while the Islamic narcoterrorists of Taliban are supported mainly by Pakistan and the Arabs of the Persian Gulf. Iran and the Taliban were bitter enemies, but now Iran has improved its relations with the Taliban, even though Pakistan is the main influence over the Taliban.

Also note that FARC is the 3rd richest terrorist organization in the world, with ISIS and Hamas being the richest and second richest ones. The Taliban are the 5th richest terrorist organization in the world. See “The 10 Richest Terrorist Organizations”

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/02/20/the-10-richest-terrorist-organizations/>

I must also say that all the above countries, i.e. Iran, the Arabs of the Gulf, Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba etc, passionately supported the Jewish Communist Bernie Sanders, in order to undermine the United States. Bernie Sanders had promised them to forbid production of oil and natural gas from shale rock in United States in case he was elected. See “American Politics in the Age of Oil”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/02/21/american-politics-in-the-age-of-oil-the-bernie-sanders-phenomenon/>

Iran and the Arabs, together with the Communists of Latin America, have been also financing Communists in Europe. Remember that the Spanish Communists party of Podemos was caught taking money from Venezuela and Iran, in order to undermine Spain. Russia is normally financing national socialists in Europe, for example Marine Le Pen in France.

Articles

“The FARC and Colombia’s Illegal Drug Trade”, November 2014

37th Paragraph

Another estimate released in 2012 by the Colombian Attorney General’s Office put the FARC’s annual income—including drugs and all other illicit activities—at \$1.1 billion.⁴⁶ General José Roberto León, who was then director of Colombia’s national police force, told Reuters in 2013 that the FARC controls about 60 percent of the nation’s drug trade and earns about \$1 billion per year from the industry.

https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Otis_FARCDrugTrade2014.pdf

“Iran Trains Terrorists in Venezuela”, May 2011

3rd, 4th, 5th Paragraphs

Tehran is already preparing for this scenario with the help of Latin American countries such as Venezuela. Al-Seyassah has published reports about Iranian training camps on the border between Venezuela and Colombia, where Shiites from the Arab world are taught to make bombs, carry out assassinations, kidnap people and transport hostages to other locations. These training camps are run by Iranian Revolutionary Guards in cooperation with Hezbollah and Hamas.

The newspaper reports that the Shiite trainees fly to Caracas via Damascus, probably on the Venezuelan airline Conviasa, which covers the Caracas-Damascus-Tehran route. The weekly Conviasa's flights to Tehran are a cause for concern in Washington, due to the lack of transparency about what or whom they might be transporting.. The Kuwaiti paper mentions as well the trainees' presence in Colombia. The Iranian government allegedly enjoys in Latin America the support of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of the Colombian group, the FARC, which derives its primary source of income from drug trafficking. It is not a coincidence, therefore, that Al-Seyassah mentions that Iran finances its militias through narco-trafficking.

Iran's support in Latin America should worry the US. The Iranian regime is expanding its ties and its influence in the US's backyard, and helping groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas finding new safe havens for their terrorist activities. Recently, Uruguay also showed strong interest in strengthening relations with Teheran. The Uruguayan Foreign Minister even went so far as to hail Iran's role in the promotion of human rights in the world.

<http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/2094/iran-trains-terrorists-venezuela>

“The 10 Richest Terrorist Organizations”

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/02/20/the-10-richest-terrorist-organizations/>

“Cuba’s Support for Terrorism and the Venezuela-Iran Nexus”, May 2014

1st, 2nd Paragraphs

Iran, Cuba and Venezuela have developed a close and cooperative relationship against the U.S. and in support of terrorist groups and states. The three regimes increasingly coordinate their policies and resources in a three way partnership aimed at counteracting and circumventing U.S. policies in the Middle East and Latin America. Within this relationship, Cuba plays a strategic role in terms of geography (proximity to the U.S.), intelligence gathering (both electronic eavesdropping and human espionage) and logistics.

In addition to its proven technical prowess to interfere and intercept U.S. telecommunications, Cuba has deployed around the world a highly effective human intelligence network. The type of espionage carried out by Ana Belén Montes, the senior U.S. defense intelligence analyst who spied for Cuba during some 16 years until her arrest in 2001, has enabled the Castro regime to amass a wealth of intelligence on U.S. vulnerabilities as well as a keen understanding of the inner-workings of the U.S. security system. Such information and analysis was provided to Saddam Hussein prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq and is being provided to a strategic ally like Iran.

7th Paragraph

Current and former members of Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA), a Basque terrorist organization continue to reside in Cuba. While some of these terrorists are on the island as part of an accord between the Cuban and Spanish governments, others are hiding in Cuba, fugitives of Spanish justice.

12th, 13th Paragraphs

On January 24, 2014 the Castro government decreed that it would now begin to freeze bank assets affiliated to Al-Qaeda in Cuba. The Castro regime tacitly admitted that they had been facilitating financing of terrorism.

“Hezbollah in Cuba,” the Hamas-funded Turkish “charity” known as IHH continues to operate in Havana. IHH is a member of the “Union of Good,” an umbrella organization that financially supports Hamas.

<http://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/2014/05/02/cubas-support-for-terrorism-and-the-venezuela-iran-nexus/>

“Hezbollah ‘Moving Freely’ in U.S. with Cuban-Made Venezuelan Passports”, February 2016

1st Paragraph

Members of Iran’s terror proxy Hezbollah “are moving freely” within the United States and Latin America, courtesy of Venezuelan passports issued by a Cuban company hired by Caracas, reports the UK-based Asharq Al-Awsat.

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2016/02/01/report-hezbollah-moving-freely-in-us-using-venezuelan-passports-issued-by-cuban-companies/>

“The Iran-Cuba-Venezuela Nexus”, November 2014

1st Paragraph

Regular readers of this column will remember that in July the U.S. asked local officials here to arrest Venezuelan Gen. Hugo Carvajal and to extradite him on suspicion of drug

trafficking with Colombian guerrillas. He was detained but the Netherlands stepped in, refused the extradition request and let him go.

7th, 8th Paragraphs

In Venezuela and Bolivia, Iran has moved to the next level, developing a military presence through joint ventures in defense industries. In Venezuela, the state of Aragua, where Mr. El Aissami is now governor, is ground zero for this activity.

Havana applauds this Islamic intervention. Since the rise of chavismo, Cuba has supplied intelligence services to Venezuela and its regional allies, notably Nicaragua, Bolivia and Ecuador. Mr. Humire says it has also supplied passport-information technology to allow these countries to process individuals from the Middle East, hand out new documents and maintain the secrecy of true identities. Cuba has used this capacity to exchange information with like-minded nations, including Russia and Iran.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/mary-anastasia-ogrady-the-iran-cuba-venezuela-nexus-1416780671>

“Venezuela Helped Argentina Protect Iranian Terrorists with Fake Passports”, March 2015

3rd Paragraph

The Veja report, translated from Portuguese to Spanish by Argentine news outlet Infobae, cites several officials described as “ex-members of Hugo Chávez’s cabinet” who now live in exile in Washington, D.C., after defecting from the current regime of President Nicolás Maduro. Those interviewed claim that “Argentine government representatives received large quantities of money from Iran,” and that Iran explicitly requested Argentina’s help in protecting Hezbollah terrorists responsible for the 1994 bombing of the Argentine Israel Mutual Association (AMIA), an attack that left 85 dead and dozens wounded.

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2015/03/16/report-venezuela-helped-argentina-protect-iranian-terrorists-with-fake-passports/>

“Obama lands in Cuba as first US president to visit in nearly a century”,
March 2016

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/20/barack-obama-cuba-visit-us-politics-shift-public-opinion-diplomacy>

“Iranian-Sponsored Narco-Terrorism in Venezuela: How Will Maduro Respond”, April 2013

14th, 15th, 16th, 17th Paragraphs

Farah produced a research paper for the U.S. Army War College in August 2012 about the "growing alliance" between state-sponsored Iranian agents and other anti-American groups in Latin America, including the governments of Venezuela and Cuba.

This alliance with Iran uses established drug trade routes from countries in South and Central America to penetrate North American borders, all under a banner of mutual malevolence toward the U.S.

The results of this access are largely secret, though security experts who spoke with U.S. News believe the attempted assassination of the Saudi Arabian ambassador in Washington, D.C.'s Georgetown neighborhood was carried out by Iranian intelligence operatives.

"Each of the Bolivarian states has lifted visa requirements for Iranian citizens, thereby erasing any public record of the Iranian citizens that come and go to these countries," wrote Farah of countries such as Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia and Panama.

<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2013/04/24/iranian-sponsored-narco-terrorism-in-venezuela-how-will-maduro-respond>

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

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

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 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>

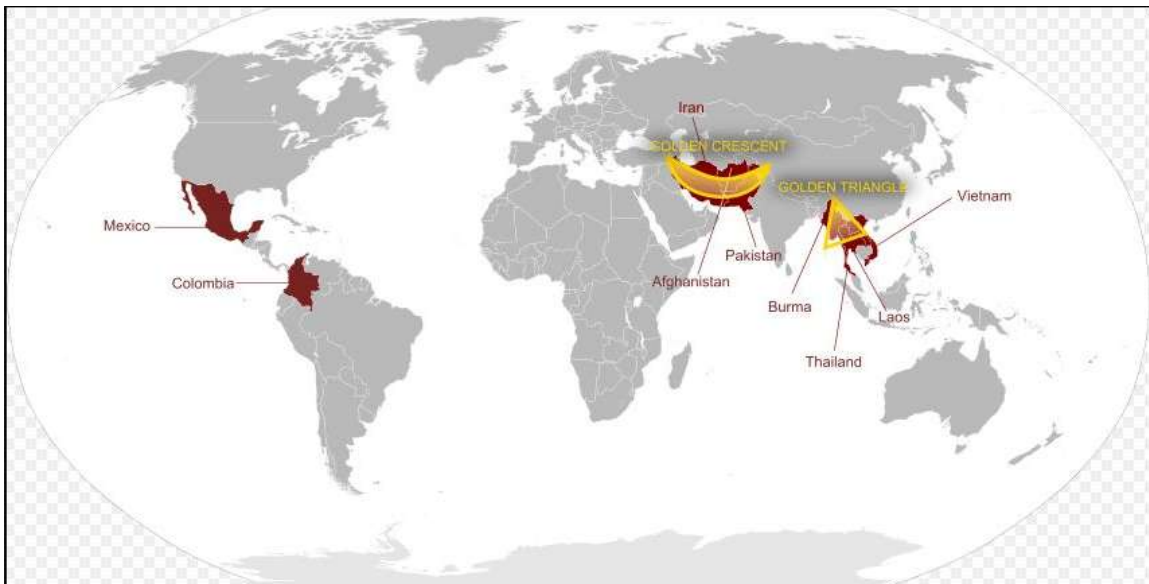
“The Hezbollah-Al Qaeda Axis”

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/05/22/the-hezbollah-al-qaeda-axis/>

The World Heroin Production

The Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle are the centers of heroin production. The Golden Crescent is a mountainous area of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the Golden Triangle is a mountainous area of Burma (Myanmar), Thailand and Laos.

Map 1 Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle



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

Between 70% and 90% of the world heroin production takes place in Afghanistan (see Huffington Post). The Islamist terrorists Taliban play a leading role in the heroin trade. The Taliban are providing safety for heroin producers, and they bribe public servants who turn a blind eye, while terrorizing the ones who create problems. The dominant tribe of the Taliban are the Pashtuns, who are also the dominant force of Pakistan. At the

following map you can see which areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan are dominated by the Pashtuns.

Map 2 Pashtuns



<http://www.heritage.org/static/reportimages/0F3F7F2CDF5E88D351EF61EB45193E1B.jpg>

The Taliban are the 5th richest terrorist organization in the world, and their annual revenues are estimated somewhere between 500 million and 2 billion dollars. That's a huge amount for a terrorist group. North Korea, a communist country with 25 million inhabitants, has a GDP, an annual income let's say, of 40 billion dollars. I have to say that not all Pashtuns are Taliban, neither all Taliban are Pashtuns.

As you can read in the Reuters article, even though the Taliban have huge revenues from drug trafficking, drug trafficking is probably not their main source of revenue, since they receive very generous donations from other countries i.e. the Arabs of the Persian Gulf and Pakistan, and they are involved in all kinds of illegal activities. Therefore if their annual revenue is 2 billion dollars, as some analysts suggest, they do not all come from drug trade.

If Afghanistan is the mother of heroin, Colombia is the mother of cocaine. In Colombia most of the drug trafficking is carried out by the communist terrorist organization FARC, which fights the pro-American Colombian government, and it is supported by the communist governments of Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia and Nicaragua, and by the Islamic government of Iran. The Shiite terrorist organization Hezbollah is also very active in the drug trade of Latin America. The FARC communist terrorists mainly operate in the jungles of the Amazon river (south-eastern Columbia) and at the mountains of the Andes (north-western Columbia).

Argentina and Brazil have not recognized FARC as a terrorist organization, which probably means something about their foreign policies of the past. See “Drug Trafficking & Terrorism in Latin America”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/06/14/drug-trafficking-terrorism-in-latin-american-and-asia/>

I must also say that the Taliban, with the help of Pakistan and the Arabs of the Persian Gulf, managed to take control of most of Afghanistan in 1996, and they established the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, which was only recognized by three countries i.e. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The Taliban government was overturned by the Americans in 2001 with the Afghanistan war.

Today things are more complicated, because the Americans and the Indians support the opponents of Taliban in Afghanistan, but the Russians, who supported the Americans against the Taliban in the past, see the Taliban in a more favorable way. The Russians are not happy to see their traditional ally India becoming a friend of the United States, but neither can Russia support India against China, because Russia and China are allies at the moment. That's what happened to another traditional ally of Russia, Vietnam, who had to turn to the Americans for protection against China.

The Russians say that they have to cooperate with the Taliban, in order to prevent the rise of ISIS in Afghanistan. Even though it is true that ISIS has appeared in Afghanistan, it is more reasonable to assume that the changing Russian attitude towards the Taliban has more to do with the improvement in the Russian-Pakistan relations.

At the following map you can see the ethnic groups of Afghanistan. With blue you can see the Pashtuns, with red in the south the Balloch, with yellow in the north the Tajiks.

Map Ethnic Groups of Afghanistan



<http://www.mapsofworld.com/afghanistan/maps/afghanistan-ethnic-map.jpg>

Articles

“Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan”

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

“How the Taliban Gets Its Cash”, November 2015

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joseph-v-micallef/how-the-taliban-gets-its_b_8551536.html

“Who is funding the Afghan Taliban? You don’t want to know”, August 2009

<http://blogs.reuters.com/global/2009/08/13/who-is-funding-the-afghan-taliban-you-dont-want-to-know/>

“Russia Pulls Back From Cooperating With U.S. on Afghanistan”, February 2016

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/21/world/asia/russia-pulls-back-from-cooperating-with-us-on-afghanistan.html>

“Russian ambassador denies Moscow supporting Taliban”, April 2016

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-russia-idUSKCN0XM1PK>

“The 10 Richest Terrorist Organization”

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/02/20/the-10-richest-terrorist-organizations/>

“Golden Crescent”

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

“Golden Triangle”

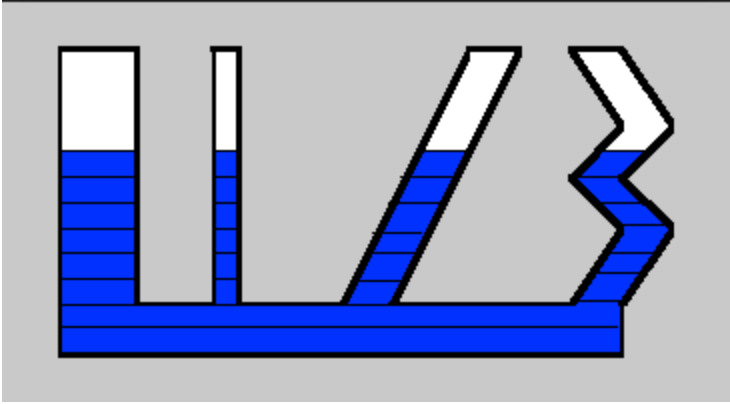
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Triangle_\(Southeast_Asia\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Triangle_(Southeast_Asia))

The Terrorist Groups Lashkar e Taiba and Haqqani Network

Lashkar e Taiba (LeT) is a Pakistani terrorist organization which attacks India, and some Western targets in Pakistan, and it is the 7th richest terrorist organization in the world. Lashkar e Taiba is supported by the Pakistani secret services (ISI). See The Diplomat “Is Pakistan Getting Ready to Abandon Lashkar-e-Taiba?”, March 2016.

According to the Diplomat, Pakistan might have to change its stance towards Lashkar e Taiba, an organization that until now was allowed to move freely in Pakistan. The reason is that China is putting pressure on Pakistan, because Lashkar e Taiba has connections with Al-Qaeda, and Al-Qaeda operates in the Muslim Chinese Province of Xin-Jiang. Xin-Jiang and Tibet are the weak points of China at her western borders.

In other words Pakistan's support to Lashkar e Taiba ends up to Al-Qaeda in Xin-Jiang, obviously without Pakistan wishing for that. It is just the process of communicating vessels.



I must also say that India is supporting the Baloch separatists of Pakistan. And it was India again that organized the Benghalis of East Pakistan, who gained their independence from Pakistan in 1971, when India won the Indian-Pakistani War of 1971.

In the same way that Lashkar e Taiba attacks India, the Haqqani Network, another terrorist organization supported by the Pakistani secret services (ISI) attacks Pakistan's enemies in Afghanistan i.e the Tajiks, the Hazara etc. The Haqqani Network is cooperating with Al-Qaeda too.

On the other hand, Pakistan's enemies in Afghanistan support the terrorist organization Tehreek e Taliban (TTP), which attacks Pakistani targets in Pakistan.

Keep in mind that the Afghan Taliban are allies of Pakistan, while the Pakistani Taliban are enemies of Pakistan, even though both of them are mostly Pashtuns.

Al-Qaeda is a Saudi terrorist group, which in the past has been supported by the Arabs of the Persian Gulf, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Sudan, Hezbollah, and probably other Muslim countries. Al-Qaeda is cooperating with many terrorist organizations, and the Taliban is one of them. See “The Hezbollah-Al Qaeda Axis”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/05/22/the-hezbollah-al-qaeda-axis/>

Al-Qaeda is a sum of Jihadist criminal organizations, which are loosely connected. That’s why there are disputes even for what the group’s ideology should be, even though it is clear that Al-Qaeda wants to establish a Socialist Islamic state in Saudi Arabia, by overthrowing the Saudi King.

However some Al-Qaeda members want the group to be focused on “crusaders” i.e. the Americans and NATO, others want the group to be focused on Muslim “apostates” like the Saudi Kings, and others want to kill both. Osama bin Laden, a Saudi, was equally tough on both the “crusaders” and the Muslim “apostates”.

This relationship obviously has to do with the funding of the different branches of Al-Qaeda. Gangs who are funded by donors who are enemies of the Saudi King but have good relations with the United States want the focus to be on apostates, and vice versa.

Iran, which supported the Al-Qaeda attack at the Twin Towers (9/11), now has significantly improved its relations with the Americans, and obviously it would not want to be associated with Al Qaeda attacks on US targets. But

obviously Iran would be very eager to support Al-Qaeda against Muslim “apostates”, like the Saudi King.

Even the Saudi government, and the Saudi King, are on one hand fighting Al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia, but on the other hand they support the group abroad, or at least some branches of the group, when they have common enemies. For example in Syria both the Saudi King and Al-Qaeda fight Iran.

Remember that in 2010, Hillary Clinton, as a Secretary of State (Minister of Foreign Affairs), accused Saudi Arabia for not doing enough to combat terrorism. Clinton said that even though the Saudi government was doing all it could do to prevent Al-Qaeda financing in Saudi Arabia, it was not very eager to stop Saudi financing for Al-Qaeda abroad. See CBS News “Saudi Largest Source of Terror Funds”, December 2010.

What Clinton says is exactly the way the Saudi Kings see Al-Qaeda. They perceive Al-Qaeda as a great domestic threat, but very often see Al-Qaeda as a valuable ally abroad, against common enemies i.e. Iran in Syria and Afghanistan, or against the American efforts to bring the oil and gas of Central Asia to the Indian Ocean.

Also remember that the Americans have the same approach. General Petraeus, a former CIA director, said that the United States should work with “moderate” groups of Al-Qaeda in Syria, in order to fight ISIS. See “The Daily Beast “Petraeus: Use Al Qaeda Fighters to Beat ISIS”, September 2015.

There are no moderate Al-Qaeda groups, and what General Petraeus meant was that the US should use Al-Qaeda groups which are supported by governments that have relatively good relations with the United States i.e. Qatar, in order to fight ISIS, a greater enemy for the US, since ISIS is the ex-people of Saddam Hussein, who were overturned by the Americans on 2003. See “Towards an Alliance Between Russia and ISIS”?

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/05/22/towards-an-alliance-between-russia-and-isis/>

But let me go back to the Haqqani Network. In 2011 the top military officer of the United States, admiral Mike Mullen, accused Pakistan for the attack at the American embassy in Kabul, and he said that the Haqqani Network is the long hand of the Pakistani secret services ISI. See BBC “US Admiral: 'Haqqani is veritable arm of Pakistan's ISI'”, September 2011.

It is true that Pakistan has been traditionally supporting Leshkar e Taiba against India and the Haqqani Network against Afghan enemies. Now that Pakistan and the United States have big problems, and the US is getting closer to Inida, Pakistan might turn against the United States.

But it also very likely that the attacks against the United States are not directly ordered by the Pakistani government, but by Al-Qaeda, which is cooperating with both groups. And that seems more plausible to me. Obviously I cannot be sure.

Pakistan cannot have 100% control on these terrorist groups. The members of these groups are criminals. Today they can work for the Haqqani

Network, and tomorrow they might find a better job with Al-Qaeda or ISIS, or get a better salary from a smaller group like the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM). Or they can sell to other terrorists the valuable skills they obtained from their cooperation with the Pakistani secret services, or the secret services of other countries.

Terrorists are employees, and they act like employees in all other sectors i.e. they are trying to increase their income. Except that their job is to pub bombs.

Articles

“Is Pakistan Getting Ready to Abandon Lashkar-e-Taiba?”, March 2016
<http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/is-pakistan-getting-ready-to-abandon-lashkar-e-taiba/>

“US Admiral: 'Haqqani is veritable arm of Pakistan's ISI'”, September 2011
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-15026909>

“Saudis Largest Source of Terror Funds”, December 2010
<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/wikileaks-saudis-largest-source-of-terror-funds/>

“Petraeus: Use Al Qaeda Fighters to Beat ISIS”, September 2015
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/08/31/petraeus-use-al-qaeda-fighters-to-beat-isis.html>

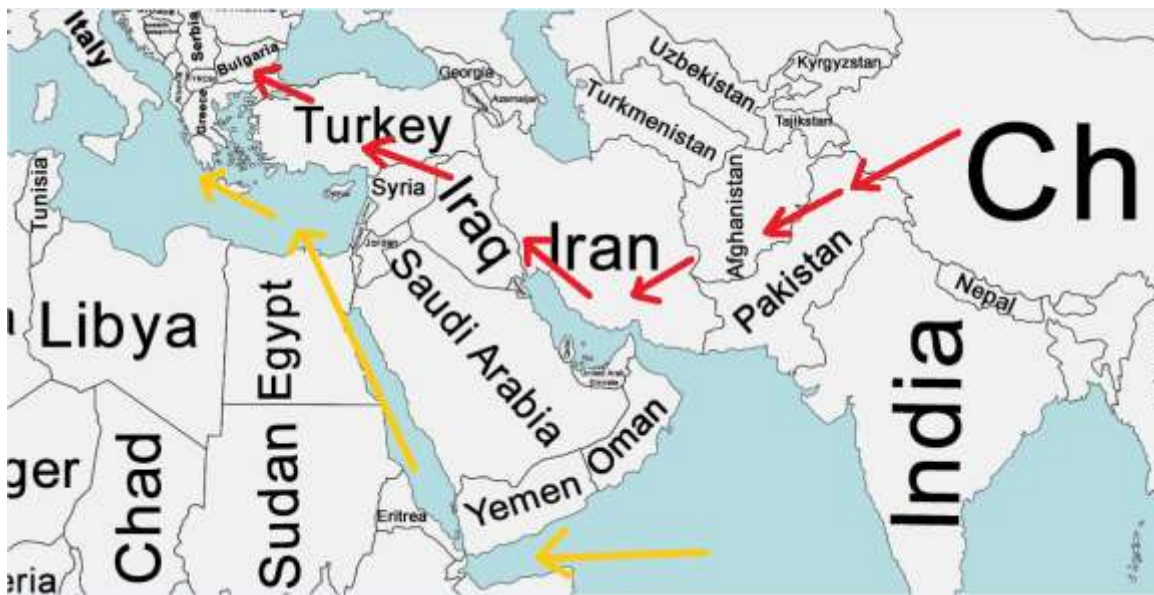
“The 10 Richest Terrorist Organizations”

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/02/20/the-10-richest-terrorist-organizations/>

Assessing the Sultan (Erdogan)

Egypt is the queen of the maritime Silk Roads, and Turkey is the queen of the territorial Silk Roads. They have always been. I mean these pieces of land whatever they were called.

Map 1



It is not a coincidence that Turkey, together with Iran and Qatar, did everything she could to bring to power the Egyptian Islamists, and they finally did it, by spending huge amounts of money, and by promising everything to the Egyptian people. Mohamed Morsi became President of Egypt in 2012, and he immediately received in Egypt, and he treated him like a Sultan. Morsi also invited the Iranian President. It was the first visit of an Iranian President to Egypt since the rise of the Iranian Islamists in 1979. Morsi also made clear that he would revoke the 1979 peace treaty with Israel.

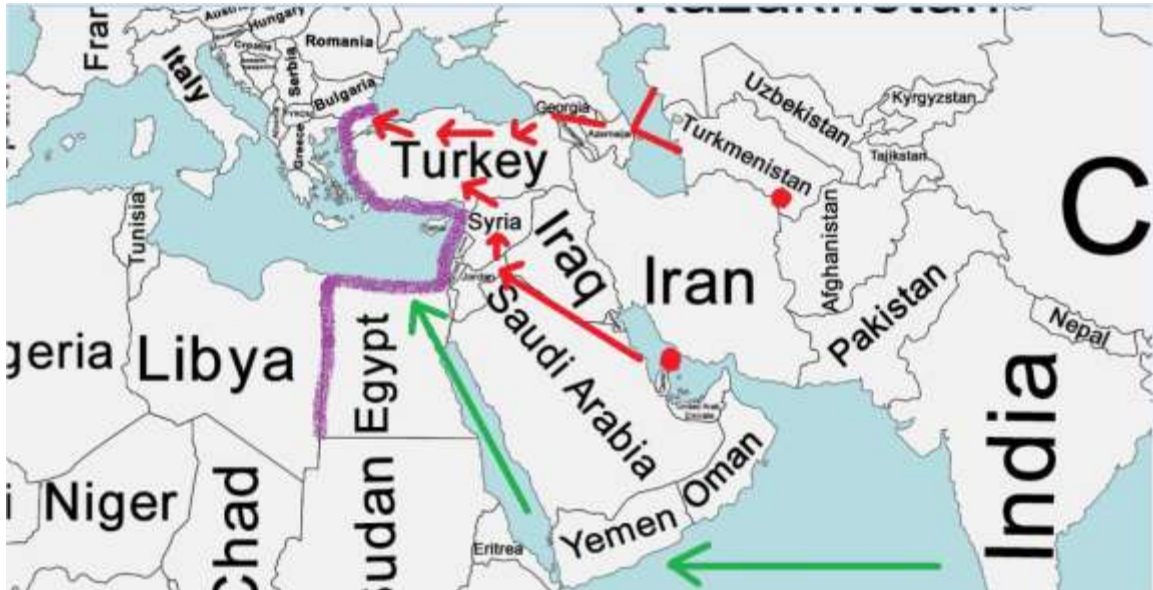
Everything was going according to the plans of the Sultan. The Sultan was creating his Islamic Union. An Islamic version of the Soviet Union, with Erdogan in the role of the Sultan. The Sultan would control all the Silk Roads.

The Sultan would send the natural gas and oil of the Middle East and the Caspian Sea to Europe through Turkey, and the Islamic Union would make sure that this time the crusaders (European) would pay fair prices to the Muslim people. There would be no more exploitation of the Muslim People from the crusaders. The Islamic Union would also be able to fight the infidels (Russians).

The Chinese, the Indians and the Japanese would have to ask the Sultan if they wanted to send their merchandizes to Europe, either through Egypt or through Turkey, and the Sultan would tell them what a fair price would be. A price that would not exploit the Muslim people.

And the same would be true if the crusaders (Europeans) wanted to send their merchandizes to Asia. Everybody would pay fair prices, and the Sultan would distribute the wealth equally to the Muslim people.

Map 2



It was a simple plan. A very simple plan. Egypt would take Israel, with the help of Turkey and Iran, and Turkey would take Syria, with the help of the Sunni majority, which would revolt against the Alawite regime which was cooperating with the infidels (Russians). This plan did not scare the Americans as one would have expected.

However in Syria there was the problem with Iran, because Iran did not want the Sultan to control all the trade routes, and they wanted some control for themselves. They were selfish. If you want a real cartel you need to have one ruler. But the alliance of the Iranians with the Russians only made things worse.

Moreover there were problems with the Saudi King, because the Saudi King was also selfish, and he wanted to be the leader of the Sunni world too. And the Sultan finally went to a war with Russia, Iran, Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria. It was a simple plan, a very ambitious plan, which seemed

to start falling apart. If only the Sultan had more power....And if only the other Muslim leaders were not selfish...

But one could argue that the Sultan has achieved a great deal. That is if one does not take into account the price paid by the Turkish people. The Sultan was close to his Islamic Union.

An Egyptian-Israeli war would have broken out at some point, if the Saudis and the UAE hadn't helped the Egyptian socialists to overturn the Islamists.

Moreover Erdogan almost convinced Iran and Qatar to send natural gas to Turkey, from their huge gas field (South Pars/ North Fields). And all three countries were supporting the Muslim Brotherhood in Saudi Arabia against the Saudi King.

Erdogan also managed to gain influence in the Turkic nations i.e. Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgistan, and even to put pressure on China by supporting the Islamists of the Chinese Muslim province of Xin Jiang.

Erdogan helped the Sunnis of Syria to revolt, and he opened a Sunni corridor to the Persian Gulf, which had been closed 100 years ago during the First World War.

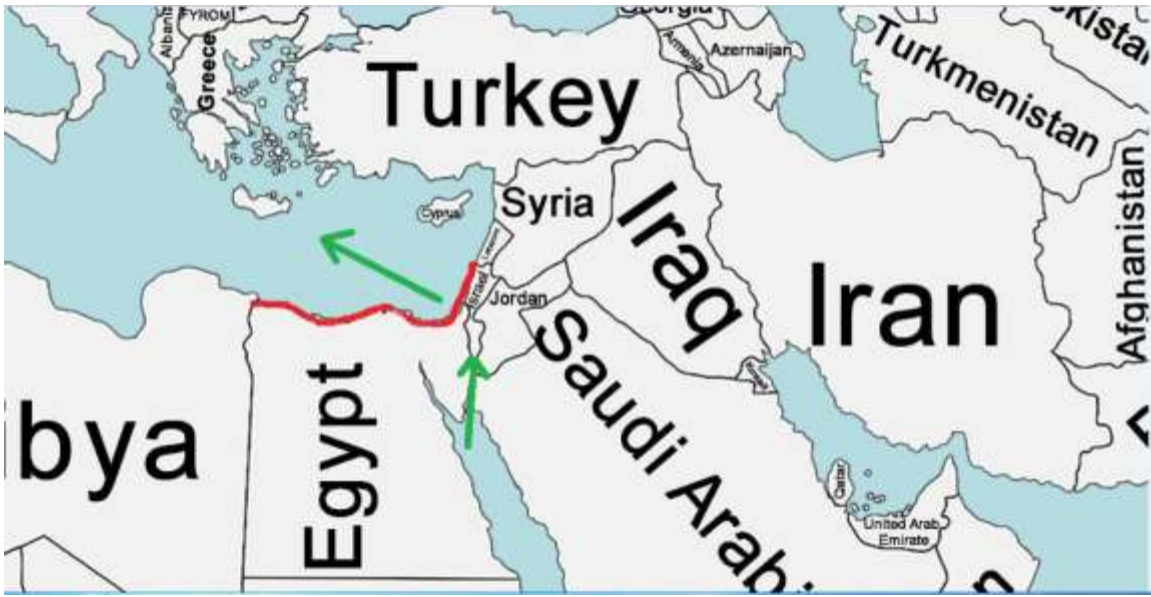
Erdogan managed to convince Qatar and Saudi Arabia, and possibly other Muslim countries, to pay Turkey huge sums of money.

Unfortunately all these were achieved by going to a war with Russia, Iran, Syria, Israel, Egypt, and by paying the price of a revolt at the Kurdistan of Turkey. Moreover the Sultan almost caused a civil war in Turkey, between Turkish socialists and Turkish Islamists, and at the same time he flooded the Turkish economy with Turkish liras, in order to finance his deficits, and he created a bubble economy. What the Sultan achieved was impressive. At least if you are not a Turkish citizen you are impressed. And he is still there. We don't know what else he is capable of. There might be more of that....

In the beginning I mentioned Egypt's importance for Turkey, and as a final word I must mention Israel's importance for Egypt. Israel has managed to cooperate with the Egyptian socialists, but the truth is that for Egypt Israel is a wound. With their Eilat port in the Red Sea the Israelis bypass the Suez Canal and they reduce Egypt's importance in the maritime Silk Roads.

If Egypt was to take Israel Egypt would be the queen of the maritime Silk Roads, and if Turkey was to take Egypt Turkey would be the queen of all the Silk Roads. That is if Turkey also managed to conquer Syria. And Erdogan almost did it.

Map 3



Pakistan Between Al-Qaeda and USA

I have said many times that when the Taliban took control of Afghanistan (1996-2001) the Americans were asking them to allow the pipelines of Central Asia to reach India, in return for American recognition for their government.



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7f/Map_of_Asia.jpg

The negotiations between the Americans and the Taliban were closely monitored and sabotaged by Al-Qaeda, with the 1998 attack on the American embassies during the Clinton administration, and with the attacks on the Twin Towers in 2001 during the Bush administration. See “The Afghan Oil Pipeline and the US Negotiations with the Taliban”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/07/01/the-afghan-oil-pipeline-and-the-us-negotiations-with-the-taliban/>

When the negotiations between the Americans and the Taliban collapsed in 2001, and the Americans overturned the Taliban government in Afghanistan, the Pakistanis found themselves between a rock and a hard place because both the Afghan Taliban and the Americans were their allies.

On one hand the Afghan Taliban were to a large extent the creation of the Pakistani secret services, and in Afghanistan they were fighting Pakistan's enemies i.e. the forces supported by Iran and India, and on the other hand the United States was providing Pakistan with huge amounts of military and financial assistance.

The Americans provide Pakistan with approximately 1 billion dollars of military assistance per year, and after the 2001 War of Afghanistan this assistance has increased. Given that an F-16 costs approximately 50 billion dollars, Pakistan can buy 20 F-16s per year with this assistance. Only the Israelis and the Egyptians receive more military aid from the Americans.

Therefore Pakistan found itself in the middle of a war which was fought by two friends. And it was not only the issue of the Taliban. Al-Qaeda, which was the main concern of the Americans, was funded with Arab money, and Al-Qaeda was helping and funding the Taliban, and the Taliban had given refuge to Al-Qaeda. Therefore by attacking the Taliban Pakistan would attack a friend, and by attacking Al-Qaeda Pakistan would attack the friend of a friend.

The Pakistanis are neither Arabs nor Persians (Iranians), they are Sunni Muslims, and Sunnism brings them closer to the Arabs, and geography brings them closer to Iran. The Pakistanis have been traditionally trying to get funding from both the Arabs and the Iranians.

To a large extent the Saudis financed the Pakistani nuclear program, and in the black market the Pakistanis were selling nuclear technology to the Iranians, while at the same time they were promising the Saudis that they would provide them with nuclear weapons if Iran was to attack them.

I think that the cooperation between the Pakistanis and the Iranians on nuclear energy ended when Qaddafi, the Libyan dictator, surrendered his nuclear equipment to the Americans in 2003, and it was obvious that it was made in Pakistan. See “The Cooperation between Qaddafi and George Bush”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/02/12/the-cooperation-between-george-bush-and-the-libyan-dictator-against-al-qaeda/>

After that Pakistan had to change its policies. I guess Iran was trying to obtain assistance for its nuclear program from North Korea and Argentina. See the American think tank Gatestone Institute “Nuclear Cooperation between Argentina and Iran?”, July 2011.

<http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/2294/argentina-iran-nuclear-cooperation>

Remember that Russia does not want Iran to obtain nuclear weapons, because they are competing in the natural gas and oil markets, and at some

point Iran might use these weapons against Russia. Moreover China does not want to help Iran, at least not directly, because that would create a lot of tension in the American-Chinese relations.

Having said that Pakistan was getting both Iranian and Arab money, I have to say that for the last decades the Pakistanis are considered a closer ally of the Arabs. At least this was the case until recently.

But let me go back to Al-Qaeda. When Pakistan was attacking Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, in order to please the Americans, it created problems in its relations with the Taliban, with some Arab friends, with some Pakistanis who have strong connections with Al-Qaeda. Pakistan even created problems in its relations with Iran, because in Afghanistan Iran and Al-Qaeda were together fighting the Americans.

In addition, Al-Qaeda was supporting valuable to Pakistan terrorist organizations which attack India, and fight India in Kashmir. See “Al-Qaeda VS India”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/07/08/al-qaeda-vs-india/>

The Pakistanis followed a contradictory policy of supporting both the Americans and the Taliban, and by supporting the Taliban they provided some indirect support to Al-Qaeda. However in various cases Pakistan, together with the Americans, attacked Al-Qaeda, and in 2007 the Taliban of Pakistan were created in Pakistan, probably by Al-Qaeda, in order to attack Pakistan. Note that the Afghan Taliban are Pakistan's allies, while the Pakistani Taliban are Pakistan's enemies.

However most Taliban are Pashtuns, and there are connections between the Afghan and the Pakistani Taliban, even though they follow different policies. The Pakistani Taliban have been supported by other enemies of Pakistan, for example the opponents of Pakistan in Afghanistan i.e. the Shia Hazara, the Tajics, the Uzbkes etc.

The problem for Pakistan is that neither the Americans nor the Taliban are happy with Pakistan's contradictory policies. But it is very difficult for Pakistan to choose one side or the other.

Note that Osama bin Laden was hiding in Pakistan until the Americans kill him in 2011, and obviously the Pakistani secret services new about that, and they were very upset with the Americans when they killed bin Laden. See "Pakistan-Osama bin Laden".

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

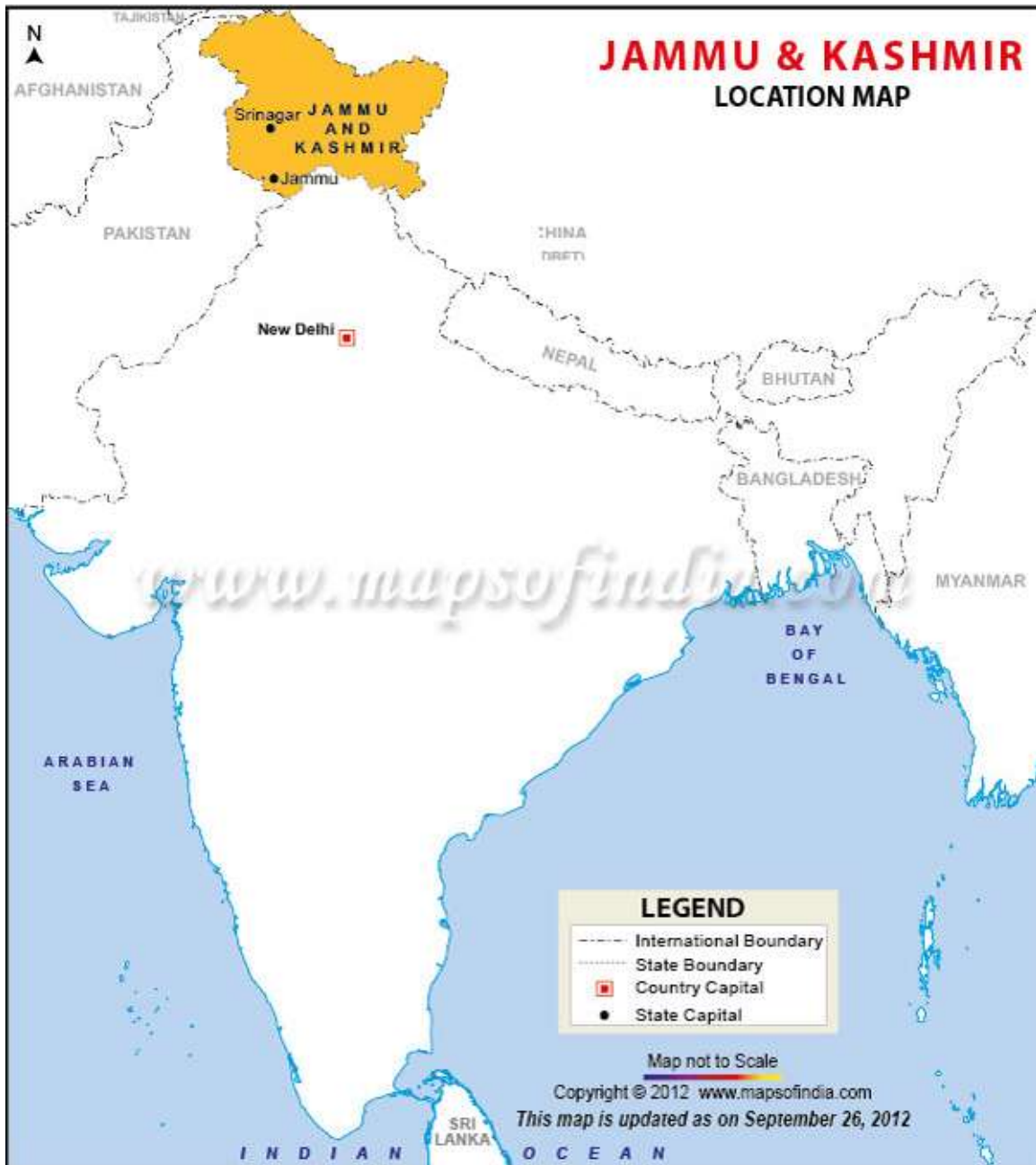
Al-Qaeda VS India

Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda's founder, considered India to be part of the world Jewish conspiracy against the Muslim World. See Wikipedia "Beliefs and ideology of Osama bin Laden : India".

Al-Qaeda supported Pakistan's terrorist organizations that had a presence in India, and at the same time Al-Qaeda was sending fighter to fight the Indians in Kashmir. Both India and Pakistan claim that Kashmir is their territory. If India controlled Kashmir, she could export her products to Central Asia and import the oil and gas of Central Asia to India bypassing her enemy Paksitan.

At the same time India would break the geographic corridor between Pakistan and China, and it is a known fact that China and Pakistan cooperate against India. Today Pakistan controls a part of Kashmir, and India another part of it, and Pakistan can communicate with China, while India does not communicate with Central Asia. As a result India needs either Pakistan, or Iran, to reach Central Asia.

Map of Kashmir



<http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/jammuandkashmir/jammu-and-kashmir.jpg>

Therefore the alliance between Al-Qaeda and Pakistan against India in Kashmir makes perfect sense, because the Arabs (Al-Qaeda) do not want India to import oil and gas from Central Asia, and Pakistan does not want

Central Asia and India to communicate bypassing Pakistan. Pakistan wants the countries of Central Asia to be dependent on Pakistan if they want to reach India and the Indian Ocean.

But while Osama bin Laden was calling India part of the world Jewish conspiracy, he admired the rebellion of the Iranian Islamists in 1979, which was an Islamic but also a socialist revolution, and he also cooperated with Iran. See Wikipedia “Beliefs and ideology of Osama bin Laden : Jews, Christians and Shia Muslims”.

The explanation is of course that Al-Qaeda was fighting the Saudi King and the United States, and the Saudi government could not obviously provide Al-Qaeda with intelligence, at least not within Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, Pakistan, which through the Taliban was providing some indirect support to Al-Qaeda, was reluctant to openly support Al-Qaeda, because Pakistan was receiving generous financial and military support from both Saudi Arabia and the United States.

Therefore Al-Qaeda needed a strong military country which at the same time was an enemy of the United States and the Saudi King, in order to obtain training and intelligence. The ideal candidate was obviously Iran, and I have referred many times to the Hezbollah-Al Qaeda axis. See “The Hezbollah-Al Qaeda Axis”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/05/22/the-hezbollah-al-qaeda-axis/>

Articles

“Beliefs and ideology of Osama bin Laden : India”

Bin Laden considered India to be a part of the 'Crusader-Zionist-Hindu' conspiracy against the Islamic world.[15]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beliefs_and_ideology_of_Osama_bin_Laden#India

“Beliefs and ideology of Osama bin Laden : Jews, Christians and Shia Muslims”

Bin Laden was profoundly anti-Semitic, and delivered many warnings against alleged Jewish conspiracies: "These Jews are masters of usury and leaders in treachery. They will leave you nothing, either in this world or the next." [44] He has also made at least one clear denunciation of Americans, but bin Laden held generally a favorable view of Arab Christians.

At the same time, bin Laden's organization worked with Shia militants: "Every Muslim, from the moment they realize the distinction in their hearts, hates American, hates Jews, and hates Israelis. This is a part of our belief and our religion." [45] and was apparently inspired by the successes of Shia radicalism—such as the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the implementation of Sharia by Ayatollah Khomeini, and the human wave attacks committed by radical Shia teenagers during the 1980s Iran–Iraq War. While in Sudan, "senior managers in al Qaeda maintained contacts with" Shia Iran and Hezbollah, its closely allied Shia "worldwide terrorist organization. ... Al Qaeda members received advice and training from Hezbollah." [46] where they are thought to have borrowed the techniques of suicide and simultaneous bombing.[47] Because of the Shia-Wahhabienmity, this collaboration could only go so far. According to the US 9/11 Commission Report, Iran was rebuffed when it tried to strengthen relations with al Qaeda after the October 2000 attack on USS Cole, "because Bin Laden did not want to alienate his supporters in Saudi Arabia." [46]

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beliefs_and_ideology_of_Osama_bin_Laden#
Jews.2C_Christians.2C_and_Shia_Muslims](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beliefs_and_ideology_of_Osama_bin_Laden#Jews.2C_Christians.2C_and_Shia_Muslims)