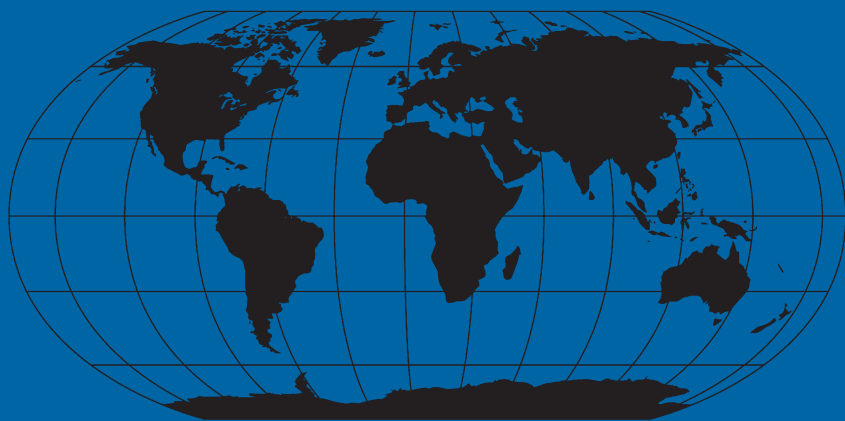




MINISTRY OF DEFENCE STRATEGIC DOSSIERS



GEOPOLITICAL OVERVIEW OF CONFLICTS 2011



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

**GEOPOLITICAL OVERVIEW
OF CONFLICTS 2011**

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INTRODUCTION

Miguel Ángel Ballesteros Martín

■ INTRODUCTION

Machiavelli, in his Discourses on Livy, said that war was a phenomenon that had accompanied mankind throughout history, with both evolving side by side. In the media, however, the word «war» is being displaced by the word «*conflict*». There are several reasons for this, the first one being that more advanced cultures see war as an aberration of society, albeit sometimes inevitable; the second is that the Charter of the United Nations, as established in its preamble «*We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war*», prohibits the threat or use of force, except in the case of legitimate individual or collective defence⁽¹⁾.

However, the absence of war is not incompatible with the absence of peace, and aversion towards war has often not provided sufficient motivation to find peaceful solutions to the controversies that lead inevitably to conflict, sometimes of a warlike nature, even if the word «war» is not used in referring to it.

The dictionary tells us that the word «conflict» comes from the Latin *conflictus* meaning combat, struggle, strife and even armed confrontation. Lewis Coser defined conflict as «*the struggle over values, status, power and scarce resources, in which the aim of the opponents is to neutralise, injure, or eliminate their rivals*». Neutralisation does not necessarily imply the direct use of violence, so for this writer the concept of conflict is so broad that it ranges from classic wars to revolutions such as those currently underway in Tunisia and Egypt.

It should be remembered that, regardless of the term used or who the protagonists are, all conflicts are subject to the Laws of War.

This broad view of conflict suggests a need for classification, which can be approached from the point of view of the extent of conflicts, the means and procedures used in them, or the causes which lead to them.

In terms of the means and procedures used, conflicts can be classified as nuclear, conventional, asymmetrical, subversive or revolutionary.

From the point of view of geographical extension, conflicts can be classified as local when they are confined to one part of a country; national when they affect a large part of a state's sovereign territory; regional when they affect several countries in a geopolitical region, as in the case of the Israeli-Palestine conflict, and finally global, when they affect various geopolitical regions, as is the case with the terrorism of Al Qaeda.

⁽¹⁾ Charter of the United Nations, San Francisco, 26th June 1945, Articles 2.4 and 51.

Years ago the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies classified the causes of conflicts as having three levels: profound or permanent causes, intermediate or short-term causes, and superficial or disputatious causes.

Profound or permanent causes include historical, ideological and religious rivalries, ethnic confrontation, rival claims to geographical possessions of strategic value, etc.

Intermediate or short-term causes proliferate during external or internal political circumstances such as when weak political systems or institutions produce weak states in which non-state players are able to cause insecurity through the use of violence, seriously undermining the Rule of Law.

Superficial or disputatious causes can be either geographical, as in the case of border incidents; political, when arising from political or constitutional structures, public order, foreign policy, etc.; economic, as with financial and industrial disputes, etc.; military, as in the case of unwarranted increases in military power; or finally could derive from the personalities of certain government leaders.

Max Weber considered that conflict stemmed from the antagonism between values, which in the modern world are engaged in a relentless and interminable struggle. Karl Marx, on the other hand, considered that the main causes of conflict were to be found in the injustice brought about by the division of labour. Durkheim considered conflicts to be anomalies that arise along the difficult path towards order and progress. Since the beginnings of sociology as a scientific discipline around the end of the nineteenth century, the majority of sociologists have seen conflict as an inherent feature of societies, along with empathy and compromise.

When the parties in a conflict are armed and these arms play a role in the conflict, we refer to it as armed conflict, which is considered to be warfare when these arms are used in combat.

Armed conflict implies the participation of armed groups, even where no use is made of the weapons, whereas warfare involves military confrontation between adversaries.

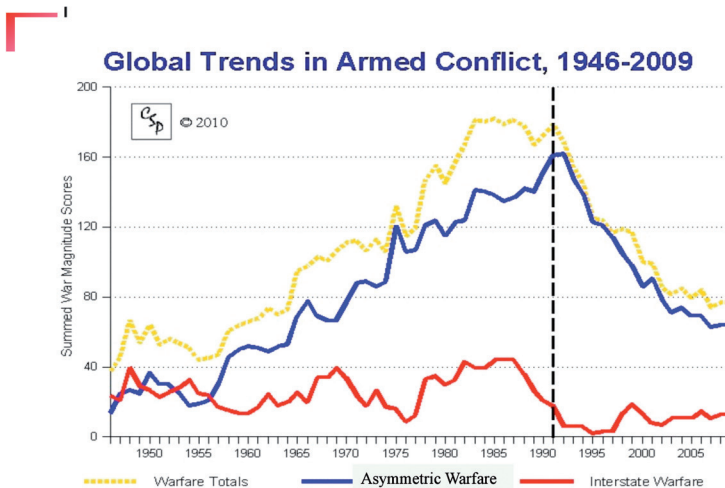
The Institution charged with aiming to avoid and resolve conflicts is the United Nations, through its Security Council, which has passed more than 2,000 resolutions aimed at maintaining and restoring peace and stability. One of its main instruments for implementing these resolutions are the so-called Blue Berets (or sometimes Blue Helmets), who have carried out 67 peacekeeping missions.

As well as the conflicts to which the Blue Berets have been dispatched, there have been many others where the stabilisation mission has been entrusted to other international organisations such as NATO, the EU, the OSCE or the African Union. Many have been resolved, with definitive solutions being accepted by all parties, while others remain in a state of calm but without having resolved the underlying disputes.

From its creation in 1945 until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (a period of 44 years), the Security Council passed 644 resolutions, and in the twenty years that have passed since then the number of resolutions passed has reached 1,366. This gives us some idea of how difficult it was for permanent members to reach agreements during the Cold War. In spite of this increased activity on the part of the Council, which is reflected in a smaller number of active conflicts, there are still too many conflicts for which no definitive resolution has been found. In figure I.1 we can see the trends in armed conflicts from the establishment of the United Nations through to 2009.

Currently the United Nations has 19 active missions in conflict zones, and the OSCE for its part is present in five countries where there are latent conflicts. Additionally, NATO has troops in Afghanistan, Kosovo, the Gulf of Aden and the Mediterranean (Operation Active Endeavour), not to mention the monitoring and training operation with Iraqi forces. For its part, the European Union

Figure 1.1



Source: Center for Systemic Peace.- *Global Conflict Trends 2009*
<http://www.systemicpeace.org/conflict.htm>

is present in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Somali Basin (Operation Atalanta) and Uganda, where it is training Somali troops. Adding to these the operations of US-led and other coalitions, the number of peacekeeping operations taken on by the international community amounts to 50, in some cases overlapping in the very same conflicts.

The number of conflicts in which there is at least some kind of peacekeeping operation being carried out by the international community is 30.

To these we can add other conflicts where violence is confined within the sovereign national territory of the country, which is trying to smother it without outside involvement. Such is the case of conflicts like those taking place in Algeria, Yemen, Syria, Pakistan, Georgia, Colombia, Mexico, etc.

Since its foundation, the UN has proved highly effective in settling conflicts and wars between states, the so-called conventional or interstate wars (the red line in figure I.1), of which there have been relatively few: the Korean war, the Arab-Israeli wars, the Falklands war, the Iran-Iraq war, the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein's troops, and very few others. However it has not been so successful in resolving those conflicts which directly involve the society in question as an adversarial party and where at least one of the combatants is a non-state player. These are what are termed asymmetrical conflicts, in which the population is generally the target of the weakest contender.

The reasons are manifold, but the most important one is that in asymmetrical conflicts only one of the sides, the state itself, is subject to the decisions of the Security Council, bearing in mind that the Charter says «[*The Security Council*] shall.... seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means...»⁽²⁾, and the limitations on reaching a solution by means of agreement make them difficult to settle peacefully.

Asymmetrical conflicts tend to be protracted, since the weakest contender uses time as a weapon for the wearing down of opponents, which makes the conflicts unpredictable and complex. A disregard for international law leads the side using the asymmetrical strategy to seek refuge beyond the borders of the territory where the conflict is centred, as a result of which this type of conflict tends to spread regionally.

To this we should add territorial claims, which become latent conflicts that in some cases could lead to active conflicts of one kind or another. Such is the case of Taiwan, or of the Spratly Islands, whose more than 100 reefs and islets are claimed in their entirety by the People's Republic of China, and Vietnam,

⁽²⁾ Ibid., Article 33

and in part by Malaysia and the Philippines. This gives us a total of 40 active or latent conflicts and another ten potential ones.

With this publication, the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies, following its policy of studying the most significant aspects of international relations in the area of security, is launching a series which aims to act as a reference point for learning about the details of the many conflicts which are destabilising the international strategic scene.

In this first edition of the series «Geopolitical Overview of Conflicts» we take an initial look at the most active conflicts and those which most directly concern Spain, either because our national interests may be affected, or because our international commitments lead us to pay special attention to them, or simply because the consequences of their resolution or otherwise are of great importance for international peace and stability. In subsequent editions we will select those conflicts most likely to arouse interest, together with some of the latent conflicts, for closer study than we have given them in this first issue, the aim of which is more focused on presenting the series.

The idea is to carry out an up-to-date monitoring that will allow us to foresee possible crises in which appropriate management could avoid the escalation of the conflict. Where necessary, a knowledge of how conflicts evolve can raise awareness among analysts, and through them among public opinion, of the need for early intervention with political and diplomatic tools and development aid or even the presence of troops, always maintaining a comprehensive approach that will make it possible to place time limits on intervention, at low cost and minimising the need for human and material resources.

The high costs involved in stabilising conflicts and peacemaking in Iraq and Afghanistan and the more than eighteen years that it has taken to pacify the Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict will presumably make the USA and its allies, including Spain, reluctant to embark upon stabilisation operations, particularly if they require a large number of troops on the ground and if there is an active insurgency. This means that priority has to be given to crisis management, which requires follow-up and analysis of active and latent conflicts to avoid their escalating.

To facilitate reading and comprehension, we have systematised the procedure for analysing each conflict. In the introduction the conflict is first placed in its geopolitical setting, and this is then followed by some background/historical information that allow us to achieve a more understanding approach to the current situation. Based on this information, an analysis of the conflict is ca-

ried out, featuring the roles played by the various internal and external participants. All this enables us to reach some conclusions and to establish the future prospects and implications for neighbouring countries and for the geopolitical region in general. The whole study has been carried out from a European and Spanish perspective.

■ **In this publication we have analysed twelve conflicts**

Carlos Echeverría, a frequent collaborator with the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies, has been in charge of analysing the **Libyan civil war** which started in February between forces loyal to Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and those of the National Transitional Council. With Gaddafi's last loyals being captured we could be witnessing the end of an insurgency movement. The dead of Gaddafi, is an important step towards disarming and demobilising them and eventually helping them rejoin society. The new leaders' skills and capabilities in healing the wounds of civil war and avoiding reprisals will be crucial for the future of Libya.

Without doubt the events in Libya have been the most violent and disturbing of the Arab uprisings which have been breaking out since the autumn of 2010 on various stages in North Africa, the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula; the way it evolves now will surely influence the future of other uprisings such as those of Syria and Yemen.

Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies analyst Blanca Palacian has studied the situation in **Kosovo**, a conflict that is not yet over, in which the solution adopted runs the risk of acting as a false conclusion, leaving a conflict in suspended animation. Kosovo is an unfinished state, both from the internal perspective, as can be seen from the workings of its institutions, and from the external, as is evident from the partial nature of its acceptance and integration in the international system.

Kosovo will not become a viable state unless it continues to receive very substantial international financial support. If the United States abandons Kosovo, this new state will go from being a UN protectorate to being an EU protectorate, providing the none too promising economic prospects permit this to be the case. There is no other possible horizon than the European one.

Lieutenant Colonel Mario Laborie has been in charge of sketching out the many complex conflicts affecting the **Middle East**, a region that has always been unstable and which is easily unsettled by other events, as occurred with the end of the Mubarak regime in Egypt, which has led to the role of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt needing to be reassessed. The Rafah Crossing

Point is opening up somewhat, allowing the controlled passage of people and goods between Egypt and the Gaza strip, so Egypt's attitude will be crucial for the control of arms trafficking. It can doubtless be concluded that Israel has lost the reassurance of having a reliable rearguard.

The request for recognition of Palestine statehood submitted by Mahmoud Abbas to the General Assembly of the UN might find a positive echo in most countries, despite the announce of US veto in the Security Council and the refusal of many EU member states to grant recognition, which could harm their image with the Arab world, in spite of the efforts being made to justify the reasons leading them to adopt this stance. This situation, together with Turkey distancing itself and military pressure from Iran, leaves Israel somewhat isolated, meaning it will now be obliged to react and regain the initiative at the negotiating table.

Lieutenant Commander Francisco Ruiz, an expert on the **Caucasus**, has analysed a region of historical rivalries among great empires which have led to a mosaic of uncommon ethnic, linguistic and religious complexity. Following a period of relative stability represented by the Soviet Union, its collapse in 1991 and the rise of the so-called «new independent states» opened the way for a phase in which conflicts of every type abounded, sometimes involving with the use of military force. These disputes, far from having been resolved, remain latent, with the obvious danger that a sudden escalation in tensions could revive them. The negotiating efforts of outside parties such as the OSCE and Russia will be crucial to avoid the parties resorting to the use of force.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict can be considered the most difficult of all to resolve, given the entrenched positions of the main parties involved. Looking to the future, one cannot exclude the possibility of an escalation in tensions leading to armed confrontation. The fear inspired by the breakaway example set by Kosovo has led Azerbaijan to relaunch its rearmament plans, supported by hard currency from exports of oil and gas and the warlike rhetoric of its leaders, which in turn could lead Armenia to carry out a pre-emptive military action to consolidate the enclave's defensive capabilities and those of its own territory.

Lieutenant Colonel Pedro Baños has analysed the dispute between Sudan and **South Sudan**, where the situation is far from stable, mainly because of inadequate definition of the border zones between the two states. It is a region in which a large part of the proven reserves of oil are located. Also, the precedent set by the secession and independence of South Sudan may inspire other separatist movements in Africa to push their own claims, and this could set off a chain reaction with unpredictable consequences.

In this case, we have opted to focus on the current situation and the outlook for the future, omitting the historical background as far as possible, since this is much better known now, having been dealt with widely in other publications.

Commander Joaquín Castellón has carried out an analysis of **Somalia**, the archetypal failed state, where elections are scheduled to be held in the summer of 2012, which will be an important milestone for the future, depending on their outcome. If they are held without problems this will in itself be a major step towards peace. On 6th August, Al-Shabaab announced its withdrawal from the streets of Mogadishu, arguing that it was a tactical move. However in this type of conflict any kind of withdrawal is associated with weakness and leads to a battle for lost public opinion. To this we need to add the unpopularity that impedes delivery of supplies by the World Food Programme, on which more than a million Somalis depend for subsistence.

Faced with difficulties at home, Al-Shabaab has tried to find support from like-minded foreign terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda, while at the same time promoting the creation or strengthening of similar groups in the region.

International efforts, which despite the economic crisis have found expression in the AMISOM, Atalanta, Ocean Shield and EUTM-Somalia military operations, together with other initiatives, are essential for the pacification, stabilisation and development necessary to stop the war and contain the famine in the country.

As regards the problem of piracy, it is necessary and urgent that the required international consensus be reached to establish an international tribunal capable of trying the pirates caught carrying out these crimes, whether by means of regional solutions or through a resolution by the Security Council passed under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Lieutenant Colonel Francisco José Berenguer explains how in the **Afghan conflict** a far-reaching change of phase is being prepared, in the form of the gradual transfer of responsibility to the Afghan Government. This transfer is the result of the efforts being made since 2008 by the 47 countries in the coalition to train the Afghan police and military so that they will be able to assume full responsibility for security over the next two to three years. Another factor to be added here is the fatigue of the international community, which has been contributing forces on the ground at a time when economic crisis is added to loss of life and materials and the general disillusionment of public opinion.

The strategy involves a simultaneous political process of national reconciliation, which aspires to bring the Taliban moderates back into the political fold, leaving outside the system only the diehard Al Qaeda allies and violent reli-

gious extremists who, as part of this process, will have become the only «military» adversaries in the conflict.

In any case, the reason for the international community's intervention in Afghanistan has ceased to exist. The capacity to export jihadist terrorism from its territory has diminished drastically, which, from the mission's perspective, is a success in itself. Building a democratic state with characteristics decided upon by the Afghans themselves will have to proceed at its own pace.

María José Caro has been responsible for analysing the conflict over **Kashmir** between India and Pakistan, that has given rise to several wars, and the origins of which are a mixture of religious and geopolitical issues and colonial border drawing, which has led to the contenders rearming to the point where they both have nuclear arsenals.

The conflict has serious negative implications for the stabilisation of Afghanistan and the loss of control of the Northwest frontier region of Pakistan to the Pakistani Taliban, who provide refuge to Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban.

Pakistan, under pressure from the US and the international community, has shifted troops from the Line of Control with Indian-controlled Kashmir to the Afghan border. However, the conflict has shown no signs of abating, although a negotiated peace process has been restarted. For its part, India remains adamant about the impossibility of independence for Kashmir, and does not accept the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. Recently, some progress has been made in bringing the two powers together, with an increase in trading and the flow of people in both directions across the Line of Control.

Analyst Jorge Bolaños reaches the conclusion that in **Colombia**, the FARC are overhauling their strategy in order to try to regain lost ground and to project an image of strength following the successes of the Colombian government; they are engaged in a tactical withdrawal, relying on guerrilla warfare and seeking to perpetrate terrorist attacks with a strong media impact in order to re-establish their active image in the eyes of Colombian society. In other words this is a war of attrition, while waiting for circumstances that will allow them to go onto the offensive. The Colombian government for its part continues to pursue a strategy that seeks to extend territorial control and strengthen local institutions by carrying out major social initiatives such as the Laws on Land Restitution and Compensation for Victims.

Miguel Ángel Serrano gives us an insight into **security problems in Mexico** which in 2010 alone caused 15,273 deaths related to drug trafficking. The total figure since 2006 when then-president Vicente Fox launched the «war» on drug trafficking stands at 40,000. On top of this, according to the annual report

of the Mexican National Human Rights Commission in 2010, 20,000 people were kidnapped in that year. Faced with this situation, there are many who see legalisation as the best strategy for bringing an end to insecurity. This problem is spreading through the Central American isthmus to the rest of the countries in the region, which could exacerbate problems by affecting countries much weaker than Mexico. After all, if Mexico has proved incapable of controlling regions in which the drug traffickers operate, what might happen in countries such as Guatemala?

María del Mar Hidalgo has analysed the conflicts in **Southeast Asia**. If anything characterises the Southeast Asian region it is its heterogeneity in economic, cultural and religious terms, and its geographical proximity to China. The conflicts that exist in the region are of a predominantly local nature and, with the exception of the border conflict between Thailand and Cambodia, arise from the internal political instability of certain states and from secessionist movements. These are conflicts in which the international community has little or no involvement, being limited to the framework of cooperation in security matters provided by ASEAN. Nevertheless, this region could arouse global interest in the future, depending on how the settlement of jihadist terrorism in Indonesia evolves, and how the territorial disputes over the South China Sea, and the natural resources under it, develop.

In this first Overview of Conflicts we have paid special attention to studying the conflicts in the Philippines and Thailand, within the Southeast Asian region. In the Philippines, we have dealt with the actions of the communist guerrilla forces who are engaged in an armed struggle to demand political, economic and social reform, and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, whose operations aimed at ending social and economic inequality are being carried out in the Sulu Archipelago and Mindanao. In Thailand, the elections held last July were won by the Puea Thai party, led by Yingluck Shinawatra. Yingluck has become the country's first woman prime minister, and although she has no political experience, great hopes have been invested in her to achieve the longed-for political stability in an extremely polarised country. Yingluck will also have to take measures to bring an end to two other conflicts in which her country is involved: the border conflict with Cambodia and the insurgency in the Pattani region in the south of Thailand.

Captain Ignacio García Sánchez, in the last chapter of the publication, analyses the **conflict on the Korean peninsula**, where the greatest risk factors and dangers on the current world strategic scene are concentrated. In a geopolitical region over which the centre of world power swings, we see a situation which, depending on how it evolves, could act as a detonator for a conflict with unpredictable consequences. The possession of nuclear weapons by a country, North Korea, that suffers great economic hardship and that pins its political survival

on a militarist and autarchic regime, presents a scenario requiring great restraint on the part of all the regional players, especially its neighbours South Korea and Japan, while at the same time demanding ongoing dialogue between the main superpowers at the beginning of this century, the United States and China.

The impenetrable nature of North Korea's dynastic regime, with its arrogant and defiant attitude and succession of violent and warlike acts near the demarcation line separating the two Koreas, as well as its clear defiance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, with manifestly proliferating public declarations and activities, appear to show a lack of geostrategic calculation, all of which poses a continual challenge to the regional stability that is so necessary.

We should not forget that there are three nuclear powers in the region: USA, Russia and China, and that Japan's technology would enable it to develop weapons of mass destruction in a very short time. This highlights just how audacious and dangerous North Korea's defiance is, with its nuclear blackmail on a conflict that has been contained for more than sixty years, at the heart of the region which is the most dynamic but also the least prepared to ensure that relations of cooperation and competition between powers are conducted in a stable and peaceful manner.

In short, this is a first geopolitical overview of conflicts which aims to frame twelve of the most significant conflicts which are destabilising twelve geopolitical regions, prior to looking into them in more depth in coming editions, with more detailed analyses and more meticulous research processes, until we have covered all the conflicts, active or latent, that might affect world peace, security and stability.

Chapter 1

LIBYA: CIVIL WAR AND FOREIGN INTERVENTION

Author: Carlos Echeverría Jesús

SUMMARY

Within the context of the ongoing Arab revolts, the case of Libya is exceptional, not only due to the nature of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's regime but also in the way that this revolt has evolved, in the main as a result of the foregoing, into a civil war of a tribal nature. The situation was further aggravated by two phases of foreign military intervention: the first being a collection of countries forming a «coalition of the willing», which in a matter of a few weeks became the second phase, strengthened by the intervention and leadership of NATO. In both phases, terms of legality and legitimacy accompanied the principle of the Responsibility to Protect, passed in 2005, and put into practice here for the first time. The war has finalized with the victory of the rebels whose greatest successes have come as a result of the air support they have received, as well as the command and communications material provided by the Contact Group. As of mid-October, the rebels were laying siege to the city of Sirte, Gaddafi's birthplace, with the whereabouts of the former leader having been unknown since June. Libya, which stretches over 1.760.000 square kilometres and which Gaddafi turned into a vast arsenal demands, an especially ambitious process of disarming, demobilisation and reconstruction is undertaken in order to ensure that the fears regarding the destabilising effects of the conflict are not realised.

Key words

Conflict; UN Security Council; National Transition Council; Gaddafi; Contact Group; war; civil war; foreign intervention; Libya; Maghreb; Mediterranean; NATO; rebels; Responsibility to Protect; Arab uprisings; Sahel Strip; tribes; jihadists.

■ INTRODUCTION

North Africa, and specifically the Maghreb (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia), is, as far as Spain and by extension Europe are concerned, a key neighbour in geopolitical and geostrategic terms. The uprisings which have been becoming more commonplace in the Maghreb sub-region of the Arab world since Autumn 2010 have therefore had an added significance in terms of security and defence. The fall and subsequent flight of the Tunisian President, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali on 14th January coincided with uprisings in Egypt (which began on 25th January and which led to the removal of President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak from power on 11th February) and revolts in Libya in mid-February, which in this case degenerated into a civil war which soon resulted in foreign military intervention, backed by UN Security Council resolution 1973 passed on 17th March.

In this chapter we shall be studying the Libyan conflict, which due to certain specific characteristics represents a special case within the context of the other many revolts which continue to this day in various parts of the Arab world. The fact that this is a civil war, in which a number of other countries have been involved since the earliest days of the conflict, that it has gone on for a long time, the uncertainties that exist in terms of the scenarios which may arise and its impact on regional security (for example the paralysis of security regional defence initiatives as important as that which has been developed within the the 5+5 framework since late 2004) means that we have to analyse its origin and development in depth. By late August, Tripoli had been taken by the rebels, a little over six months after the uprising began on 15th February, with the complex battle lines spreading throughout Libya's inhabited territory over the following weeks to take control of the remaining pro-Gaddafi strongholds. By mid-October, these strongholds were concentrated in Sirte, Gaddafi's birthplace, although it should be pointed out that the control exercised over the rebels' organisational body, the National Transition Council (NTC), largely due to NATO air support and the training, materiel and financing offered by leading members of the international umbrella organization, the Libya Contact Group, set up just a few weeks after fighting broke out. According to rebel sources, from the start of the conflict in mid-February to late August around 50,000 people had died with hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced civilians. On 1st September, the day on which Gaddafi had planned to celebrate the 42nd Anniversary of his coming to power, a Conference was held in Paris at which the «Group of Friends of Libya» (the successor to the Contact Group) bestowed international legitimacy on the NTC and ensured its political, diplomatic, military and financial support in establishing post-Gaddafi Libya.

■ BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

Historically, the Gaddafi regime has been subject to internal opposition since the outset. Having come to power in a coup d'état on 1st September 1969, it became increasingly bizarre with the constitution of the People's Socialist Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in 1977. With a strong tribal base and a very small population (6.3 million people) widely dispersed across a vast territory which is rich in oil and gas, the Libyan regime was known for decades more for its destabilising actions abroad than its internal politics, which have traditionally been shrouded in mystery. There were few true experts on Libya, whilst the attitude of the regime and the country's idiosyncrasies made it very difficult for decades to learn very much about the Libyan state⁽¹⁾.

Opposition to the regime was split among the few dissidents that managed to escape - such as the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL), which is a grouping largely made up of liberals and monarchists, and groups of radical Islamists - who undertook sporadic failed coup attempts, armed attacks and other such acts from within the country. As occurred in other Arab countries between the 1970s and 1990s (in Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia and Syria, among others), the intervention of radical Islamists soon became more important, in the case of Libya especially in the eastern region of Cyrenaica, the same region in which recent protests against the regime began in February 2011.

Towns such as Benghazi, Derna, Bayda, Ajdabiya and Tobruk have in recent years all been the settings for anti-regime acts and, as a result, have borne the brunt of its reprisals. The region has also become infamous for its steady flow of leaders of globalised Salafist jihadist groups and their activists, both under the umbrella of Al Qaeda and in theatres of war such as Afghanistan, Iraq or Pakistan over the past decade and up to the present day. According to Al Qaeda documentation intercepted in 2007 by American forces in Iraq, Libyans represent the second largest group of foreign jihadist terrorists after the Saudis, with the majority of the Libyan combatants coming from Derna.

It is therefore not surprising that the focal point for the start of these revolts was Benghazi, that violence soon became a key factor, or that within the context of this violence the regime promised that its repression would be swift and unlimited. Past experience and Gaddafi's habitual verbal virulence meant that few doubted that this would be the case. If the epicentre of the uprising took place in Benghazi on 15th February, the fact that just a week later, on the 22nd, Gaddafi stated in Tripoli that he was prepared to die within the country as a martyr (thus distancing himself from his Tunisian and Egyptian counterparts who had been overthrown just a few days earlier) gave an idea of the violence

⁽¹⁾ See the works by Davis, Djaziri, Georgy, Haley and Vignolo as cited in the Bibliography, among others.

that had been generated in such a short time, the forerunner to a true civil war which those in power had been trying to prevent for many years, but which was finally set to break out. By 21st February the regime had lost control of Benghazi, Libya's second-largest city, which has between 600,000 and a million inhabitants and a large port. In the second fortnight in February alone, it is estimated that over 700 people met violent deaths in Libya.

The spark that lit the touchpaper of the Libyan uprising was the arrest in Benghazi of Fathi Terbil, the lawyer representing the families of the more than a thousand inmates massacred in 1996 at Abu Salim Prison, near Tripoli, followed by a mass demonstration demanding he be freed. The then-rebel leader as Vice-President and Spokesman for the NTC, Abdelhafiz Ghoga, was also a lawyer for the families of some of the executed prisoners. This was a cause that allowed a number of Libyans to see themselves as objectors within a country whose regime left very few doors left ajar for the purposes of protest.

Although some analysts and numerous media outlets have resisted the temptation to talk of the situation in Libya as a civil war (in contrast with their haste in defining events in Algeria as such in the 1990s), it is nonetheless true to say that the development of the conflict may soon result in a textbook civil war scenario. The swift disengagement of certain key military figures who went over to the rebel side (among the most important early defectors were General Abdul Fatah Younes, Interior Minister and Head of the Special Forces, on 22nd February, and Colonel Tarek Saad Hussein four days later), the early establishment on 27th February of a representative body for the rebel forces consisting of 31 members (most of whom remain in the shadows), the NTC, which was promptly recognised first by France and then by other international players, and the definition of a «liberated» territory represent the three central elements in defining the structural breakdown that this civil war has resulted in.

In Algeria, the Armed Forces did not visibly disintegrate, the terrorist groups did not achieve the international recognition they sought and no part of the country was «liberated» by these combatants in order to establish their alternative regime. As we have seen, the dynamic in Libya has been somewhat different, with desertions within the country's armed forces becoming increasingly commonplace, the strengthening of the NTC's position abroad and the extension of the battleground to other parts of the country from its starting point in the east. Furthermore, the intervention of foreign powers and later of NATO itself, with the backing of the corresponding UN Security Council Resolutions (particularly 1970, passed on 26th February and 1973, on 17 March) meant that the Libyan conflict could be described as a civil war of a tribal nature, dressed up with foreign military intervention. In the first four months of fighting there were approximately 15,000 deaths.

The Libyan regime's ability to resist, which despite certain high-profile desertions saw a large part of the country's impoverished armed forces (50,000 Army, over 18,000 Air Force and some 8,000 navy) remain loyal to their leader, supported by thousands of mercenaries from Libya's Saharan and Sub-Saharan allies, surprised many who had already written Gaddafi off as destined to follow the same fate as Presidents Ben Ali and Mubarak⁽²⁾. Furthermore, and as we will see in more detail in the following section, the limitations imposed both from inside and outside Libya on foreign intervention, together with the military weakness of the rebels and the cohesion and motivation of Gaddafi's men, has quickly turned this into a war of attrition, which, even after the rebels seized Tripoli and Gaddafi's military headquarters in Bab al-Azizia, has become drawn out due to the disappearance of the former leader and the need to move rebel troops toward Bani Walid and Sabha in the south, with operations focusing on Gaddafi's home town of Sirte at the time of writing.

■ THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CONFLICT

Gaddafi's threats against the expected uprising in Benghazi were actually made before any unrest had even occurred. Having expressed his sympathy for the fate met by the neighbouring Tunisian and Egyptian presidents, Gaddafi threatened those who were preparing a demonstration in Benghazi on 15th February in protest at the arrest of Terbil. He assured them that he would not tolerate protests resembling those that had proved too much for Libya's neighbouring authorities. The organisers remained firm in their intention to raise their voices in protest and the demonstrations soon degenerated into tragedy⁽³⁾. The outbreak of the uprising also coincided with 110 jihadists being freed from Abu Salim as part of the regime's deradicalisation process. In Libya from the outset there were also scenes of violence comparable to those that had been seen in Tunisia and Egypt (with the accompanying repression of demonstrators, attacks on police stations, barracks and prisons which quickly escalated into an armed conflict that took the form of a civil war), to which Gaddafi responded with his fearsome threats that were heard at home and abroad.

17th February marked the start of the uprising with the attack on Gaddafi's army barracks in Benghazi whilst the city's airport was put out of action after tons of rubbish were thrown onto the runways. As proof of the rapid spread of

⁽²⁾ See *The Military Balance 2010* London, Routledge - The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2010, pp. 262-263.

⁽³⁾ It is important to mention here that among the events that provided a context to the uprising was the setting up of the Defence Committee for the Members of the Revolutionary Council, which included Abdessalam Yalud, number two in the regime until his removal in disgrace in 1997, and Generals Abdelmunim Al Huni, Al Hanmdi Al Jawidi and Abubaker Yunis Yaber, the latter of which was the Army's Chief of Staff. See CANALES, Pedro: «La tensión aumenta en Libia por las luchas entre clanes» («Tension rises in Libya due to inter-clan fighting») *El Imparcial* 17th February 2011, in www.elimparcial.es.

protests in the eastern region of Cyrenaica, on this same day Gaddafi accused the inhabitants of nearby Derna, who were also demonstrating, of seeking to turn their city into «an Islamist emirate» whilst the revolt quickly moved to Tobruk, where there were firefights between forces loyal to the regime and demonstrators, with the latter taking control of all main official buildings.

Gaddafi's reference to radical Islamists has been seen by many as mere propaganda, nevertheless it is true that this ideology has been and continues to be well consolidated in Cyrenaica, and some of its main activists have been directly involved in the armed struggle from the outset. Thus, Islamists led by Hakim Al Hasadi, a veteran of the Afghan wars from Derna, seized control of Labrak airport in the first days of fighting from sub-Saharan mercenaries in the pay of Tripoli. In May, Al Hasadi led a group of 300 men known as the Abu Salim Martyrs Brigade whose second-in-command was Sufian Bin Qumu, another veteran of Afghanistan and a former prisoner at Guantanamo⁽⁴⁾. The names of various key jihadists were gradually taking their place within the rebels' line of command, the majority of them on the battlefield, before eventually taking over positions of responsibility regarding matters of security: Ismael As-Salabi in Benghazi, Abdelhakim Al Assadi in Derna, Ali Salabi within the NTC itself and Abdelhakim Belhadj directing fighting in the Western Mountains, the latter making a victorious entry into Tripoli on 26th August, where he has consolidated his position as the Head of Security⁽⁵⁾.

Apart from the ideological element which we might detect amongst those fighting Gaddafi, there is another aspect which in the case of Libya is particularly important: the tribal element. The vulnerable social structure of Libya's small population, on the one hand, and on the other, the fact that many of the regime's opponents belong to the most important tribe in demographic terms, the Warfalla, has been highlighted by many commentators and, a priori, makes the Libyan war a conflict which is more difficult to resolve, given the traditional balancing act that Gaddafi has used for decades in order to remain in power. Traditionally Gaddafi has favoured members of his own tribe, the Qadhadhfa, firmly entrenched in the city of Sirte and the surrounding area, whilst also making concessions to the Warfallah and the Magarha, many of whom form part of the Libyan Armed Forces. In order to remain in power, Gaddafi has played both the tribal, clan and, in particular, family cards, appointing his sons and other family members to positions of responsibility in security and defence, as other Arab leaders also threatened by popular revolt have done, such as the Presidents of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh and Syria, Bashar El Assad. Gaddafi has maintained three of his sons as his central pillars: Saif El Islam, the eldest, who has long played a key political role, has been named as his heir and occupies a position comparable to that of a Prime Minister; Khamis, trained

⁽⁴⁾ RICO, Maite: «La yihad de los rebeldes libios» («The jihad of the Libyan rebels») *El País* 16th May 2011, p. 9

⁽⁵⁾ PERRIN, Jean-Pierre: «Abdelhakim Belhadj» *Libération* (Paris) 26th August.

in Russia and the leader of the 32nd Brigade, the Armed Forces' elite unit, with the best materiel and training and some 10,000 troops, who was entrusted with putting down revolts in Benghazi; and Mutassim, the regime's National Security Advisor.

From the outset there was speculation - legitimate, it should be stressed - regarding the profile of the Libyan authorities in the east of the country, above all in Benghazi. It is worth remembering that Cyrenaica had been the setting for earlier revolts against Gaddafi which had largely involved radical Islamists. Furthermore, the regimen was undergoing a process of negotiations with its own radicals, in particular with those who had accepted a deradicalisation programme, a process that was underway in other Arab and Muslim countries. Hundreds of jihadists, former members of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), some of which were and indeed are understood to be part of the Al Qaeda network, to which the LIFG has been allied since 2007, had been freed by the Libyan regime in 2010 and 2011 and they may well have ended up in the armed resistance against a regime they still deemed to be apostate.

If any characteristic can be said to have defined the rebel forces from the outset, it has been their lack of organisation, a factor which has been evident on the battlefield. Various groups acting independently, with neither leadership nor strategy, with widely differing arms that have frequently been used pointlessly, up against Armed Forces who, although low on numbers are well motivated, using well-prepared tactics and strategies as well as the appropriate weaponry. For months, the rebels were only able to advance once the allied air attacks had first cleared the area of enemy forces. This has been a constant factor and one which can be clearly seen at important scenes of fighting, such as Misrata and Brega, with positions taken only to be lost again, depending on whether or not there was NATO air support. In the summer months, when the emphasis placed on the political and diplomatic process made it necessary to make a greater effort to introduce coherence to the battlefield, progress began to be made and better use was made of the most intensive bombardments on the most relevant targets by the rebels who were increasingly better organised and led.

Continuing with the theme of foreign support, Operation Odyssey Dawn was launched by France, the United Kingdom and the USA on 19th March in order to provide general support to civilians when many were in fact already armed rebels. French Rafale and Mirage fighter planes, followed by British Typhoons and Tornados, all of which were supported by the American war machine, entered the theatre of operations on 19th March, preventing columns of Libyan heavy armoured vehicles from entering Benghazi in order to crush the uprising. The setting up of the NTC in early March and the growing presence of a flag that had last been used during the Libyan monarchy ensured ever greater visibility for those opposing Gaddafi; nevertheless, on the battlefield their co-

herence continued to be conspicuous by its absence for a number of months. For western allies, the situation was even more complicated if we remember that certain rebel spokespersons had asked them for air support, arms and training, whilst rejecting any form of foreign interference on the ground. Only at certain specific moments, such as the dramatic siege of Misrata by Gaddafi's troops which lasted over two months, did the rebels - in desperation and only for brief spells - ask the allies for land intervention. Western countries, led by the US, had no intention of committing land troops to any other Muslim theatre of war, due to their continued involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq. This problem would be reflected during the first months of fighting in the weak coordination between rebel forces and Allied Command Operations, a weakness that benefited Gaddafi's troops on the ground who, if there had been the desired coordination, would have seen far greater losses to their battle tanks, armoured personnel transport and artillery much earlier due to more effective attacks.

The presence of special forces elements from western countries on the ground during the early days of the uprising has been verified, being there to assist in the evacuation of foreign nationals. There has been subsequent evidence of their occasional presence, using media such as Twitter to send useful information to bombing missions and, finally, to train rebels in combat and use of arms techniques.

With the launch of Operation Odyssey Dawn, later to become known as Operation Unified Protector on 31st March, the most important defensive alliance in the world entered into combat in Libya. In early April, General Abdul Fattah Younes, who had joined the rebel forces on 22nd February before the repression launched by Gaddafi in the east, confirmed that the rebels had around 400 T-55 and T-70 tanks captured from the enemy. At that time the east of Libya had largely been cut off from Tripoli which had led Gaddafi to attack oil wells in the eastern sub-region in order to prevent AGOCO (the Arabian Gulf Oil Company), which had abandoned central Libya, from continuing to export crude oil to fund the rebels. The company had already exported reserves to Qatar, Austria and China, although the destruction of oil wells and pipelines halted their activities in early May. At that time, with the important plants at Brega and Ras Lanuf inactive, the city of Tobruk still supplied crude from the southern oilfields at Sarir, although these too eventually came under attack.

NATO air support facilitated the opening up of combat fronts beyond Cyrenaica, providing support to the uprisings in towns and cities in Tripolitania, in the west of the country. On 12th April allied aircraft overflying the Nafusa Mountains destroyed a number of columns of heavy armoured vehicles which had arrived from Tripoli in order to suppress the rebellion in the cities of Yafran, Kikla and Zintan. The US, present in the air and at sea during the early days of the fighting, soon began to take a back seat in terms of visibility in favour of its

French and British allies, although the use of unmanned drones, authorised by President Barack Obama on 21st April, would also prove to be a determining factor in the evolution of the conflict in later months.

From the outset, the growing foreign support for the rebels forced Gaddafi to combine a mixture of classic conventional warfare and other asymmetric combat tactics. The use of devices installed within civilian vehicles (similar to those used by rebel forces), doing away with uniforms, camouflaging tanks, personnel transport vehicles and artillery by hiding it among civilians, civilian light aircraft such as crop sprayers in order to break the air embargo and then using them to attack fuel deposits in the besieged city of Misrata, or using similarly civilian vessels (fishing boats, for instance) to mine ports and stop refugee ships from leaving or humanitarian aid and arms from coming in are just a few examples. Wherever it could, the regime launched dogged counterattacks in an attempt to recover terrain lost to the rebels and by the end of April had laid siege to the city of Misrata, 200 kilometres to the east of Tripoli. The siege of this city of 300,000 inhabitants, the third largest in Libya, began in the second fortnight in February, with Gaddafi's troops launching heavy bombardments against the town from 6th March onwards, and for two months it was one of the most painful combat stages as far as the rebels were concerned⁽⁶⁾.

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Furthermore, in order to undermine foreign combatants, Gaddafi even used illegal immigration as a weapon against the rebellion. In May, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) echoed a number of complaints that the Libyan regime was forcing hundreds of people it deemed to be illegal immigrants to leave the country via stretches of the coast it still controlled, first from Zuara and then from other ports and harbours, all near Tripoli. The media went to so far as to claim that the person responsible for organising these expulsions was Zuhair Adam, a high-ranking officer in the Libyan Navy who in 2009 had received training from the Italian Interior Ministry regarding the management of migratory flows⁽⁷⁾.

In an attempt to weaken Gaddafi's forces, NATO began to increase the number of air attacks against governmental facilities in Tripoli. The attacks on command and control centres sought to hinder and even impede meetings between Gaddafi and his military chiefs in order to make the exercising of operational command as difficult as possible. Furthermore, the increasing selections of targets in the capital was an attempt to provoke desertion within Gaddafi's camp and hasten his overthrow by disenchanted officers. Rebel attacks were getting ever-closer to Gaddafi's command centre at Bab al-Azizia, and a bombardment on 11th May claimed the life of one of his sons, Saif Al Arab, leading

⁽⁶⁾ «Libya. Las tropas de Gadafi violan la zona de exclusión aérea» («Libya. Gaddafi's troops violate the no-fly zone») *ABC* 9th May 2011, p. 40.

⁽⁷⁾ MORA, Miguel: «Gadafi fuerza la inmigración hacia Europa» («Gaddafi forces immigration towards Europe») *El País* 11 May 2011, p. 2.

to harsh reprisals by the regime, combining assaults on the British and Italian embassies in Tripoli with artillery and missile bombardments against the cities of Misrata, Zintan and Wazzin, in the west, and the outskirts of Benghazi in the east.

The cohesion of the regime was maintained with some difficulty in the first seven months of the war, although cracks did begin to appear from the start of summer, with significant desertions such as the Interior Minister, General Abdul Fatah Younes, in February; the Foreign Minister and Chief of Foreign Intelligence, Musa Kusa, in late March, and the Oil Minister, Shokri Ghanem in May. What is clear is that the breakdown that some analysts thought would happen, given Gaddafi's difficulties and allied support for the rebels, never came about. It should also be remembered that in May, Gaddafi saw support from Russia, which had until then been unswerving, weaken when Moscow recognised the NTC as its «legitimate partner», although the fact that on 28th June the International Criminal Court formally sought the arrest of the Libyan leader, his son Saif El Islam and the head of domestic intelligence helped to ensure that the leadership further entrenched itself against foreign harassment.

The weakening of the regime in military terms began to be noticed in May. On 17th May the rebels lost control of the Dahibah-Wazzin crossing, situated on the Tunisian border and crucial for supplying those fighting in the Western Mountains. Between the 19th and 20th May, NATO carried out a coordinated attack on the ports at Tripoli, Al Juma and Sirte, destroying eight ships of different classes belonging to the Libyan fleet. This was the first attack against Gaddafi's navy and took place after the Alliance had intercepted and destroyed a boat laden with explosives heading for Sirte on 17th May. On 24th May, the Alliance launched its largest attack to that point against positions in Tripoli, hitting around twenty targets in the area around Bab Al Aziziya. By this time NATO had carried out some 3,000 attacks, reducing Gaddafi's forces by 50%. France and the UK had already sent combat helicopters in order to make ground attacks more effective and as far as possible prevent diversionary manoeuvres by Gaddafi's troops and the loss of civilian life. Meanwhile the situation at the besieged city of Misrata improved in the third week of May thanks to NATO air intervention, including the use of American unmanned Predator drones. On the economic front, funding from Qatar and Kuwait covered expenses, with both countries expecting to recover these loans when embargoed Libyan accounts are freed up and when Libya's oil and gas exports return to normal.

A deadlock on the battlefield in the first weeks of summer saw despondency set in amongst the rebels and their allies, who no longer saw an early end to the war, with the Atlantic Alliance having to extend its period of commitment

in the theatre of operations. The disorganisation among the rebels, split into multiple factions which allowed anyone from anywhere to join their ranks, exasperated their military allies, who would soon receive the order to instruct and coordinate the rebel combatants better. In any event, this chaos could be seen perfectly in the assassination on 29th July of the rebel military leader Abdul Fatah Younes, killed by one of his own faction. The leader's murder has still not been solved, with the NTC seeking at first to blame infiltrators loyal to Gaddafi.

At that time, the rebels were bogged down on battlefronts in the east and Misrata and could only engage on the western front if they managed to take Tripoli. For most observers this seemed a tall order, above all when taking into account internal divisions as a result of the murder of Younes. He was killed in Benghazi, where he had been recalled for consultations whilst directing operations on the Brega front⁽⁸⁾. Two colonels were also murdered at the same time, with the bodyguard of one of these men claiming they had been detained by the 17th February Brigade, a well-known Islamist group. At first the NTC sought to explain the murder as the work of infiltrators loyal to Gaddafi, although pressure from Younes' family and tribe, the Obeidi, one of the most important in the country with 400,000 members, forced them to recognise what was obvious: the deep internal divisions. The death of Younes was blamed on Islamists from the aforementioned Brigade, firmly established in Benghazi, although other commentators have spoken of hostility between Younes and the rebel generals Jalifa Heftar and Omar Hariri. Heftar left the regime in 1987 in order to take control of an armed opposition group financed by the CIA, and in April, a rebel spokesman announced that he would be replacing Younes as the military leader of the rebels - a statement that was retracted shortly after. In any event, an internal investigation promised by the rebel leader, Mustafa Abdul Jalil was supposed to resolve the matter, and on 30th July the rebel Oil and Finance Minister, Ali Al Tarhuni, another deserter from Gaddafi's side, like Younes or Jalil, stated that Islamists were responsible for the murder.

Returning to the analysis of the conflict, with the deadlock on the Misrata front, Brega and Ras Lanuf still yet to fall into rebel hands and the western front also at an impasse, the priority had to be to take Tripoli in order to weaken Gaddafi and bringing rebel combatants together. This was therefore the objective over the mid-summer weeks for NTC allies, including the whole month of Ramadan. By mid-July, some thirty states had formally recognised the NTC, giving all concerned a political boost, even more so with the coming of further NATO military support. On 30th July, the Allies bombarded various satellite dishes in Tripoli in order to silence satellite television, which the regime was still using to broadcast its propaganda. On 5th August, Zliten was bombed, a town in which the troops loyal to the regime were concentrated in order to halt

⁽⁸⁾ ESPINOSA, Javier: «La alianza rebelde se resquebraja» («The rebel alliance fractures») *El Mundo* 30th July 2011, p. 23.

the rebel advance toward Tripoli. Meanwhile between 6th and 7th August, in the Western Mountains, the rebels took Birghanem, which lies 80 kilometres to the south of the capital, with the aid of air support. Gaddafi was now surrounded on all sides by land⁽⁹⁾.

The main offensive took place in the second fortnight of August. On the 14th of the month, rebel forces surrounded Tripoli having taken the Berber town of Gharyan to the south and Taworgha to the east, although troops loyal to Gaddafi held Zauiya (in which the country's only operational oil refinery was located), with the rebels taking until 19th August to overcome them. Gaddafi's forces also maintained a pocket of resistance in Ras Jdir, on the Tunisian border. This was the base for attempting to take control of the oil-refinery town of Brega, which they attacked with a Scud missile launched on 14th August from Sirte and which missed its target by 50 miles. Two other Scuds were launched from Sirte without causing serious damage, in an initiative which brought to mind a 1986 missile attack by Gaddafi on the Italian island of Lampedusa within the context of an ongoing confrontation with the US 6th Fleet in the Gulf of Sidra.

The assault on and subsequent entry into Tripoli took place on 21st August, after NATO had made strenuous efforts in identifying targets (including Bab El Azizia) and an intensification of bombardments, as well as an amphibious operation in which rebel forces from Misrata and other Libyan ports were landed.⁽¹⁰⁾ In parallel to this offensive in the east, there was another assault on Brega. At the time of writing, military forces were concentrating on Sirte, Bani Walid and Sabha in order to finish off the last pockets of resistance loyal to Gaddafi.

At the time when Tripoli fell, it was significant that the 32nd Brigade did not defend the barracks tooth and nail, but rather abandoned their HQ without a fight, with Gaddafi himself, who had promised he would resist to the end, also fleeing Bab El Azizia. Since there had been desertions from within all ranks of Libyan power from the outset, as we have seen, the inner circles still loyal to their leader consisted of members of his own tribe: a good example of this is Musa Ibrahim, Gaddafi's spokesman, whose brother died in a NATO helicopter attack during the fall of Zawiya. The continued support for Gaddafi in centres of population where his tribe is either predominant or has great influence - particularly in Sirte - was used as an attempt to halt the rebel advance, at first, and presumably in order to carry out resistance action at a later point. The southern city of Sabha, so important in the history of Gaddafi's regime, has

⁽⁹⁾ «Los rebeldes ganan territorio y acercan Tripoli por el Sur, el Este y el Oeste» («The Rebels Gain Territory and Approach Tripoli from the South, East and West») *La Gaceta* 15th August 2011, p. 1

⁽¹⁰⁾ CANALES, P.: «Los rebeldes se acercan a la residencia de Gadafi donde resisten sus fieles» («The rebels near Gaddafi's residence manned by his supporters») *El Imparcial* 22nd August 2011.

was a focus point for supply lines between the Sahel and sub-Saharan Africa and Gaddafi intended to maintain control of the town.

■ THE ROLE OF FOREIGN ACTORS

One of the characteristics that defines Colonel Gaddafi and his regime has been the open hostility to the West he has displayed for decades. His support for terrorism and radicalism on numerous global stages is not merely declaratory but real and effective, as has been evident in a number of high-profile cases, such as the Pan Am 103 bombing over Lockerbie (1988) and the UTA 772 bombing over the Tenere Desert (1989) with 270 and 170 deaths respectively. Gaddafi was also a source of support, as opposed to a true ally, of the Soviet Union. Libya is also an arms proliferator, with nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programmes at various stages of development, and this, together with its international exploits, has greatly hindered its relations with the West. Nonetheless, the West opened its doors to Libya, offering access to the international community of Nation States, although with reservations, requiring that Gaddafi complied with the conditions being imposed on him. Thanks to this deal, the embargos were lifted which had been imposed by the UN Security Council, by the European Union and bilaterally by certain states, with the strictest boycotts being those enforced by the US. Libya compensated the families of victims of the Pan Am and UTA flights brought down by Libyan terrorists, recognised the existence of WMD programmes and either destroyed them itself or assisted in their destruction, tempered its discourse and activism to a great extent and became an actor which could even be considered to be constructive within important international diplomatic contexts, such as Africa and the Western Mediterranean (the 5+5 Initiative). All of the above undoubtedly helped Libya to re-enter the international system from which its regime had previously sought to isolate itself, although this does not mean that the past will be wiped out in one fell swoop or that earlier mistrust would immediately now turn into full confidence. In September 2003, the arms and economic embargos were lifted, along with certain commercial restrictions that had been imposed by the UN in 1992, while in October 2004, it was the EU that lifted the embargo it had imposed in 1986.

For this reason, all the threats proffered by Gaddafi, and his well known capacity to carry them out, resonated with certain states, led by France, who for a range of motives decided to lead an international coalition to prevent the threats from becoming a reality. For some, with France again to the fore and closely followed by the UK and the US, who were seeking to stop Gaddafi's repression of his own people, there was a desire to settle certain scores that were still pending with Libya. It is useful to recall that Colonel Abdullah El Senusi, Gaddafi's son-in-law and the head of interior security and military in-

telligence, was one of the three high-ranking Libyan officials for whom the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal issued an international arrest warrant on 16th May, along with Gaddafi and his son, Saif El Islam, having already been convicted in absentia in France for the bombing of UTA 772.⁽¹¹⁾ As far as Saif El Islam is concerned, his designation as the regime's «number two» in 2008 as the «Coordinator of the People's Committees» ensured the continuity of the regime. For others, Nicolas Sarkozy's role can be explained by his desire to not see his standing diminished after the damage that was done to the image of French foreign policy after the revolts in Tunisia and Egypt. It could be that a combination of various elements is required in order to explain the decision-making process in Paris, London and Washington, as well as the reference to the «Responsibility to Protect». Nevertheless, it is true that at the start of the Libyan conflict the explanation for intervention is far more complex than the trite catch-all affirmation that it is all about access to oil. In any event, it is clear that the countries that have intervened in Libya under the backing of UN Resolution 1973 have allowed for a very flexible interpretation of said ruling which stresses the protection of civilians.

Access to oil (here we are talking about only 2% of world crude production) was perfectly assured without any need to go to war, with a Libya that was never subject to a total embargo (only the US applied a commercial embargo whilst the restrictions imposed in April 1992 by the UN Security Council were partial and did not include oil and gas) and which, having normalised relations with all Western countries in the middle of the last decade, have significantly opened up its exploration, exploitation, transport and export sectors. To a great extent the war has paralysed Libyan production, whilst allowing the country to at least prepare its future with non-Western actors (Qatar, among others). However, the unknown factors that have been opened up are much more worrying than the situation prior to February. Russia maintains close relations with Gaddafi, as does China, and both have proved to be averse to foreign military intervention, whilst not impeding its approval by the UN Security Council: Moscow officially recognised the NTC on 31st August, after a somewhat lukewarm approach before the summer. China still has not made this step, although their recognition is expected to come soon, applying the principle of effectiveness.

The Arab League, which paved the way with the creation of a no-fly zone over Libya (this had in fact been officially requested by the Security Council which led to Gaddafi breaking ties with the UN), reacted immediately when attacks commenced on 19th March. We should not forget the fear that certain Arab states have of Libya's arsenals, or the refusal of two League members, Algeria and Syria, to open the way to foreign intervention which neverthe-

⁽¹¹⁾ FERRER, Isabel: «La Haya pide la detención de Gadafi por crímenes contra la humanidad» («The Hague calls for Gaddafi's arrest for crimes against humanity») *El País* 17th May 2011, p. 11

less still took place⁽¹²⁾. Reaction came via the Arab League's then Secretary-General, Amr Moussa, who stated «what we want is the protection of civilians and not bombing other civilians», repeating the difficulties that Europeans and Americans have traditionally faced in their dealings with the League. On 21st August, faced with the entry of rebels into Tripoli, the Arab League's Foreign and Political Affairs Committee called on Gaddafi to hand over power and for an end to fighting, taking advantage of the moment in order to refer to Allied operations as «foreign interference»⁽¹³⁾.

The international efforts concerning Libya under analysis here have created, through the Contact Group, a rather curious relationship between certain Western and Arab countries which may point to future rapprochement. France, Italy and Qatar swiftly recognised the NTC, whilst the UK and the US took slightly longer. As far as the EU is concerned, we should remember that in early May it decided to open an office in Benghazi in order to coordinate humanitarian aid and show its political support for the NTC. The EU even requested the formation of a European mission to be known as EUFOR Libya, although this would only intervene if formally requested to do so by the UN. The EU's High Representative officially declared the Benghazi office to be open on 22 May. Two days later, the rebel capital was visited by Jeffrey Feltman, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.

UN Resolution 1973 was passed on 17th March with the abstention of China, Russia, Germany, Brazil and India. Outside the context of the Security Council, at first Turkey declared its opposition to the resolution, although it later changed its position. The visit of President Sarkozy and Prime Minister Cameron to Tripoli and Benghazi on 15th September was immediately followed by a visit from the Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Recep Erdogan, part of a tour of the region that also included visits to Tunisia and Egypt. On 27th May, Russia strengthened links with the NTC and demanded that Gaddafi abandon power, although the country has, along with China, criticised various aspects of the NATO-led intervention. Nevertheless, as we said earlier, both countries are set to normalise relations with the NTC following the fall of Gaddafi. The more reluctant of the two, China, made the first step on 12th September by recognising the NTC as the «governing authority».

Finally, regarding the African Union (AU), it should be noted by way of example that on 26th April, Gaddafi asked the organisation to hold an Extraordinary Summit in order to consider what he saw as the aggression against Libya. This summit meeting was never called, despite the wide-ranging support that Gaddafi had in Africa, although for a long period of time two ad hoc committees set

⁽¹²⁾ CANALES, P.: «Gaddafi rompe con la Liga Árabe que pide una zona de exclusión aérea» («Gaddafi breaks with the Arab League which asks for a no-fly zone») *El Imparcial* 14th March 2011, in www.elimparcial.es.

⁽¹³⁾ «La Liga Árabe pide la salida del dictador» («The Arab calls for the dictator to relinquish power») *El País* 22nd August 2011, p. 2

up by the AU, one led by the President of Mauritania, Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, and another by the South African leader, Jacob Zuma, unsuccessfully sought to find a negotiated end to the conflict. It should not be forgotten that as of late 2009, the inventory showed that of the thirty or so countries in debt to Libya, twenty of them were African (Sudan, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Madagascar, Mali, Guinea Conakry, Niger and Burkina Faso, among others)⁽¹⁴⁾. Both the removal of Gaddafi as Head of State and the war in itself have greatly damaged the AU, and it is still too soon to evaluate the final impact that both situations will have.

■ CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

The conflict has still not concluded at the time of writing. Gaddafi remains in hiding, troops loyal to him continue to hold out in Sirte in mid-October and it can be imagined that there will be no new stabilisation and rebuilding phase until this situation is resolved.

The NTC had began to move its base from Benghazi to Tripoli. The governing functions of this body were also simplified from June, when an Executive Committee was put in place, with 17 ministerial portfolios. The advances in terms of political normalisation had been necessary and urgent, particularly those concerning the prevention of any partitioning of the country. The NTC had declared some months previously their intention to call elections eight months after the confirmed fall of Gaddafi; however, until this fall takes place it will be impossible to initiate the disarming process which is both necessary and urgent: by way of example, some fifty well-armed combatants or 'Katibas' make up the military arm of the rebels, some of whom are under the orders of recognised jihadists. When Gaddafi is finally defeated, the unknown factors which today pose questions such as the cohesion of rebel forces, their attitude when it comes to forming a new government and the future of the country in territorial terms will test the as yet uncertain commitment of the NTC leadership. Preventing what some have called a «catastrophic success», in other words the bloodbath if territorial, tribal or ideological rivalries are accentuated, will be one of the main priorities⁽¹⁵⁾. At the time it was possible to confirm the existence of contingency plans for both the rebels and their foreign patrons, and their viability.

Although the images that have emerged of the taking of Bab El Azizia lead one to believe that some rebel forces have been victorious, as long as Gaddafi remains untraceable and his troops still fighting, the war has not been won.

⁽¹⁴⁾ BALLONG Stéphane: «Libye. Monopole diplomatique» («Libya. Diplomatic Monopoly») *Jeune Afrique* n° 2614, 13th-19th February 2011, p. 15

⁽¹⁵⁾ See VANDEWALLE, Dirk: «Rebel Rivalries in Libya. Division and Disorder Undermine's Libya's Opposition» *Foreign Affairs Snapshot* 18 August 2011.

Gaddafi's wife and three of his children fled to Algeria on 29th August, the 32nd Brigade under the orders of his son Jamis did not put up the fight for the defence of Tripoli that was expected, and although their forces may be partly decimated, the remaining troops could still be used in a new phase of the war after a tactical fallback. It is also important to prevent the possibility that remnants of the regime once again begin to support and exploit actors in unstable regions (such as the Sahel) in order to destabilise the new Libyan authorities and their allies within and beyond the region. The fact that the rebels are still being forced to fight on battlefields such as Sirte and Sabha is a clear reminder that the war is far from over. For the American Predator drones and the Allies in general, the location of what remains of Gaddafi's military apparatus and the prevention of theft from arsenals are two fundamentally important missions in the days following the collapse of the regime. Some commentators have once again spoken of possible remnants of WMD programmes which the regime had developed before making them public and destroying them in 2003: if indeed there are hidden remains of such arms, these could be used as a last resort, as were the Scud missiles launched from Sirte.

Libya is a regional power in terms of energy resources which will need to return to operations as soon as possible: the country is the third largest producer of crude oil in Africa and has the greatest confirmed reserves on the whole continent. Prior to the start of the conflict, production levels worth US\$35 billion a year were reported, with 85% of production being exported to Europe. With its small population and its mineral wealth, Libya was the only North African country that did not have a workforce that needed to emigrate. In fact 1.5 million Egyptians, 80,000 Tunisians and a similar number of Moroccans worked within its borders. Now, with tens of thousands of dead, its infrastructures largely destroyed and numerous political and security questions unanswered, Libya has become one of the potentially most destabilising elements within the context of the Arab revolts which began in late 2010.

■ CHRONOLOGY

Table 1.1. Timeline of the Conflict

TIMELINE OF THE CONFLICT		
DATE	EVENTS	
1969	Coup d'état led by Gaddafi	
1986	USA bombs Libyan targets, killing an adopted daughter of Gaddafi	
1988	Libyan agents blow up Pan Am Flight 103	
1989	Bombing of French airline UTA's Flight 772	
1992	United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution	
1998	Libya issues order for search and capture of Osama bin Laden	
2003	Embargo lifted. Dismantling of weapons of mass destruction	
2006	USA removes Libya from the list of states sponsoring terrorism	
2008	Saif al-Islam Gaddafi named as successor to his father in Sirte	
2011	February	Gaddafi forces lose control of Benghazi and besiege Misrata. UNSC passes Resolution 1970. National Transitional Council formed
	March	France recognises the NTC. United States, France and Britain launch Operation Odyssey Dawn, which becomes Operation Unified Protector under NATO command. The EU approves the EUFOR Libya mission.
	April	The African Union presents its roadmap. USA approves the use of unmanned aircraft
	May	The International Criminal Court (ICC) issues arrest warrants for Gaddafi, his son Saif al-Islam and his intelligence chief Abdullah Senussi. The EU opens a representative office in Benghazi
	June	NATO starts using attack helicopters. The rebels open up a new front in the west and France drops arms and munitions by parachute to relieve the pressure on Misrata
	July	The AU resolves not to execute the arrest warrant issued by the ICC. Trial of strength between rebels and forces loyal to Gaddafi in Ras Lanuf and Brega
	August	Operation Siren: assault on Tripoli. Tripoli under rebel control. Gaddafi's wife and three of his sons flee to Algeria. Moscow officially recognises the NTC. Gaddafi's Foreign Minister Abdelatif Obeidi is detained
	September	The EU lifts sanctions against Libyan ports, banks and companies. Interpol issues international arrest warrant for Gaddafi, his son and his intelligence chief. The IMF recognises the NTC. First public speech by the chairman of the NTC in Tripoli. China recognises the NTC as the «governing authority». Visits by Sarkozy, Cameron and Erdogan to Tripoli and Benghazi.
	october	Dead of gaddafi
november	Gaddafi's son and intelligence chiefs are captured	

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Chapter II

KOSOVO: CONFLICT IN THE HEART OF EUROPE. PRECEDENT OR SPECIAL CASE?

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SUMMARY

The Balkan Peninsula has been a necessary crossing point between East and West, being an object of greed of big empires and powers in the past and in the present. Due to its geostrategic importance, the Balkans has scarcely known periods of peace and stability, except during Tito's Yugoslavia where the lethargic powder keg was waiting for a change to explode.

Having many international implications, the conflict in Kosovo, difficult to solve and which has the risk of becoming a «frozen conflict», such as those of the former Soviet Union, is approached in this chapter. The self-proclaimed independence of Kosovo, the most sacred province for the Serbian, and the richest in mineral resources, has obtained the support of the United States and of the European powers but it does not have that of other nations as Russia, China or Spain.

Key Words

Kosovo, Balkan Peninsula, Yugoslavia, Tito, Serbia, Rugova, independence, Milosevic, UÇK, Resolution 1244, Martti Ahtisaari.

■ INTRODUCTION

The Balkan Peninsula is one of the three main peninsulas in southern Europe, connected to the continent by the Balkan Mountains to the east (the mountain range which gave its name to the peninsula) and the Dinaric Alps to the west.

On an administrative level it consists of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, the FYR of Macedonia⁽¹⁾, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia (including Kosovo) and Turkey's European region.

Apart from the terminological disagreement between Macedonia and Greece, two other important ongoing conflicts in the area can be identified: Kosovo and Cyprus. Whilst the latter is not physically situated on the Balkan Peninsula, it does represent a continuing dispute between two Balkan countries, Greece and Turkey.

The Republic of Cyprus gained its independence from the UK in 1960, joining the United Nations a month later. Four years later, in 1964, tension between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities led to the creation of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), which is still present on the island to supervise ceasefire directives, maintain the buffer zone and undertake humanitarian activities. Despite this presence, the country has been divided since the Turkish army invaded the island in 1974 and proclaimed the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, a territory that is only recognised by Turkey.

This chapter focuses on analysis of the Kosovo conflict, as this is considered to be the most important ongoing conflict in the region, both in terms of the role played by countries and the difficulty in finding a solution, with it close to becoming a «frozen conflict», such as those in the former Soviet Union. For this reason we will be focusing on the western region of the Balkan Peninsula - Croatia, Albania, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia - as this is indispensable in order to understand the Kosovan conflict. The following section will examine the conflict itself, its origins, the current situation, the foreign actors and perspectives for the future.

■ Geopolitical Overview of the Region

A defining characteristic of the region is that, although there are some narrow coastal plains, the morphology of the area is predominantly mountainous, a factor that has long hindered communications. These conditions have meant

⁽¹⁾ The use of the name *Macedonia* is rejected by Greece as it is also the name of a historic Greek region. After a compromise agreed upon by both parties in 1993, the provisional use of the name *the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* (FYROM) has been accepted. This conflict of terminology has prevented Macedonia from joining NATO.

Figure 2.1. Main ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia

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that the various ethnic groups⁽²⁾ in the region have remained impermeable to outside contact, representing an obstacle to regional integration. Current borders do not coincide with the distribution of ethnic groups, so that while in each country there is an ethnic majority, the other groups are also represented. This lack of integration has been a factor used by opportunist leaders seeking to incite inter-ethnic conflict, and thus a direct cause of the many conflicts that have taken place in the region.

There are two important racial groups in the area: Slavs and Albanians. The Slavs are in the majority in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro. Albanians make up the largest group in Albania, Macedonia and in Kosovo, and are a minority in Serbia and Montenegro.

The ethnic differentiation (see Figure 2.1) between the Slavs is due to their religion, and, to a lesser extent, their language: Serbs and Macedonians are Orthodox, Croats are Catholics and the majority of Bosnians are Muslims. Their language, with certain variations, is what was formally called Serbo-Croatian⁽³⁾ except in Macedonia, where Macedonian is spoken. Albanians are mainly Muslims with their language also known as Albanian.

⁽²⁾ Ethnic group. Human community defined by racial, linguistic, cultural etc. affinity

⁽³⁾ After the break-up of Yugoslavia, the term «Serbo-Croatian» is now considered incorrect. The current official names for the languages are Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Montenegrin. They are very similar, with differences in vocabulary, grammar and accent which do not hinder mutual understanding.

In the area we are analysing here we can say that the majority religion is Christian, both Catholic and Orthodox; nevertheless, due to centuries of Turkish domination there are also many Muslims, above all in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia.

Despite the difficult communication routes in this area it has always been the crossing point between East and West, the nexus between Europe and Asia, making its geostrategic importance an object of ambition for great empires and powers, both past and present. To give specific examples, Kosovo currently hosts the largest American military base in the world outside the US, whilst Russia has plans to make the region the point of entry for its energy resources in Europe.

Economically speaking, the Balkan states are not of great importance. Although there are important differences between the various countries, the post-conflict situation has stabilised, leading to an increase in foreign investment. A large part of this investment has come from industry, specifically in the area of mining, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, where there are abundant mineral resources including iron, lead, zinc and carbon. Special mention should also be made of the attempts to revitalise tourism, which before the wars was a growing sector in some of these countries. Belgrade has been referred to as the Barcelona of the Balkans, whilst Mostar and Dubrovnik live almost exclusively from tourism and in Croatia the sector represents 16% of GDP.

Nonetheless, organised crime, corruption and political instability currently appear to be insurmountable obstacles to further development in the region. On the other hand, the perspective of joining the European Union represents the main economic driving force in the Balkans.

All these circumstances are more severe in Kosovo, where unemployment, poverty and corruption are at very high levels (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. Country geopolitical indicators

INDICATOR	KOSOVO	SPAIN
GDP per capita*	6.600\$	29.400\$
Inflation*	3.5%	2%
GDP growth rate*	4%	- 0,1%
Balance of trade*	-US\$2.79 billion	-US\$63.65 billion
Defence expenditure as % of GDP	n/a	0,66%
Human development index **	n/a	0,863
Gini index*	30	32

Corruption Perceptions Index***	2,8 ¹	6,1
Literacy rate*	91,9%	98%
Life expectancy*	74 years (in 2004-2006)	81.17 years
Infant mortality*	35/1.000	3,39/1.000
Population growth*	1,5%	0,574%
% Urban population*	37%	77%
% Population under 14 years old*	27,2%	15,1%
% Population below the poverty line*	30%	19.8% (data for 2005)
% Unemployment*	45%	20,1%

Table 2.1: Data corresponding to 2010 unless otherwise stated.

* CIA data for 2010

** The UNDP Human Development Index does not include states that are not members of the United Nations.

*** Data from Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

■ BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

■ Historical Background

One cannot discuss Kosovo without understanding the political construction that was Yugoslavia and its disintegration which led to the rise of Balkan nationalism. We can situate the origin of Yugoslavia as the creation of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes after the First World War, with the Serbian Petar I Karadjordjevic as the king. For Serbia this union represented a way to bring all Serbians in the Austrian and Ottoman empires together in one state, under the rule of a Serbian king, whilst for Croatia and Slovenia it was a way to ensure their independence from Austria-Hungary. We shall see how these two aspirations would become the dominant trend in the coming conflicts. In 1929 the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes became the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, adopting this name, which translates as «the land of the southern Slavs», for the first time.

In 1943 the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was proclaimed, made up of the republics of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as two autonomous provinces within this latter republic - Kosovo and Vojvodina. After the Second World War, after a series of changes to its name, it ended up as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with Marshal Josip Broz «Tito» as head of state from this moment until his death in 1980. Tito was the main architect of this second Yugoslavia, multinational and socialist, which united this territory until 1991. Through an unbending perse-

cution of nationalism, and thanks to the granting of autonomy to the regions, he managed to calm the problems that were still there below the surface under this federal umbrella.

With the death of the charismatic socialist leader and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the breakup of Yugoslavia, defined by Tito himself as «a solid nation made up of six republics, five nations, four languages, three religions, two alphabets... and a single party», was only a question of time. The difficult balance that Tito managed to achieve after the Second World War was based on his own character and not a true common Yugoslavian identity.

As the 1974 Constitution established, when Tito died on 4 May 1980, a federal collegiate government was formed with eight presidents, one for each socialist republic within the federation, one for Kosovo and another for Vojvodina, which were still autonomous Serbian provinces. Each year, with the corresponding power struggles that ensued, one of these eight presidents would be appointed to lead the federation. Over the course of this decade, ethnic conflict became more accentuated and separatist movements grew in strength in the various republics and provinces, threatening the viability of the federation. The Albanian majority in Kosovo demanded greater independence and there were serious clashes between Serbians and Montenegrins throughout the 1980s.

Slobodan Milosevic emerged as an important figure during this decade, embodying the aspirations of nationalist Serbs. In 1989 he was elected president of Serbia. At that time he controlled four of the eight votes within the federal government: Serbia and Montenegro and the provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo. He then sought control over Macedonia in order to ensure a majority in the federal government and the power to modify the constitution in favour of Serbia. Evidently, these movements were closely followed - and with considerable mistrust - by Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Macedonia.

Due to this rise in nationalism, the 1990s featured war and secession among the territories that constituted Yugoslavia. The ten years between 1991 and 2001 saw a succession of Balkan wars that affected the six former republics of Yugoslavia. They would pitch Serbia, incited by Milosevic with his ideas of a Greater Serbia on the one hand, against Croats, Bosnians and Albanians, on the other. There was also fighting between Bosnians and Croats in the conflict for control of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Croats felt seriously threatened by Serbian nationalism. High-ranking Serbian politicians openly stated their desire to see large parts of Croatia reassigned to Serbia. Slovenia, also very wary, passed a constitution that established the precedence of Slovenian legislation over Yugoslavian law, explicitly stating the right of Slovenia to secede from Yugoslavia.

Thus, in 1991 Slovenia and Croatia unilaterally declared their independence. Serbian resistance to the disintegration of Yugoslavia led to armed conflict in both cases that culminated in the recognition, by the then European Community, of Slovenia and Croatia as independent nation states the following year. Also in 1991, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina proclaimed their independence. Serbia and Montenegro remained united in the New Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which disappeared with the secession of Montenegro in 2006 after a referendum.

In Slovenia the war lasted ten days with few casualties. The ease with which this armed conflict was concluded was due to the ethnic homogeneity of Slovenia and, specifically, the absence of a Serbian population, making it that much easier for Serbia to accept the proposed peace agreement. Slovenia recovered swiftly from the consequences of the war and by 2004 was a member of NATO and the European Union.

Macedonia managed to gain independence without a single drop of blood being spilt. In Croatia, however, the price to be paid for their independence was greater. The conflict lasted five years with some 13,000 deaths and over 2,500 disappeared. Here there were areas of the country where Serbs were in the majority. It was the first time the UN had intervened in a European conflict.

Especially bloody was the Bosnian War, which also lasted five years, with over 278,000 dead and 2.2 million people displaced. Bosnia-Herzegovina had a far more complex ethnic map. The existence of a majority Muslim community, the Bosnians, alongside smaller numbers of Serbs and Croats, was a determining factor at the start of the conflict, given that once Slovenia and Croatia had become independent, the future for Bosnia was a Yugoslavia dominated by the Serbs, who were Orthodox Christians. This possibility was never going to be acceptable for Bosnia's Croats or Muslims. The depletion of the combatant forces and international intervention led to the signing in 1995 of the Dayton Agreement that put an end to hostilities.

Kosovo was also a source of conflict in the 1990s. Once the Bosnian War was over, a part of the Kosovo Albanian population organised itself into the Kosovo Liberation Army⁽⁴⁾ in order to attack the Serbian authorities. Serbia intervened with such harshness that NATO, without United Nations resolution deemed it opportune to become involved in the conflict. In 1999 the UN took over administration of Kosovo.

These Yugoslavian wars of secession, the bloodiest conflicts on European soil since the Second World War, left a large part of the Balkan territory submerged in poverty. The dismantling of the former Yugoslavia into the nations that had

⁽⁴⁾ UÇK (*Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës*) in Albanian, KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army) in English.

once been independent has been generally accepted by Serbia, albeit with serious difficulties and great loss of life. The Kosovo situation is different, however, as the Serbs consider the province to be untouchable, symbolically representing the very heartland of their nation. Many of the most sacred religious monuments for Serbians are located here and this is especially important since the nexus of Serbian nationalism is the Orthodox faith.

■ Background to the Kosovo Conflict

The Serbian defeat at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 paved the way for centuries of dominance by the Ottoman Empire. There are few reliable accounts of this battle, which immediately passed into Serbian folklore along with Prince Lazar's death in the fighting, becoming in the process a symbol of Serbian patriotism and their desire for independence. It became mythologised in popular song and in the literary renaissance of the Serbian language in the 19th Century. It once again came to the fore when it was invoked by Slobodan Milosevic in 1989 in a speech celebrating the 600th anniversary of the battle⁽⁵⁾.

The Albanians meanwhile, have always considered themselves to be the true indigenous population of Kosovo and use this as the basis for their historical claim (see Figure 2.2). When the modern Albanian state was established in 1912, around half the population lived beyond its borders, the majority in Kosovo and in certain parts of Macedonia. In 1913, after the Balkan Wars, when Kosovo was ceded to Serbia, the Kosovo Albanians refused to accept this situation, considering that, after the Second World War, it should now form a part of Albania. This was not the case and in the face of Kosovan discontent and unease in the other republics, Tito designed a new constitution for Yugoslavia in 1974 which afforded Kosovo the status of an autonomous province within Serbia.

The sense of frustration among many Serbs who saw in this new situation for Kosovo a clear sign of the position of inferiority that Serbia had within the Federation was exploited by Milosevic as soon as he came to power. Thus, in 1990 he brought an end to this special status for Kosovo and imposed a state of emergency in the province. We can identify this act as the direct origin of the Kosovo conflict, a region which, while seeking greater independence and its annexation by Albania, saw its aspirations destroyed in one fell swoop. This and other events, as has been seen previously, provoked the leaders of the other

(5) From the Gazimestan speech:

«Six centuries ago, Serbia heroically defended itself in the field of Kosovo, but it also defended Europe. Serbia was at that time the bastion that defended the European culture, religion, and European society in general. Therefore today it appears not only unjust but even unhistorical and completely absurd to talk about Serbia being separate from Europe.»

Long live Serbia!

Long live Yugoslavia! Long live peace and brotherhood among peoples!»

Figure 2.2 Ethnic division of Kosovo in 2005



Republics, initially Slovenia and Croatia, to seek a way out of a federation dominated by Milosevic's desire for ever greater power.

For a large part of the 1990s, amidst the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the majority of the Kosovo Albanian population adopted a policy of passive resistance to Serbia. It seemed that critical mass would ensure that things would fall into place on their own. Demographic changes had doubled the number of the Kosovo Albanian population, which was further augmented by numerous Albanians fleeing the Maoist regime in Albania, whilst the number of Serbians in Kosovo remained stable.

In September 1991, Kosovo Albanians organised a referendum which resulted in a majority vote for independence. The following year elections were held, which were not recognised by the Belgrade government, in which Ibrahim Rugova, the leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo, was elected president. Although a social and political structure was set up in parallel to the Serbian state, Rugova's pacifist policy did not bear fruit.

■ **1996-1999. Guerrilla War between the UÇK and the Serbian and Yugoslavian Security Forces**

When the European Union recognised the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, consisting of Serbia and Montenegro, it no longer demanded what it had defended until then: devolution for Kosovo, returning the autonomy it had lost. No further conflict was the priority and Rugova's strategy was of no concern as it was pacifist in nature. This «propping up», through the absence of any censure or pressure, of Milosevic, who at the time was seen as part of the solution, led to a radical shift in the posture of some Kosovo Albanians. Leaving behind Rugova's pacifism, this group organised themselves in the mid-1990s to form the Kosovo Liberation Army (UÇK), a group which until 1999 was considered to be a terrorist organisation by the United States and other European countries.

When the Albanian state collapsed in 1997 with the virtual disappearance of the police and army, large amounts of arms ended up in the hands of people who saw them as a way of offering support to the UÇK. It was at this point, in 1998, that the US and the EU changed their position. Their posture, which had been one of distancing themselves from a low-intensity conflict, shifted to one of greater implication now that Kosovo was at war. Their position went from rejecting both the independence of Kosovo and its simple integration within Serbia, to full support for independence.

■ **24th March 1999 - 11th June 1999. War between Yugoslavia and NATO Forces**

Serbia responded with severity to the UÇK attacks, on the one hand provoking a considerable increase in people joining the terrorist group and, on the other hand, a humanitarian catastrophe which justified the intervention of the international community.

Thousands of Kosovans fled into exile whilst hundreds of others disappeared without trace. The United Nations insisted that Belgrade put a halt to the violence through Security Council Resolutions 1160 and 1199. The international community brought the warring factions together at Rambouillet Castle, where

a series of agreements were signed which were never implemented, just as the Holbrooke-Milosevic accords signed a few months earlier had been ignored.

In the following months Milosevic sought to turn the situation around by instigating large-scale ethnic cleansing which would change the state of negotiations by irrevocably decimating the enemy. NATO's response was to implement Operation Allied Force on 24th March 1999, firstly against Serbian forces deployed in Kosovo and, given the very limited success of this focus, through air attacks against strategic objectives in Serbia itself. NATO bombing lasted 78 days and concluded with an agreement that represented the surrender of the Belgrade regime.

Yugoslavia and NATO signed an agreement in Macedonia which required the full withdrawal of all Serbian forces and the deployment of the KFOR peace-keeping force, under allied command. The war ended on 11th June with the official announcement by Javier Solana, then NATO Secretary General, after confirming the Serbian troop withdrawal. The international agreement on Kosovo was set out in UN Security Council Resolution 1244 that also included the withdrawal of the Serbian administration and established a temporary transitional UN administration in the province, with a view to ensuring «substantial autonomy» for Kosovo without prejudice to the «territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia»⁽⁶⁾. This point is of fundamental importance since Serbia signed the surrender on the condition that it would maintain territorial integrity.

On 27th May 1999 Milosevic was accused of crimes against humanity in Kosovo by the International Tribunal in The Hague, thus becoming the first sitting Head of State to be charged by an international court.

■ UN Protectorate and the Declaration of Independence

The UN took over administration of Kosovo in 1999 and its mission continues, despite the fact that on 17th February 2008 Kosovo unilaterally declared independence, as the other former Yugoslav republics had done.

Since 1999 Kosovo had existed within a complex legal framework, as a temporary international protectorate, awaiting review at an undetermined moment in the future. The violent events of March 2004, which resulted in numerous deaths and the destruction of many homes and Orthodox places of worship, led Kofi Annan, then Secretary General of the United Nations to appoint a Special Envoy to bring an end to this temporary situation and seek a definitive solution for Kosovo.

The person chosen for this role was the former president of Finland, Martti Ahtisaari, who held fifteen negotiation sessions in Vienna throughout 2006

⁽⁶⁾ S/RES/1244 (1999) 10th June 1999

which dealt with areas such as decentralisation and the protection of minorities, without reaching an agreement on the status of Kosovo. Belgrade continued to prefer the option of autonomy whilst Pristina insisted on full independence.

«I regret to say that at the end of the day there was no will from the parties to move away from their previously stated positions», said Ahtisaari after concluding the final round of negotiations⁽⁷⁾. In order to avoid a complete breakdown of the situation, the international community decided that the Special Envoy should draw up a proposal to define the definitive political status of Kosovo.

Thus, in March 2007 he recommended in a report that a future Kosovan Statute should recognise independence supervised by the international community as the only viable option, and also presented a Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement. The immediate support of the United States for Ahtisaari's proposal was not surprising, as Washington had been committed to Kosovan independence since the start of the armed conflict.

In a letter dated 26th March 2007 to the President of the Security Council, Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations gave his full support to both Ahtisaari's recommendation, that of supervised independence, and the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement, representing a change of position with respect to previous resolutions.

Serbia and Russia rejected the proposal for independence, stating that they would only be prepared to accept substantial autonomy under international supervision for Kosovo («more than autonomy but less than independence»). Despite the UN Security Council not passing a new resolution (it should not be forgotten that Russia has the right to veto), it was clear that the US openly supported full independence. The then president George W. Bush publicly promised independence for Kosovo in 2007⁽⁸⁾.

The Ahtisaari Plan was implemented some years later when, with the support of the United States, Kosovo proclaimed its independence from Serbia and drew up a constitution⁽⁹⁾ based literally on the aforementioned plan which, in the opinion of Russia, gave the appearance of supposed international acceptance.

Those who defend the legality of this declaration argue that the condition requiring «substantial autonomy» for Kosovo within Serbian sovereignty was

⁽⁷⁾ El Mundo 11th March 2007

⁽⁸⁾ BBC News, 9th June 2007. El Mundo, 9th June 2007: «The president of the USA, George W. Bush, declared that «the time has come» to approve the UN plan proposing supervised independence for Kosovo, despite the opposition of Serbia and Russia.»

⁽⁹⁾ Kosovo Declaration of Independence, paragraph 1 (a Spanish translation of the English text can be found at http://estaticos.elmundo.es/documentos/2008/02/17/independencia_Kosovo.pdf).

established under Resolution 1244 as a temporary measure as was the subrogation by UN member states of the principle of Serbia's territorial integrity:

«10. Authorizes the Secretary-General, with the assistance of relevant international organizations, to establish an international civil presence in Kosovo in order to provide an interim administration for Kosovo under which the people of Kosovo can enjoy substantial autonomy within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and which will provide transitional administration while establishing and overseeing the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants of Kosovo»

Without American pressure other paths toward the partition of Kosovo would undoubtedly have been taken which would almost certainly have been less painful for Serbia; a gradual return to the status of autonomy, extended within the Serbian state on the condition of the future incorporation of Serbia into the European Union or the holding of a referendum on self-determination for Kosovo under the auspices of the United Nations which would have established the formal basis for independence.

■ THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CONFLICT

Under the auspices of the European Union, in March 2011 the first conversations between Serbia and Kosovo took place since the unilateral declaration of Kosovan independence. These contacts were put back until after the summer and it seems possible that they will be postponed *sine die* due to episodes of tension in the months of July and August on Kosovo's northern border.

As Serbia and Bosnia do not recognise the independence of Kosovo, the trading of Kosovan products remains suspended. For this reason, Kosovan Albanian forces took over border posts on the Serbian frontier, over which they had no previous control, in order to do the same: prevent the entry of Serbian products.

These actions provoked disturbances in the area in which a Kosovan policeman was killed and a border post was burned.

NATO's KFOR mission was forced to increase the number of troops by 6,000. The agreement between the two parties, under the mediation of KFOR, put the border crossing points between Serbia and Kosovo in the hands of international troops until September, when talks were resumed. The pressure on Serbia was firm and clear. In the words of the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, addressed to the Serbian president Boris Tadic: «Kosovo or Europe, you'll have to decide».

■ THE ROLE OF FOREIGN ACTORS

Kosovo has been and continues to be a very complex problem for the international community. It has not been possible to reach a consensus on how to tackle the matter.

In the Kosovo conflict, the decision on intervention was taken by the international community based on humanitarian motives. The media and politicians have actively participated in the positioning of public opinion. We have, for example, the words of the German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer in which he claimed that intervention was necessary to prevent «a second Auschwitz»⁽¹⁰⁾ or British Prime Minister Tony Blair declaring that «Good has triumphed over evil, justice has overcome barbarism and the values of civilisation have prevailed»⁽¹¹⁾.

Since Kosovo declared its independence in February 2008, 81 countries⁽¹²⁾ have recognised its status as an independent nation state (see Tables 2.2 and 2.3). The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of this declaration of independence, as requested by Serbia, does not seem to have done much to change this panorama. By a majority of ten to four, the International Court of Justice was of the opinion that the Kosovo declaration «does not violate international law, UN Security Council Resolution 1244, nor the constitutional framework» imposed by UNMIK.

Table 2.2. Countries Recognising Kosovo's Independence. Information updated in August 2011

COUNTRIES RECOGNISING KOSOVO'S INDEPENDENCE		
Organisation	Total number of member countries	Number of member countries recognising Kosovo's independence
UNO	193	81
UN Security Council	5	3
European Union	27	22
NATO	28	24
OSCE	56	36
Arab League	22	10

⁽¹⁰⁾ Die Zeit. 27/01/2005

⁽¹¹⁾ Tony Blair. *Statement on the Suspension of NATO Air Strikes against Yugoslavia*. London, 10th June 1999. At the time of writing, this report is no longer available on British government websites.

⁽¹²⁾ Information updated on 28th August 2011

Tabla 2.3. Misiones internacionales en Kosovo. Datos de agosto de 2011

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS IN KOSOVO.			
ORGANISATION	MISSION	START DATE	STANCE ON INDEPENDENCE
UNO	UNMIK	1999	Neutral
OSCE	OSCE MISSION IN KOSOVO	1999	Neutral
NATO	KFOR	1999	Neutral
EUROPEAN UNION	EULEX	February 2008	Neutral status
INTERNATIONAL CIVILIAN OFFICE	ICO	February 2008	Recognises independence. Its mission is to supervise it

The fact that there is not a unanimous UN Security Council or European Union position seriously hinders Kosovo's participation in the most important international organisations such as the United Nations, the European Union and NATO. If we talk exclusively in economic terms, then Kosovo has had no problem in joining the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank.

■ The United Nations

As far as UN action is concerned, we can see an evolution from 2007 onward, after the presentation of the Ahtisaari report, showing a change from that established in earlier resolutions⁽¹³⁾, which supported «substantial autonomy» for Kosovo. Although the United Nations as a block has not recognised Kosovan independence, 81 countries from among the 193 members have done so.

With the Russian refusal to recognise Kosovo as an independent country and its intention to veto any such recognition by the Security Council, Kosovo could not be admitted as a full member of the Organisation.

The UN has maintained the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo - UNMIK - since 1999. This mission seeks to guarantee a peaceful life for the inhabitants of Kosovo and promote regional stability in the Western Balkans.

■ The OSCE

The day after the declaration of independence of Kosovo, the President of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Ikka Kanervva declared that each of the 56 members of the OSCE would decide their position on an

⁽¹³⁾ UN Security Council Resolutions regarding Kosovo: Resolution 1160 of 31st March 1998, Resolution 1199 of 23rd September 1998, Resolution 1203 of 24th October 1998, Resolution 1239 of 1999 and Resolution 1244 of 10th June 1999.

individual basis. To date, 36 countries have recognised Kosovo as an independent country.

The current OSCE mission in Kosovo began in 1999. Since then, the OSCE has worked on the establishment of a democratic system and monitoring respect for human rights. Referring to Resolution 1244, Decision N° 305 of the OSCE Permanent Council determined that the OSCE Kosovo Mission, within the general framework of UNMIK, should «assume leadership of matters relating to institutional development and the strengthening of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.» Russia and Serbia opposed the continuance of the OSCE Kosovo Mission.

■ European Union

At the outset of the conflict, the European Union was in favour of a negotiated settlement with Serbia, based on principles of non-imposition of a statute on the parties, the guarantee of minority rights and the non-division of territory, upholding Resolution 1244. Nonetheless, the European Parliament, in its Resolution of 29th March 2007, expressed its support and favourably received the proposals for the solution of the Kosovo Statute presented by Martti Ahtisaari⁽¹⁴⁾. Since this date, the discourse from Europe has referred to inevitability of Kosovan independence process, classifying it as a *sui generis* case which cannot be extrapolated to any other situation. Given the lack of an agreement, recognition of Kosovo was left to each member state, once again demonstrating the long path that remains before a true European policy can be constructed.

Of the 27 members of the EU, 22 recognised the declaration of independence in Kosovo. Germany, France and the United Kingdom were the first countries to recognise Kosovo as an independent country. The countries that as yet have not recognised Kosovo are: Spain, Cyprus, Greece, Slovakia and Romania. As there is no unanimous position, the EU Mission in Kosovo, EULEX, continues to assist local authorities under a status of neutrality.

■ NATO

On 13th October 1998 NATO launched Operation Joint Guardian, with the deployment of a total of 45,000 troops from all NATO countries in Macedonia, whilst on 24th March 1999 it launched Operation Allied Force, which concluded with the surrender of Belgrade. Due to the position of Russia and China

⁽¹⁴⁾ «1. Supports the UN-led process to determine the final status of Kosovo and the efforts to establish a viable framework that guarantees stability and protection for all the communities in Kosovo and long-term, self-sustaining economic and social development; endorses Mr Ahtisaari's Comprehensive Proposal for a Kosovo Status Settlement and takes the view that sovereignty supervised by the international community is the best option for securing those objectives; on this basis, expects the UN Security Council to adopt swiftly a new resolution replacing Resolution 1244 (1999)». The future of Kosovo and the role of the EU. INI/2006/2267

in opposing all action against Serbia, it had not been possible to draft UN Security Council Resolutions authorising the use of force. Even without the backing that such a resolution would have offered, NATO considered the need to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe constituted a legal basis for a military campaign. With this experience, and in order to avoid taking any action without the backing of a UN resolution in situations considered similar, in 2005 the United Nations approved the concept of responsibility for protecting civilians from their own governments, backed by Resolution 1973 which in 2011 gave the green light to intervention in Libya⁽¹⁵⁾.

Currently, 24 of the 28 members of NATO recognised Kosovo as an independent state.

Since 1999 the KFOR Mission has been operational whose functions include maintaining security in Kosovo and supervising the training of members of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF), as required by the Ahtisaari Plan.

At the meeting of NATO defence ministers in June 2009, the Alliance agreed to gradually reduce the size of KFOR, abandoning certain duties such as guarding borders or key Serbian religious sites that are gradually being handed over to the Kosovan police. After the altercations at the two border posts in the north of Kosovo this summer, KFOR have increased troop numbers by 6,000.

■ Russia

The Russian Federation does not recognise the independence of Kosovo, as well as vigorously opposing the approval of a new UN Security Council Resolution annulling Resolution 1244.

The defeat of Serbia has also represented the defeat of Russia. At least, this is the perception of the Russian people. Having said that, the relationship between Serbia and Russia can hardly be called an «alliance»⁽¹⁶⁾. In strategic terms, Belgrade does not see its future as a Russian ally, but as a member of the European Union and even NATO.

The most important economic agreements between the two countries relate to the transit of Russian gas which, having come through Bulgaria, must cross Serbia in order to reach Central Europe. Culturally, although both countries share the orthodox religion, opinion studies indicate that Russians do not feel themselves to be especially close to Serbs.

The main reason for Russia's refusal to accept the independence of Kosovo is the precedent it will create for potential claims for independence in the repub-

⁽¹⁵⁾ BALLESTEROS, Miguel Ángel. La estrategia de «las tres D» para Libia. (The Strategy of the 3 Ds for Libya») *Revista Española de Defensa*. May 2011. p. 16

⁽¹⁶⁾ Oksana Antonenko (2007): *Russia and the Deadlock over Kosovo*, *Survival*, 49:3. DOI:10.1080/00396330701564794

lic in the North Caucasus. Furthermore, Russia feels that in accordance with international law, any secession must be approved by the country whose region wished to secede. However, six months after Kosovo's unilateral declaration, Russia recognised the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, although in these cases, it was in response to acts of aggression by Georgia against the rebel regions. Whilst independence for Kosovo has been recognised by 81 countries, Abkhazian and South Ossetian independence has only been recognised by Russia, Nicaragua, Venezuela and the Pacific island state of Nauru.

■ China

China maintained close ties with the former Yugoslavian president Slobodan Milosevic and opposed NATO intervention in Yugoslavia in 1999. Beijing has expressed its concern for the Kosovo declaration of independence with half an eye on Taiwan and the autonomous regions of Tibet and Xinjiang, where acute nationalist tensions exist.

■ USA

As we have seen, the United States has openly supported independence for Kosovo and has put pressure on the United Nations to pass a new resolution to this end. In October 2010, Hillary Clinton visited the Balkans, reconfirming American commitment to Kosovan sovereignty, its territorial integrity and economic development.

Much has been said of the geostrategic advantage that the US has taken from the conflict in Kosovo. In June 1999, the United States opened Camp Bondssteel military base, under NATO command, in Kosovo. This is the largest US military base in the world not on American soil. This enormous European base has been open for over 10 years although it seems it will be closed soon, according to the US Ambassador in Pristina, Christopher Dell⁽¹⁷⁾. Its strategic importance has decreased now that the Iraq front has closed and the days of the Afghan front would appear to be numbered. No country is exempt from the economic crisis and the upkeep of the base is very expensive.

■ Spain

The declaration of independence in Kosovo has underlined Spain's involvement in the conflict.

From the start of the NATO KFOR mission in 1999, 22,000 Spanish soldiers have taken part. Also worthy of special mention is the Spanish collaboration with both the UNMIK civilian mission, with the participation of the Guardia Civil, and the OSCE mission.

⁽¹⁷⁾ [Jane's Intelligence Review. 15th March 2011.](#)

After the Kosovan declaration of independence, the Spanish government decided to withdraw its troops, considering that the mission it had been entrusted to complete had concluded.

■ CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

Faced with the «Europe or Kosovo» dilemma, as set by the German Chancellor, the Serbian president Boris Tadic has responded in blunt terms⁽¹⁸⁾ that he would choose Kosovo. This is, however, an attempt to show strength in light of the forthcoming elections in Serbia. Europe is the only economic solution for the countries of the former Yugoslavia, there is no other option on the horizon.

■ Possible Outcomes to the Kosovo Conflict

- A reversal of positions with the reintegration of Kosovo into Serbia will not be taking place in the short or medium term.
- The partition of Kosovo, that is, that the regions in the north, under de facto Serbian control, join Serbia, with the rest constituting an independent Kosovo, would also seem improbable. It is possible that this is a proposal that Serbia has prepared, seeing it as the lesser of two evils. Nevertheless, after recent events in the area, Germany now refuses to accept this possibility even before it is suggested. Neither will Kosovo accept this solution in principle although it would be of benefit to the new country, as the recognition of Serbia and Russia would allow it to join the United Nations. In any event, it does not seem a likely option as the United States and the majority of the countries in the European Union are also opposed to this possibility which may lead to attempts to redefine other borders in the area.
- The final possibility is the recognition of Kosovo as an independent nation supported by a UN Security Council Resolution. Some observers have already claimed that Kosovo is becoming a «frozen conflict». This would seem to be the most probable scenario: the Kosovan situation is postponed because it is unable to advance given the opposition of Russia and China to its independence, while the other Balkan countries one by one end up joining the European Union and NATO.

■ Viability of Kosovo within the International Context of the Current Economic Recession

Kosovo will be an unviable state unless it continues to receive significant economic international support. If the United States continues to wind down operations in Kosovo, as it has announced, it would seem that this new nation

⁽¹⁸⁾ Boris Tadic: «If we see demands (...) to make a choice, my answer will be that Serbia will not abandon either of its legitimate interests». 26th August 2011. Reuters/EP

would cease to be a protectorate of the UN and become an EU protectorate, assuming that the admittedly pessimistic economic perspectives so allow it.

After 1999, the Kosovan economy has depended on foreign financing. The economic structure of Kosovo is based exclusively on trade and services, which are maintained due to the presence of an important international community in the region (see Table 2.4), and on money sent home by migrant workers. Unemployment in Kosovo runs at 60%.

Table 2.4. Kosovo's Trade with Other Countries

TRADE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES (% OF GDP)	BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	ITALY	GERMANY	AUSTRIA	SLOVENIA	FYROM	RUSSIA	HUNGARY	ROMANIA
KOSOVO EXPORTS	13,1	10,9	9,9	5,4	5,4	5,1	4,6	4,3	
KOSOVO IMPORTS	12,2	9,5		4,9	6,6			6,8	4
GDP of Kosovo: US \$5.591 billion									

Kosovo is an unfinished state, both from an internal point of view, in the way that its institutions function, and externally, evidenced by the level of acceptance of Kosovo and its integration within the international system⁽¹⁹⁾. The basic components required for a legal system are in place, although as a whole it doesn't function. The police, public prosecutors and courts are at best erratic actors, subservient to political inference and the abuse of power. Organised crime and corruption⁽²⁰⁾ are very widespread and continue to grow⁽²¹⁾. They are, in fact, exported to Europe. Kosovo is a sick artery within the heart of Europe.

■ Possible Consequences

The example of Kosovo may encourage the construction of a Greater Albania, made up of Albanians from Macedonia, Montenegro and the Presevo Valley bordering Albania. There are also projects in place seeking to establish a Greater Serbia and a Greater Croatia which could see themselves strengthened, with fighting amongst the Serbs and Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina to rejoin Serbia and Croatia respectively. However, as has been seen with recent events on Kosovo's northern border, most problems arise in Serbian areas of Kosovo which have been operating in parallel to the Kosovan Albanian areas since

⁽¹⁹⁾ ERNST, Andreas (2011): Fuzzy Governance: State-Building in Kosovo Since 1999 as Interaction Between International and Local Actors, 7:2, 123-139. DOI: 10.1080/17419166.2022.572781

⁽²⁰⁾ PHILLIPS, DAVID.L. The Balkans' Underbelly. World Policy Journal. Fall 2010

⁽²¹⁾ The Rule of Law in Independent Kosovo. 19th May 2010. International Crisis Group. Crisis Group Europe Report n° 204

1999. The desire of these countries to join the European Union should temporarily halt these aspirations.

Within an international context the situation regarding Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence could be considered to be a favourable precedent to future independence processes. Furthermore, the apparent contradiction with that set out in Resolution 1244 could result in more distrust in the future forcing us to greatly extend the use of the term «frozen conflict».

■ CHRONOLOGY

Table 2.5. Timeline of the Conflict

TIMELINE OF THE CONFLICT		
YEAR	DATE	EVENTS
1974		New constitution for the Federation. Kosovo and Vojvodina become autonomous provinces.
1980		Tito dies aged 88.
1989	03.1989	Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic withdraws the rights to autonomy granted to Kosovo and Vojvodina under the 1974 constitution.
1990	07.1990	The ethnic Albanian leaders of Kosovo declare independence from Serbia.
	09.1990	The sacking of more than 100,000 ethnic Albanian workers, including government employees and media workers, prompts a general strike.
1991		Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia declare their independence.
1992	05.03.1992	Declaration of independence by Bosnia and Herzegovina.
	07.1992	Ibrahim Rugova is elected president of the self-proclaimed republic of Kosovo.
1998	03-09.1998	Open conflict between Serbian police and KLA.
	09.1998	NATO issues ultimatum to Milosevic to stop the crackdown on ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.
	13.10.1998	NATO launches Operation Joint Guardian.
1999	23.03.1999	NATO launches Operation Allied Force.
	10.06.1999	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.
2006	07.2006	Vienna hosts first direct talks between Serbs and Kosovans since 1999 on the future status of Kosovo.
2007	03.2007	United Nations special envoy Martti Ahtisaari presents his Final Status Proposal for Kosovo to the Security Council
2008	17.02.2008	Kosovo unilaterally declares independence.
	12.2008	EULEX takes charge of police, justice and customs services in Kosovo.

2011	03.2011	Serbia and Kosovo start direct talks to try to bring an end to the conflict.
	07-08 2011	Tension at border posts in the north of Kosovo. Pristina prohibits Serbian imports. Kosovan policeman killed. KFOR increases its force to 6,000.
	2.09.2011	Talks resume between Serbia and Kosovo under the auspices of the European Union. Kosovan customs stamps accepted.
	16.09.2011	EULEX takes over operations at the border customs posts between Kosovo and Serbia, with the help of Kosovan officials.

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Chapter III

MIDDLE EAST: IRREVERSIBLE CHANGE

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SUMMARY

The relative calm that the Middle East has known for almost three years has disappeared as a result of popular uprisings that have spread throughout the Arab world. The future geopolitical landscape in the area will be determined by ongoing changes in direction. The starting point is that the enormous complexity and volatility of the peaceful environment hinders analysis to ensure valid prospects in the medium term. However, this paper seeks to explain three of the aspects considered most relevant for the regional stability: the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Egyptian-Israeli relations and the explosive situation in Syria.

Key words

Middle East, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Sinai, Syria

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades the Middle East⁽¹⁾ has been removed from world political and social events (see Figure 3.1). Largely oblivious to the strategic transformations that were unfolding on a global level, the various States that make up this region, of vital importance to the planet, have remained outside the dynamics that have shook other parts of the world. It could be argued that in reality, the last events of indisputable importance for the area were the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel in 1978 and the Iranian revolution in 1979.

Figure 3.1. Map of the Middle East



⁽¹⁾ This paper considers the Middle East in its widest sense, including countries such as Iran and Turkey which have an essential influence on affairs in the region.

Not even the fall of the USSR in the early 1990s, or, a decade later, the start of the poorly-named «global war on terror» and the subsequent interventions led by western countries in Iraq and Afghanistan, have altered the geostrategic constants in the Middle East. The permanent Arab-Israeli conflict, with its successive phases of open armed confrontation and «hot peace», as well as the arduous international search for a stable solution to the problem, represent the essential parameters. As a consequence, the internal situation for the States involved, not only the Arab nations but also Israel, has been determined by the conflict itself. With western acquiescence in general and US compliance in particular, Arab regimes in the area, mainly autocratic in nature and with high levels of corruption, have remained in power using the excuse that this was the ideal manner to ensure that the fragile regional stability continued. For its part, Israel has shown itself to be satisfied with identifying specific counterparts with whom it can conduct subtle military dissuasion.

Nevertheless, these historical parameters have been radically redrawn since early 2011, when the suicide of a young Tunisian became the epicentre of mass popular protests which have spread with unexpected speed and virulence to most Arab countries. The geopolitical consequences of these protests in the medium and long term are, as yet, unforeseeable, although the immediate impact is undeniable.

The Middle East scenario is being redesigned by these uprisings which are leading vast numbers of Arabs in the area to demand socio-economic improvements and respect for the individual. The surprising transformations that are taking place, especially in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Yemen, would seem to be paving the way for a transition toward a new Middle East whose final form is still an unknown. It is questionable whether or not the changes will lead to government models in line with western democracies, offering greater economic and social opportunities for their people, and peaceful coexistence with Israel, or if, on the contrary, radicalism and religious fundamentalism will impose their rules, meaning that the stable, lasting peace that the region has sought for so long proves once again to be a mere utopia.

From the initial premise that the enormous complexity and volatility of the environment hinder a measured analysis of the facts and the gaining of insight into viable medium-term perspectives, this paper seeks to study three of the most important effects that the ongoing headlong social and political transformation is considered to be having on regional stability: the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Egyptian-Israeli relations and the explosive situation in Syria.

■ BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

The eternal conflict between Israelis and Palestinians (see Figure 3.2) remains at the centre of regional instability and continues to represent the greatest risk to peace. The efforts of the international community over recent months to find a breakthrough, evidently a difficult task given the irreconcilable positions of those involved, has produced results which one would have to say are disheartening. Even the Obama administration, which prioritised finding a solution to this conflict when it came to power in 2009, has shown signs of weariness. Nonetheless, the transcendental influence of the popular revolts, the internal evolution of both Israel and Palestine and the request before the United Nation to recognise Palestine as an independent state, leads us to hope, albeit cautiously, that the peace process may in fact enter a new phase.

On the other hand, the sudden changes in recent months in the relations between Egypt and Israel represent another point of considerable interest. Three days after the 33rd anniversary of the 1978 Camp David Accords, which marked the end of the conflict between the two countries and Egypt's recognition of the state of Israel, relations between them have been subjected to the worst diplomatic crisis since the accords were signed. Egypt's reaction to the tragic death of five members of their security forces deployed to guard the Sinai border, in a military operation perpetrated by Israel outside their territory, has awoken Israelis to a new reality. The television images shown around the world of a young Egyptian pulling down the Israeli flag from their embassy in Cairo, amidst the celebrations of an inflamed crowd, clearly demonstrated popular Arab resentment regarding the Palestine situation and that the passivity that marked the Hosni Mubarak era is now history.

The third and final element on which this analysis will be focusing is the explosive situation in Syria. The difficult circumstances in which the country finds itself have a decisive influence, not only on the Arab-Israeli conflict in general terms but also with respect to the relations between the various Arab countries in the region such as Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Iran, with the underlying confrontation between Sunnis and Shiites and the muffled struggle for regional hegemony. On this point, Turkey's possible role also deserves reflection.

Figure 3.2. Israel



■ THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CONFLICT

■ The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

From January 2009 onward, after the conclusion of Operation Cast Lead, the heavily-criticised Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip, a tacit ceasefire has existed. During this period of time, in which Israel has abstained from carrying out «selective elimination» against the leaders it considers to be terrorists and who participate in planning attacks on Israel, military action by both parties has been limited to isolated incidents.

However, despite what might have been expected, this ceasefire has not seen any significant advances in the peace process. On the contrary, peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, based on the so-called «Two State Solution», have remained paralysed since mid-2010. Palestinians refuse to negotiate, at least publicly⁽²⁾, whilst Israel continues with its policy of building settlements in occupied territories on the West Bank (see Figure 3.3). It should be remembered that in September 2010 Israel ended the partial moratorium that it had kept in place for ten months, allowing the building of new homes in Jewish colonies on the West Bank. Thus in early August 2011, the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, gave the green light to the building of 930 houses in Har Homa, a Jewish settlement near Bethlehem. Furthermore, in September, authorisation was given to construct over 3,000 homes in various West Bank locations, including Jerusalem.

Figure 3.3. West Bank



Convinced in the main that they will not achieve their political objectives through violence, and as a step toward breaking the current status quo, the Palestinians seem to be seeking recognition from the United Nations for an independent state based on the following principles: The borders that existed prior to the 1967 Six-Day War, in other words, those stipulated in the 1949 Armistice, and which include the Gaza Strip (see Figure 3.4), the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The text of the Palestinian proposal is expected to be put before the UN General Assembly at its annual session in late September.

⁽²⁾ In recent months, Shimon Peres has held at least four meetings with the Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas. Information obtained from: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/netanyahu-examining-possible-future-borders-of-a-palestinian-state-1.381422>. Date of query 1st September 2011

According to international law, in order that the UN decision can have a practical effect, the approval of the Security Council is required. If, as has been confirmed, the US vetoes any such initiative, the Palestinian representatives plan to ask the General Assembly for a positive resolution. Here, the vast majority of its members would be prone to view a motion to recognise Palestine as an independent state favourably, as over 120 nations have already done officially. The General Assembly may grant Palestine the status of an «observer», based on the same formula used with the Vatican which, although it has no right to vote, may sign up to UN agreements and international treaties.

Figure 3.4. Gaza Strip



Although, as has been pointed out, the General Assembly does not have the attributes required to admit Palestine as a full member of the UN, a wide-ranging recognition would offer historic support for the Palestinian cause; hence the deep concern that this initiative has created in Israel.

The Palestinian point of view is that although the General Assembly vote may be merely symbolic, with this step alone and the accompanying international backing for the new State it will be possible to cancel out Israeli «unilateralism» and put sufficient pressure on Israel in the hope that it may be forced into making concessions. The Palestinian position seems to have been strengthened in recent months thanks to the agreement between Fatah, Hamas and 11 other Palestinian parties, including Islamic Jihad, signed in May 2011, to form a government of national unity which should lead to the calling of elections on the West Bank and in Gaza in spring 2012. Although it is too soon to determine the viability of the agreement in terms of its ability to reconcile the different factions, given the enormous differences between them, it is possible to indicate, as the Palestine Strategy Group have pointed out⁽³⁾ «strategic unity, greatly highlighted by a process of reconciliation» is a key requirement in formulating an effective strategy for Palestine.

⁽³⁾ According to information gathered from its website, the Palestine Strategy Group is a forum comprising 55 Palestinians «dedicated to strategic dialogue and discussion in which Palestinians from across the social and political spectrum conduct strategic analysis of the environment of the conflict with Israel in order to strengthen and guide the Palestinian national project for liberation and independence». Information from www.palestinestrategygroup.ps. Date of query 31st August 2010

The aforementioned intention of the Palestinian National Authority to go to the United Nations has led to negative reactions in Israel, the US and other countries that deplore what they see as a unilateral Palestinian focus and a distrust of the possible consequences that the General Assembly's passing of such a motion might have, such as a resurgence of violence.

For months, legal experts have analysed the various consequences that a potential recognition of Palestine could have. It has even been suggested that if recognition does occur, based on the 1967 borders, Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 may well be undermined, as well as the Camp David and Oslo agreements, which require a negotiated outcome in which the final borders are not predetermined. There is even an independent legal report⁽⁴⁾ prepared by Guy Goodwin-Gill, professor of international public law at Oxford University and member of the legal team that represented the Government of Jordan in the case of the «Wall» against Israel in the International Court of Justice in 2004, which argues that UN recognition of the Palestinian state could endanger the rights of millions of Palestinians who live outside Gaza and the West Bank. Others have warned that the Palestinian strategy gives Israel the perfect opportunity to adopt unilateral measures, such as the annexing of settlements in the occupied territories and in the area alongside the River Jordan required in order to establish a defensible border, as well as the imposing of economic sanctions, as a consequence of the violation of peace accords. Nonetheless, President Mahmoud Abbas has largely ignored these arguments and is determinedly continuing to follow his diplomatic strategy around the world, securing the support of China, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, as well as other regional powers such as India and Brazil. Russia has reaffirmed its support for the Palestinian cause, without modifying the position adopted by the former USSR which recognised Palestine's independence in 1988.

As one might expect, the strongest criticism of the Palestinian strategy has come from Israel. There, the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is of the opinion that all disputes should be resolved through bilateral negotiations and that the 1967 borders are «indefensible». In a speech to the US Congress on 24th May 2011, Netanyahu, although supporting the two state solution, clearly set out the conditions for a permanent peace agreement: recognition of Israel as a Jewish state, indivisible from Jerusalem as the capital of that state, the incorporation of the suburbs of Jerusalem and Greater Tel Aviv, the complete demilitarisation of the future Palestinian state, the upkeep of an Israeli military presence along the River Jordan, no acceptance of the pre-1967 borders as the delimitation between the two states and a refusal to allow Palestinian refugees to return. Netanyahu also insisted that he would never negotiate with a Pales-

⁽⁴⁾ English text available at: <http://www.documentcloud.org/documents/238962-final-pdf-plot-statehood-opinion-arb.html>. Date of query 31st August 2011

tinian Authority supported by Hamas, considering them to be «*the Palestinian version of Al Qaeda*».

The Israeli attempt to block the Palestinian initiative in the UN, has, albeit with important caveats, the support of its traditional ally, the US, who consider the strategy to be pointless and indeed prejudicial, defending instead a peace agreement reached through direct negotiations.

When Barack Obama assumed the presidency, he put the resolution of the Palestine-Israel conflict at the top of his foreign policy agenda. In an acclaimed speech given at the University of Cairo in June 2009, Obama claimed that the only solution to the conflict is one where «the aspirations of both sides are met through two states, where Israelis and Palestinians each live in peace and security». Nearly two years later, reality has once again become twisted, demonstrating that good intentions are not enough to resolve the conflict.

On 10th May 2011, Barack Obama outlined the strategy to be followed in the Middle East. His speech was received as being, at best, vague in the sense that it did not set out any specific measures, nor offer any significant change to the US position with regard to the region. With respect to the conflict between Palestine and Israel, the words of the US president served to provide a broad outline of US policy in this crucial matter. Obama recognised that the peace process had become deadlocked in spite of the efforts undertaken by the US administration over the past two and a half years, although he accepted that resolution of the problem «is more urgent than ever», since at the moment the whole region is immersed in a wave of change. To this end, Obama supports the well-known two-state solution, in such a way that «Israel and Palestine borders are based on 1967 lines with mutually agreed demarcation, in order that recognised borders can be established for both States». On this point, the president admitted the possibility of land swaps between Palestinians and Israel, as half a million Jews currently live in territory occupied during the Six Day War. Obama warned that the future of Israel as a Jewish, democratic state, would be at risk unless committed progress was made on recognising a Palestinian State. Obama did not fail to reiterate one of the constant elements of US foreign policy: «our commitment to the security of Israel is unshakeable». Consequently, and in Obama's own words, the solution needs to result in «a viable Palestine, a secure Israel». Nonetheless, the speech avoided mention of the two questions which are central to the future peace between Israelis and Palestinians: Jerusalem and the return of Palestinian refugees.

In the months after this speech the position of the two sides in this conflict have become distanced from US proposals, something which would have been unthinkable previously. Both parties have chosen strategies which take them further away from the parameters outlined by Washington, whilst the latter's

ability to put pressure on Israel and Palestine has diminished. The perception in the Middle East is that America's will is no longer the determining factor in the region. This is not to suggest in any way that US policy has lost all its influence. However, the economic recession, an image of a certain weakness derived from the announcement of a gradual withdrawal of the military presence in Afghanistan and with a re-election campaign coming up, Obama's room for manoeuvre is deemed to have shrunk. If, in addition, we consider the impact that the Arab revolts represent, we could say that a new «Post-American» era has begun in the Middle East.

Taking into account the historic ties that link the US and Israel and the former's avowal to veto the recognition of Palestine before the Security Council, the representatives of the Palestinian people are keen to ensure maximum support from EU member states, their main donor of development funding.

The EU has still not decided if it will defend a common position before the UN concerning the recognition of the Palestinian state. Along with countries that are members of the Union, such as Spain, that have expressed their support for the initiative, others, such as Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic have promised the Israelis that they will vote against recognition. Despite the declarations by European heads of state and governments, as well as the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, who have asked for a common policy on the matter, it is highly probable that, once again, the EU will be divided when it goes to New York.

This fragmentation of opinions at the heart of the EU concerning the recognition of Palestine will have its consequences. Firstly, the European Union's position as a member of the Quartet (USA, Russia, the European Union and the UN) with regard to the Middle East has been weakened; secondly, its relationship with the US will be affected, as the possibility of a transatlantic project will be invalidated and thirdly the spirit of the Treaty of Lisbon to progress toward a genuine common foreign policy will have been undermined once again.

■ Relations Between Israel and Egypt

The Camp David Peace Accords between Israel and Egypt, as well as cooperation between the two countries are considered vital to stability in the Middle East. Since 1978, when these agreements were signed, and until very recently, both countries have sought to avoid any situation which would endanger the fragile balance between the two parties. It should be remembered that for Egypt the Camp David Accords largely represented the loss of their traditional leadership of the Arab world.

However, the fall of Hosni Mubarak has led to some of these tenets being called into question. The fact that Mubarak made keeping the peace with Israel the central pillar of his government guaranteed him Washington's support for decades. However, since he was overthrown, Egypt has improved relations with Hamas, has instigated a more indulgent border policy as far as the Gaza Strip is concerned and has flirted with restoring diplomatic relations with Iran. Furthermore, once press censorship had been eliminated and with an emerging Islamic movement, the pressure of public opinion within Egypt, now much more critical of Israel, is evident.

This new situation manifested itself in all its facets with the events on 18th August 2011, when a group of armed militants attacked two Israeli buses and various civilian and military vehicles near Eilat, an Israeli tourist resort at the apex of the Gulf of Aqaba, which separates the Sinai peninsula from the Arabian peninsula (see Figure 3.5). By the end of the attack, six Israelis and seven militants had been killed. The Israeli authorities immediately claimed that the attackers had entered Sinai from Gaza and then on to Israel, accusing Hamas as being responsible, although the Palestinian militant group fiercely denied any involvement. Some sectors of the Jewish media blamed Egypt for its supposed loss of control over the security situation in the Sinai, even implying that Egypt may have been complicit in the attack. After the killings, Israeli security forces entered Egypt in pursuit of the attackers, killing five Egyptian border policemen in the process.

Figure 3.5. Sinai Peninsula



The events above uncovered the extent of popular anti-Israeli sentiment in Egypt. As a demonstration of the current post-Mubarak period, the Egyptian transition government met in an emergency session and issued a declaration condemning the killing of their policemen and demanding a full apology from Israel. They also recalled their ambassador from Tel Aviv «for consultation», thus making it the first diplomatic conflict between the two countries since Supreme Council of the Armed Forces took control of Egypt in February

2011. In a further departure from routine, the new authorities gave full rein to Egyptians to express their anger over the incidents in the Sinai. The potential presidential candidates have wasted no time in seeking to capitalise on the situation, each trying to outdo the other in showing antagonism toward Israel.

The Israeli government has sought not to aggravate tension with its neighbour, downplaying the importance of the crisis and claiming contacts were continuing «on a tactical level» between military leaders from the two countries. Furthermore, and in a reaction that is unprecedented in the history between Cairo and Tel Aviv, the Defence Minister Ehud Barak and President Shimon Peres issued official apologies whilst the Israeli government has agreed to demands for a joint investigation into the incident.

The events have highlighted Egypt's inability to control the Sinai under current conditions. The northern Sinai has become an area where the absence of government control has for some years now given near free rein to smuggling and other illegal activities, which have been exacerbated by the blockading of Palestinian territories in Gaza. In recent months, there has been an increase in arms trafficking into the Palestinian territories, mainly coming from Libya and Sudan. These arms, having passed through southern Egypt and the Red Sea, cross into the Sinai and continue north, coming into the hands of Hamas through the network of tunnels that connect Egypt and Palestine through the Rafah border crossing. This flow of arms has resulted in limited confrontations between the smugglers and the Egyptian police. Elsewhere, continuous sabotage has damaged the gas pipeline that channels gas into Israel, harming the vital supply of energy.

Israel has continually complained that security in the Sinai is weak and not sufficient to prevent cross-border infiltration. Egypt, however, has a limited capacity to deploy police and troops in the area. In accordance with the 1978 Camp David Treaty, Egypt may not alter the make-up of its security forces without Israel's consent. The Peace Treaty limits the number of Egyptian forces in the area, as well as the types of weapons that can be deployed in the Sinai, prohibiting, for example, the presence of tanks or artillery on the Israeli border. The treaty divides the peninsula into four zones, which are demilitarised to a varying extent. In particular, Zone C includes a corridor that runs along the 220 kilometre border between Egypt and Israel and a further 14 kilometres along the border with Gaza, where only a limited number of Egyptian police may patrol.

After Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, Egypt was allowed to deploy a further 750 police in order to secure the border. The number was doubled in 2007 after Hamas took Gaza. In January 2011, during the popular protests by Egyptians against their government, Israel accepted the deployment of an

extra 2,000 Egyptian soldiers on the Sinai peninsula, for the first time since the peace agreement was signed. In August 2011, both Egypt's and Israel's interests in reinforcing security in the Sinai resulted in «Operation Eagle», in which 1,000 Egyptian soldiers participated after receiving the green light from the US and Israel. The operation was aimed at combating Al Qaeda elements and members of other radical Islamic groups, after there had been demonstrations in various parts of the country organised by Salafist leaders which in one town saw a statue of former president Anwar Al Sadat destroyed. In recent years, Al Qaeda has taken advantage of the power vacuum in the Sinai, as well as the porous nature of the border with Gaza in order to increase their presence in the region, allowing them to attack the Egyptian police and carry out terrorist assaults on hotels frequented by westerners.

All of these incidents, together with the most recent escalation of violence in the area has given Egypt's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, who are running the country until the forthcoming presidential elections, the opportunity to force Israel to revise the Peace Accord articles related to levels of implementation and the arming of Egyptian forces in the Sinai. On 27th August 2011, Egypt and Israel agreed to increase the number of Egyptian troops along their common border.

■ The Popular Revolts in Syria and its Regional Influence

The popular protests in Syria and the bloody repression that is being meted out by Bashar Al Assad's regime represent another element of key importance with regard to stability in the Middle East. Obviously, everything that has been happening in Syria (see Figure 3.6) is of essential importance to its neighbours and especially to Israel and Lebanon.

Prior to the uprising, in March 2011, many Arabs saw the Syrian regime as an important ally to the anti-Israel resistance movements in Lebanon and Palestine. Their open support for Hezbollah and Hamas has meant it has long been seen as one of the leading champions of the anti-Zionist cause. For this reason, during the first weeks of the revolts, the repression was met in the Arab world with a complicit silence, even by those Arab governments considered as being hostile to Syria. For these countries, as well as western governments, a fall of the Ba'athist regime would result in an unpredictable regional scenario. However,

Figure 3.6. Syria



as disturbances spread to the majority of Syrian cities and the violent repression of the protesters worsened, an element which was seen as showing the weakness of the government, a new analysis became necessary. Thus, a growing number of nations have begun to see Syria as a destabilising force itself.

Consequently, and together with the European Union and the US, the main regional actors such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Turkey have taken measures to distance themselves from the tottering Syrian regime. In early August, demonstrating a certain degree of hypocrisy given their own domestic situation, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait, withdrew their ambassadors from Damascus, joining the international criticism against the Syrian regime. Some sources have also stated that Saudi Arabia and the decidedly pro-western March 14 Alliance from Lebanon led by Saad Hariri⁽⁵⁾ are giving material support to the Syrian rebels. The European Union has prohibited the entry of around fifty people and a dozen companies linked to the Al Assad regime into its territory as well as blocking their funds, also establishing an embargo on the purchase, import and transportation of Syrian oil.

Nevertheless, at the time of writing, Al Assad still has the support of its traditional allies, Iran and Hezbollah, as well as the Lebanese government, controlled by this latter group. The Lebanese militia is in debt to the Syrian regime due to the support it has received over the years. This support has included the provision of weapons and material. Similarly, Hezbollah's leaders have found a relatively safe refuge from the danger represented by Israeli attacks. Syria has also acted as a reliable intermediary for Iran's interests in the region.

Given the aforementioned support and censure, and although the essential social component of the revolts can still be seen, in Syria the situation seems to be evolving into a sectarian conflict between Sunnis and Shiites. This confrontation has been noted in the burning of Iranian flags by anti-Al Assad demonstrators. Despite the fact that the majority of Syrians are Sunnis, power is in the hands of an Alawi minority, a religious group which is a branch of Shia Islam and which represents less than 10% of the total population. Nonetheless it should be pointed out that since the invasion of Iraq around a million Shiites have sought refuge in Syria. Together with the change in the demo-

⁽⁵⁾ Saad Hariri is the son of Rafik Hariri, the former Lebanese Prime Minister assassinated in 2005. In July 2011, the UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon, investigating this crime, found that four members of Hezbollah were responsible for the murder. Among the accused was Mustafa Badreddine, one of the highest-ranking military chiefs of the Shiite militia. Information obtained from: «La Interpol dicta alerta roja para detener a cuatro miembros de Hezbollah en relación al asesinato de Hariri». («Interpol calls for a red alert to arrest four members of Hezbollah in relation with the murder of Hariri»). *La Vanguardia*. 10.07.2011. Available at: <http://www.lavanguardia.com/20110710/54183538532/la-interpol-dicta-alerta-roja-para-detener-a-cuatro-miembros-de-hizbula-en-relacion-al-asesinato-de.html>. Date of query 2nd September 2011

graphic balance, the spread of Iranian influence and Hezbollah's victory over Israel in 2006 has boosted Shiism in Syria.

The Shiites fear the growing role that Sunni Islamic groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood are playing in these revolts, groups which have been repressed for decades by the Ba'athists, but which enjoy the support of the Saudis. In 1982, the Syrian army occupied the city of Hama and massacred the entire population of 15,000 inhabitants, as punishment for an attempted uprising presumably led by Muslim Brotherhood. With such antecedents, it is more than probable that after the hypothetical fall of Al Assad, a government dominated by Sunnis would offer a radical change of direction, meaning that Iranian interests, and therefore Hezbollah, would be gravely damaged.

Another element to bear in mind in the sectarian struggle between the various Islamic creeds is the role of other minorities which until now have supported the Ba'athist regime. Christians, Druze and even the Palestinians have observed the revolts with unease, concerned as to whether the future situation will resemble the period prior to the coming to power of Hafez Al Assad, the father of the current president, in 1970. That time was characterised by frequent military coups and the systematic persecution of religious minorities. If these fears do not come to pass and these minorities remain loyal to the regime, the conflict will become increasingly protracted, with an uncertain outcome.

The role that Turkey might play in this conflict could well be essential. Over the past decade, Turkey has invested sizeable amounts of political and financial resources in Syria, a country with which it shares an 800 km border. Turkey has also distanced itself from Israel, with the most recent chapter in this saga taking place with the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador from Ankara in early September. This measure was seen as a direct response to Israel's refusal to apologise for the death of nine Turkish civilians during the attack by Israeli military forces on the flotilla heading for Gaza in May 2010 in an attempt to break the blockade of Palestinian territories⁽⁶⁾. As a part of the wider strategy to become a key player in the Middle East, Turkey has opted for the «soft power» route, basing its policy on having «zero problems with one's neighbours». After his re-election in 2011, the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, declared that he was committed to promoting «*justice, the rule of law, liberty and democracy*» in the region.

⁽⁶⁾ On 1st September the long-awaited UN report on the Israeli flotilla attack was leaked to the press. The report, whose publication has been postponed on a number of occasions, stated that the Israeli naval blockade was legal and appropriate, although it also said that the action taken was «excessive and unreasonable». «Report of the Secretary-General's Panel of Inquiry on the 31 May 2010 Flotilla Incident» (July 2011) Available at: <http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/world/Palmer-Committee-Final-report.pdf>. Date of query: 3.09.2011

However, the current uprisings in Syria have presented a serious challenge to Erdogan's aspirations. Al Assad's repression has been fiercely criticised by the Turkish government, who have offered shelter to thousands of Syrian refugees and a number of opposition leaders. If the situation in Syria continues to deteriorate, Turkey might see itself obliged to intervene more overtly, thus endangering its «soft» policy

Obviously, Israel is paying very close attention to the Syrian situation. Part of the problem for Israel with respect to revolts in its neighbouring country is that the groups opposing Al Assad may also represent a threat to Israel. Israel's options therefore come down to two somewhat awkward alternatives. The first consists of opposing the current Syrian regime, which it has traditionally considered to be an enemy, although a certain stability has been managed with clear rules of engagement established. The second alternative, which would open up after the hypothetical fall of Al Assad, would be to negotiate with the new government, whose position and ideology could well be radically opposed to Israeli interests, with the possibility that reaching practical agreements on security matters could be unrealistic. As a result, perhaps the best option for Israel would be the survival of the Ba'athist regime, albeit with a weakened Al Assad, which would also mean diminished Iranian influence in the area. In any event, extreme prudence on the part of Israel would seem to be crucial.

■ CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

The relative calm that has prevailed in the Middle East for almost three years has vaporised as a consequence of the popular revolts that have spread across the Arab world. The social and political transformation which we are only just starting to see unfold should be perceived not only within the domestic context of the affected countries, but also in terms of their repercussions throughout the region.

Many are claiming that the new context constitutes a window of opportunity to attain the long-awaited state of peace and stability. Nevertheless, and in spite of these hopes, the future geopolitical scenario in the region will be determined by whichever path the currently ongoing changes end up taking. It is still too early to determine the direction that these changes will take, but what is unquestionable is that the previous status quo is now history. The weakness of Arab civil society, largely lulled into slumber by the autocratic rule which is still the norm in the region, constitutes a challenge to the peaceful triumph of the protests. It would seem to be unquestionable to state that at least in Egypt, Islamist groups have seen their positions strengthened, a factor which is viewed with considerable concern in the west.

For Israel, the question is how best to handle a situation that had seemed to have abandoned the parameters of normal logic. One by one, the traditional Arab leaders with whom successive Israeli governments have maintained contact have either disappeared or have adopted a less understanding attitude toward Israel. From now on, Arab governments will have to be more sensitive to the feelings of their people, who will no longer be prepared to accept measures that are adopted behind their backs. The Israeli authorities are fully aware of these circumstances, and if recent actions are indicative, would seem to be showing a certain level of moderation.

In the short term, two aspects are worthy of special attention in the region. Firstly there is the risk of a breakdown of the strategic relationship between Egypt and Israel, damaged by incidents in the Sinai last August. Amidst the continuous mass protests while waiting for presidential elections to be held, the challenge is knowing how best to provide an outlet to the legitimate demands of the Egyptian people without resorting to ideological and religious positions that hinder progress toward a permanent peace agreement. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood (the best organised political grouping) does not attempt to hide its animosity toward Israel. Although its actual influence on the electorate remains to be seen, a future Egyptian government which adopts radical anti-Israeli positions might result in the Camp David Agreements being torn up, complicating the regional scenario even further. In any case, the deterioration of the security situation in the Sinai will probably mean that the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel will have to be redrafted in order for the former to be able to control their side of the border, a matter which is in the interests of both countries. Having to militarily strengthen its southern flank is of far less interest to Israel, especially at a time when events in Syria are stirring up the situation on its northern border. This solution could be viewed positively by the US, which in any event will maintain its considerable influence on Egyptian military high command.

Unless there is a change at the last minute, the intention of the Palestinian National Authority to go to the United Nations in search of recognition as an Independent state constitutes the second aspect of most interest in the region in the coming months. Even if the Palestinian cause receives the majority support of the General Assembly, this will only represent a step toward real independence. Only a bilateral agreement between Israel and Palestine can have practical consequences. The question is what will happen in October when the Palestinians realise that General Assembly recognition has not worked in reality. A new intifada in the occupied territories cannot be ruled out.

Given the foreseeable challenges over the coming months, the strength of the Israeli position will be determined by its domestic situation. Since the creation of the State of Israel, external threats that have endangered the very survival

of the country have served to bind society together. Nationalist positions have undoubtedly predominated over any other type of consideration. Nonetheless, the economic policy of the Netanyahu government, the cost of housing and a perceived deterioration in education have made the social climate outlook somewhat bleaker. In recent weeks there have been a series of demonstrations, the most important in the history of Israel, demanding social improvements. These demonstrations would seem to be redefining traditional standards in which a wide sector of the population, rejecting ultra-orthodox positions, seek not only security, but also improved living conditions. In any event, at a crucial moment for the future of the Palestine-Israel peace process and with the Middle East in turmoil, diminished social cohesion can only represent a significant debilitating factor.

■ CHRONOLOGY

Table 3.1. Timeline of the Israeli-Palestine Conflict

DATE	EVENT
1947	UN Partition Plan for Palestine
1948	Israeli War of Independence
1949	Israel admitted to the UN
1950	Israel passes the Law of Return giving every Jew in the world the right to acquire Israeli citizenship
1956-1957	Suez War
1958	Al-Fatah established
1967	Six-Day War Israel occupies Gaza, the Sinai, the West Bank and the Golan Heights
1978	Camp David Accords. Peace between Israel and Egypt. Israeli army occupies Southern Lebanon
1991	Madrid Conference
1993	Start of the Oslo process. Mutual recognition between the PLO and the State of Israel.
1995	Oslo II signed in Washington. Extension of Palestinian autonomy to the West Bank.
1999	Israel withdraws from Southern Lebanon.
2005	Israeli army pulls out of the Gaza Strip.
2006	Hamas wins Palestine elections
2006	Israel-Hezbollah War
2007	Clashes between Hamas and Fatah in Gaza. Mahmoud Abbas dissolves the unity government.
2009	President Obama's speech in Cairo
2010	USA announces direct two-way talks between Israel and the Palestinians.
2011	The Palestinian Authority submits a request to the United Nations General Assembly for recognition of Palestine as a full member state.

Chapter IV

THE CAUCASUS: NAGORNO-KARABAKH

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SUMMARY

The Caucasus region has traditionally been an area of frontiers and rivalries among great empires, while at the same time being heir to a long history that has left a patchwork of singular ethnic, linguistic and religious complexity. Following a period of relative stability represented by the Soviet Union, its collapse in 1991 and the rise of the so-called *new independent states* opened the way to a phase in which conflicts of every type abounded, sometimes with the use of military force. These disputes, far from having been resolved, remain *frozen* with the obvious danger that a sudden escalation in tensions could revive them. In this chapter we study the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which can be considered the most difficult of all to resolve in view of the entrenched positions of the major participants.

Key words

Caucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia, OSCE.

■ INTRODUCTION

«We, the Presidents of the countries which co-chair the Minsk Group of the OSCE - France, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America - are convinced that the time has arrived for all the sides to take a decisive step towards a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

We reiterate that only a negotiated settlement can lead to peace, stability, and reconciliation, opening opportunities for regional development and cooperation. The use of force created the current situation of confrontation and instability. Its use again would only bring more suffering and devastation, and would be condemned by the international community. We strongly urge the leaders of all sides to prepare their populations for peace, not war⁽¹⁾.»

The area known as the Caucasus comprises North Caucasus, where the autonomous republics of Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachai-Cherkessia and Adyghea are located, all of them belonging to the Russian Federation; and South Caucasus or Transcaucasia, which is home to the republics of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, nations that attained their independence in 1991 following the break-up of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1. Political and Administrative Divisions of the Caucasus



⁽¹⁾ Joint statement by Presidents Sarkozy, Obama and Medvedev on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict during the G-8 summit in Deauville, France on 26th May 2011.

Figure 4.2. Ethnic and Linguistic Divisions of the Caucasus



According to an old legend, when God was about to spread the peoples over the world he had just created with a salt-cellar, he accidentally dropped it on what is today the Caucasus. As a result, this region is made up of a complex patchwork of ethnic groups and religions unrivalled in other regions of the world. There are three main ethnic-linguistic groups - Indo-European, Caucasian and Altaic - and two major religions -Orthodox Christian and Islam - in turn spread in highly diverse combinations over each of the territories referred to above (see Figure 4.2).

Moreover, fate has decreed that this natural border between Europe and Asia should also be a contact zone and therefore a conflict zone among three of the largest empires the world has known: the Russian, Ottoman and Persian Empires. Present-day Georgia and Azerbaijan were conquered by Russia between 1801 and 1813. This was followed in 1829 by Turkey's ceding of Eastern Armenia (coextensive with present-day Armenia) to Tsar Nicholas I after the signing of the Treaty of Adrianople.

Curiously, it took Russia much longer to conquer all of North Caucasus: although by the end of the sixteenth century the Tsardom of Russia had reached the north bank of the River Terek, fierce Muslim tribes lived between its south bank and the mountains, and the Russians preferred to avoid confrontation. In the end, invasion of the region became inevitable following the conquest of Transcaucasia, in order to ensure communication with the new outposts of the empire. What the mountain tribes called the *gazawat* (holy war) lasted from 1817 until 1859 when the Muslim leader Imam Shamil (*the Lion of Dagestan*) was captured by the Russians.

Following decades of relative peace, the First World War brought the long-suffering region back into the limelight as it once more became a battlefield, between the Ottoman Empire, which was an ally of the Central Powers, and Russia, a member of the Triple Entente. In 1915 approximately one million Armenians died in a series of incidents described by Armenia and many other countries as genocide, whereas the Turks maintain that they were the result of a civil war within the Ottoman Empire, combined with hunger and disease. Even today these tragic events continue to overshadow international relations in the region.

As if all this were not enough, the formation of the USSR and its domination of the region from 1922 onward, whilst admittedly bringing political stability and fixing external borders, further exacerbated differences among territories and rivalries among communities. In particular, what could be called the Kremlin's *addiction* to continually moving the internal borders of its Republics⁽²⁾, with a view to winnowing out ethnic differences, as part of a policy of *divide and rule*, sowed the seeds of the conflicts that broke out in the region after the collapse of the Soviet empire.

On 8th December 1991 the presidents of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus established the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), bringing an end to the 74-year life of the USSR. On 21st December the remaining Republics, with the exception of the three Baltic republics and Georgia, joined the CIS by signing the *Declaration of Alma-Ata*⁽³⁾. Both the Declaration of Alma-Ata and the *Charter of the CIS* of 22nd January 1993 confirmed the inviolability of borders, which could be altered only in common agreement and by peaceful means.

⁽²⁾ The internal borders of the USSR were changed 94 times from 1917 to 1991. In the area we are concerned with, the so-called Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic existed from 1922 until 1936, when it was divided into the Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs) of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

⁽³⁾ The text of the Declaration is available from: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/belarus/by_app-nc.html.

However it was not explicitly stated that the old USSR administrative borders would become the new international borders, and by also including a reference to the «inalienable right of the peoples to self-determination»⁽⁴⁾, it opened the door to several processes of secession. Armed conflicts arising in the Caucasus following the decline and break-up of the USSR, although interrelated, can be classified in three broad groups:

- *Northern Caucasus*: with the two Chechen Wars (1994-96 and 1999-2002) and their spread to the other Russian Autonomous Republics with Muslim majorities and the rest of the Federation⁽⁵⁾.
- *Georgia*: with the Georgian civil war (1992-94), the wars between Georgia and its secessionist regions of South Ossetia (1991-92 and 2008) and Abkhazia (1992-94), and the de facto independence of Adzaria⁽⁶⁾, recovered by Tbilisi in 2004.
- *Armenia-Azerbaijan*: with the war of independence of the province of Nagorno (Upper)-Karabakh against Azerbaijan (1991-92), which escalated into open warfare between Azerbaijan and Armenia (1993-94).

Although all these conflicts remain open at present, more or less actively, this chapter will focus on Nagorno-Karabakh, which can be considered the most intractable of all the *frozen conflicts* in the former USSR, as accredited by the continual incidents which threaten to lead to a new armed confrontation between the parties.

■ BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

The age-old historical antagonism between the Armenians (an Indo-European, Christian people) and the Azeris (an Altaic, Muslim people) resurfaced as strong as ever as soon as the USSR started to disintegrate. The detonator for the conflict was the drawing of the administrative borders in 1923 between the two SSRs (Armenia and Azerbaijan), which left enclaves of the other ethnic

⁽⁴⁾ BLANC ARTEMIR, Antonio, *Conflictos territoriales, interétnicos y nacionales en los estados surgidos de la antigua Unión Soviética (Territorial, inter-ethnic and national conflicts arising from the former Soviet Union)*, Valencia, Tirant lo Blanc, 2004, pg. 34.

⁽⁵⁾ As regards the complex patchwork referred to above, the Karachay and the Balkars (Altaic) share administrative units with, respectively, the Cherquesians and the Kabardians (Caucasian). In North Ossetia, 70% of the population is Christian and the remaining 30% Muslim. Ingushetia and Chechnya, both Muslim and Caucasian, separated in June 1992 following the latter's declaration of independence. Lastly, 2003 saw the abolition of the agreement whereby the 14 ethnic groups of Dagestan took turns in power, and its replacement by an unwritten agreement to the effect that the two main groups, Avars and Darghin (both Caucasian) would alternate.

⁽⁶⁾ A small Georgian territory of 2,900 sq. km. and 370,000 inhabitants bordering on Turkey, its inhabitants are ethnically Georgian (and thus Caucasian), but they adhere to the Muslim faith.

groups isolated (Azeris in Nakhchivan⁽⁷⁾, Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh), as Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan recently recalled⁽⁸⁾.

As long ago as February 1988 the regional parliament of Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh⁽⁹⁾, approved a resolution calling for reunification with Armenia, which gave rise to anti-Armenian pogroms in Azerbaijan⁽¹⁰⁾. In 1991-92, Azeri forces launched an offensive against the separatists, but the Armenians counter-attacked and by 1993-94 had conquered not only all the region but also wide surrounding areas (almost 20% of Azerbaijan's territory). Some 600,000 persons were displaced and between 15,000 and 25,000 died before a ceasefire, signed in Moscow on 12th May 1994, came into force.

■ The Role of Foreign Participants in the Conflict

Regarding the involvement of foreign participants in the conflict, we would highlight the role of the Russian Federation, which is complex given that both Armenia and Azerbaijan were at the time members of the *Collective Security Treaty* (CST), the military arm of the CIS created in May 1992. On the one hand, Russia has strong ties with Armenia, sharing as it does its Indo-European ethnicity and Christian religion. On the other hand, relations with Azerbaijan are crucial for Russia, in order to secure the supply of oil and gas from the Caspian and to act as a buffer against the expansion of Iran's influence in the region. For these reasons Russia's official stance during the war was one of neutrality, although in practice more or less legal materiel was delivered to both sides.

As regards the Organisation (at that time *Conference*) for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in its meeting of 24th March 1992 in Helsinki⁽¹¹⁾

⁽⁷⁾ Nakhchivan is still an autonomous republic within Azerbaijan, with an area of 5,500 sq. km. and some 300,000 inhabitants, separated from the rest of the country by the Armenian province of Zangezur.

⁽⁸⁾ «At the dawn of Soviet power, the Soviet Communist Party's Caucasian Bureau decided to separate the historical regions of Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan from Armenia and transfer them to Azerbaijan. The people of Karabakh have never ceased to protest against this illegal decision and these protests became more pronounced in Gorbachev's era of *perestroika*». Interview with the Armenian president in the daily Moscow News, quoted on 23rd May 2011 by the Russian news and information agency RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20110521/164145110.html>.

⁽⁹⁾ At that time the population of Nagorno-Karabakh was about 190,000 composed of Armenians (76.4%), Azeris (22.4%), plus Russian and other minorities.

⁽¹⁰⁾ In particular, Sumgait, scene of the «Sumgait pogrom», a town located 20 km to the north of Baku where from 27th February 1988 Azeri militias killed scores of Armenians and looted their possessions, until martial law was imposed on 1st March 1988 and the army took control of the situation.

⁽¹¹⁾ Azerbaijan and Armenia had joined the CSCE in January 1992, after attaining independence as a result of the collapse of the USSR. The request mentioned that the «*lected and other representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh*» should take part in the conference, which lent support to Armenia's idea that the process should be open to the authorities of the enclave.

the Chairperson-in-Office was asked to convene a conference as soon as possible on the question of Nagorno-Karabakh, at which a peaceful solution to the conflict would be negotiated. The conference was to be held in the capital of Belarus, Minsk, but was never actually held, despite which the city has given its name to the Group within the OSCE that has been taking charge of this issue.

On 6th December 1994, during the Budapest summit, the OSCE decided to establish a co-chairmanship for the process, at the same time expressing the political will to deploy a multinational peacekeeping force on the ground. The mandate for this co-chairmanship of the *Minsk Group* was announced on 23rd March 1995⁽¹²⁾, and it fell to the Russian Federation, the USA and France, which still perform the role today. Other permanent members of the Group are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey, as well as of course Armenia and Azerbaijan and, on a rotating basis, the OSCE *troika*.

The UN gave priority attention to the conflict in the period of maximum violence on the ground (1992-94), and coordinated its actions with the CSCE. However it should be pointed out that in the four Resolutions passed by the Security Council⁽¹³⁾ reference is always to «*the Nagorno-Karabakh Region of the Azerbaijani Republic*», along with condemnations of Armenian militias' seizing of territory and reaffirmations of Azerbaijan's sovereignty and indivisibility and of the inviolability of the region's borders.

These considerations appear to favour the Azerbaijani position, and in fact the Azerbaijani government still alludes to compliance with these resolutions, rather than with those adopted by the OSCE in more ambiguous terms, and which are set out in a subsequent section.

■ THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CONFLICT

Since the 1994 ceasefire the negotiating process has remained paralysed: Azerbaijan insists that the Armenians must leave the region and allow the displaced persons to return to their homes. Armenia for its part refused to accept that Nagorno-Karabakh was legally part of Azerbaijan, arguing that it is a distinct country which declared its independence simultaneously, and insists on Nagorno-Karabakh's government being allowed to attend the peace talks.

It should be pointed out that, as is the case with other *frozen conflicts* in Europe (Trans-Dniester, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Cyprus), Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in February 2008 has served as a spur to Nagorno-Karabakh's aspirations of independence, and has increased the volume of warlike

⁽¹²⁾ Document available at <http://www.osce.org/mg/70125>.

⁽¹³⁾ Resolutions 822 of 30th April, 853 of 29th July, 874 of 14th October and lastly 884 of 12th November, all approved during 1993.

rhetoric from the Azerbaijani authorities, who are alarmed by the possibility that the region, *de facto* independent since 1994, might try to achieve a formal recognition of independence. Consequently, armed incidents across the ceasefire line have proliferated, costing on average 50 lives a year⁽¹⁴⁾.

To this must be added the role of the political opposition parties in both countries, who are always predisposed to depict any concession as a sign of weakness. There was an example of this on 9th December 2010, when the Armenian nationalist Heritage Party submitted a bill to parliament «*on the independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh republic*»; although it was rejected by the majority Republican Party, its leader Galust Sahakyan felt obliged to stress that, if the OSCE Minsk Group talks failed, the ruling coalition would initiate steps aimed at recognition of the republic's independence⁽¹⁵⁾.

The key points of both countries' current positions can be gleaned from their presidents' speeches in the last OSCE summit, which was held in Astana, Kazakhstan⁽¹⁶⁾ on 1st and 2nd December 2010:

Speech by President Sargsyan of Armenia⁽¹⁷⁾:

- Nagorno-Karabakh proclaimed its independence from the USSR in September 1991, and ratified it by means of a referendum held in December of that year in accordance with the rules of international law.
- When the USSR ceased to exist in December 1991, in the territory of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan two equally legitimate states emerged: Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh, although the latter did not enjoy international recognition.
- The armed conflict was a consequence of Azerbaijan's ethnic cleansing and military aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh, which exercised its right of self-defence in accordance with the UN Charter. Faced with military defeat, Azerbaijan found itself obliged to sign the 1994 ceasefire. (Figure 4.3)
- Azerbaijan is misleading the international community by claiming it wants to resolve the consequences of the conflict (the loss of the seven provinces surrounding the enclave), without mentioning its immediate cause (Azeri aggression).

⁽¹⁴⁾ The number of fatalities in armed incidents in Nagorno-Karabakh since the signing of the ceasefire in May 1994 is estimated at 3,000, most of them soldiers.

⁽¹⁵⁾ «Armenian parliament rejects Karabakh independence bill». RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru/exsoviet/20101209/161700422.html> So far no country in the world has recognised the self-proclaimed independence of Nagorno-Karabakh.

⁽¹⁶⁾ On the development and outcomes of this summit, see Ruiz González, Francisco, «La cumbre de la OSCE in Astana» («The OSCE Summit in Astana»), IEEE information document no. 26/2010. http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_informativos/2010/DIEEEI26_2010_CumbreOSCE.pdf.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Complete summit speeches available from <http://summit2010.osce.org/documents>.

Figure 4.3. Situation in Nagorno-Karabakh at the Time of the 1994 Ceasefire



- Azerbaijan is re-arming for a renewed military aggression, exceeding the levels of armament permitted by the CAFE (Conventional Armed Forces in Europe) Treaty⁽¹⁸⁾, its leaders call for anti-Armenian violence and commit excesses such as the destruction of the historic Armenian cemetery of Juba to build a firing range.
- Azerbaijan has no interest in resolving the conflict, only in causing as much harm as possible to Armenia, and it has no legal basis of any kind for laying claim to Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory that has no future within Azerbaijan.

Speech by President Aliyev of Azerbaijan:

- As a result of Armenian ethnic cleansing, 20% of Azerbaijan's territory is under occupation and a million people have been driven from their homes.
- Armenia occupies not only Nagorno-Karabakh but also seven adjacent provinces, where it is destroying Azeri villages, mosques and even tombs, as well as having committed genocide in 1992 in the town of Khojaly⁽¹⁹⁾.
- Nagorno-Karabakh is a part of Azerbaijan, historically and legally; in spite of the Armenian attitude, which is to seek confrontation and maintain the status quo, Baku maintains its commitment to seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Complete text of the Adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe approved at the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999, available at <http://www.osce.org/library/14108>.

⁽¹⁹⁾ The incidents that occurred in this Nagorno-Karabakh town on 25th and 26th February 1992 are described as genocide or massacre by Azerbaijan, which puts at 613 the number of civilians assassinated by the Armenian militias, shot down as they tried to flee towards territory under Azeri control. Armenia for its part refers to it as a battle or an event, minimises the number of fatalities and blames it on the Azerbaijani militia defending the place, who they say used the civilian population as human shields to enable them to flee to Azerbaijan.

As can be seen, both countries' stances are entrenched, their rhetoric aggressive, and the arguments include appeals to the baser sentiments of their respective peoples, which can lead only to more radical positions and an escalation of tensions, the more so now that the contact zone is criss-crossed by First World War-type trenches which in some areas are no more than 20 to 40 metres apart.

At the same time, Azerbaijan's defence spending increased by 45% from 2010 to 2011, surpassing US\$3 billion (almost 20% of the country's total budget.) This in turn might tempt the Armenians to carry out a pre-emptive attack⁽²⁰⁾, before the balance of power tilts towards Baku in line with the main indicators of both nations (see table 4.1):

Table 4.1. Data for 2010. Sources: *The military balance 2011* (IISS London) y *United Nations Development Program* (UNDP)

ITEM	AZERBAIJAN	ARMENIA	NAGORNO-KARABAJKH	SPAIN
Land area	86,600 sq. km.	29,800 sq. km.	4,400 sq. km.	504,645 sq. km.
Population	8.933.928	3.090.379	140.000	47.150.800
GDP	US\$52 billion	US\$9.23 billion	US\$320 million	1.438.356
GDP per capita	5.846 \$	2.987 \$	1.729 \$	29.595 \$
Growth	2,3%	1,2%	13,1%	-0,1 %
Defence Budget	US\$1.59 billion	US\$400 million	-	US\$10.7 billion
Percentage of GDP	3,05%	4,33%	-	0,72 %
Active members of the armed forces	66.940	48.570	20.000	130.000
Life expectancy (years)	74,2	70,8	-	81,5
Human development index	Puesto 76	Puesto 67	-	Puesto 20

It can be readily seen that Armenia is in a clear situation of inferiority in all respects, and that time is also against it, since the economic and military differences look set to continue to grow, especially in view of the backing lent to Baku's policies by its huge revenues from the export of oil and gas.

⁽²⁰⁾ In July 2009 the de facto Minister of Defence of Nagorno-Karabakh, Movses Hakopian, stated that a military offensive could not be excluded if the situation so required, and added that the enclave's line of security should extend as far as the River Kura, in the centre of Azerbaijan.

■ **Russia's Influence on Relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan**

Since the end of the Cold War, the Russian Federation has maintained the 102nd Military Base Gyumri on Armenian soil, with some 3,000 troops, and about 2,000 Russian border guards man the borders with Turkey and Iran. In Azerbaijan Russia maintains, under a lease arrangement that in principle expires in 2012, the radar installation in Qabala from the Soviet era, with 1,000 personnel, designed to provide early warning of any ballistic missiles coming in from the Indian Ocean.

The protocol signed on 20th August 2010 by President Medvedev with his Armenian counterpart Sargsyan, as well as renewing the 1995 bilateral agreements on defence (extending the use of Gyumri right up until 2045) introduces new factors that strengthen the original agreements. For example, Russia now takes on the duty of guaranteeing the territorial integrity of all Armenia (without of course including Nagorno-Karabakh), not just its borders with Iran and Turkey as hitherto.

In practice this involves incorporating in the bilateral relationship the principle whereby an attack on a member country of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO, which replaced the CST in 2002, and to which Russia and Armenia but not Azerbaijan belong) is considered as tantamount to an attack on all of them, as well as serving as a clear message to the Azerbaijani authorities that the use of armed force is not a viable option for resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

As for Azerbaijan, following Medvedev's visit of 2nd and 3rd September 2010 he signed several important agreements with his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev: a treaty on the definitive demarcation of the border between their two countries, an agreement on the joint use of the water resources of the River Samur and a supplement to the cooperation agreement for the production and sale of gas from the Caspian.

During the joint press conference in Baku, Aliyev repeated the well-known Azerbaijani view of the conflict: part of Azerbaijan's territory is under military occupation, the United Nations Security Council Resolutions calling on Armenia to withdraw from the seven territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh must be complied with, and the conflict must be resolved in accordance with the principles of international law, including the return of displaced persons and the deployment of a peace force.

The Russian president confined himself to reiterating his country's commitment, strengthened after its war with Georgia in the summer of 2008, to try to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict, which led Medvedev to convene no fewer than nine trilateral meetings starting in November of that year with

the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents⁽²¹⁾, with very little practical progress, but if nothing else at least they boosted mutual trust. Following the war with Georgia, the Russian authorities were quick to deny that there was any parallel to be drawn between their recognising the independence of Abjazia and South Ossetia and the situation of Nagorno-Karabakh⁽²²⁾.

Precisely in the last but one of these trilateral meetings, held in the Russian seaside resort of Sochi on 5th March 2011, the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents agreed to an immediate exchange of prisoners of war, reiterated the principle of resolving all disputes by peaceful means and signalled their acceptance of the OSCE's investigating all ceasefire violations in the area, in particular those caused by the much-feared snipers who are active there.

Russia's thus assuming a leading role in the negotiations between the parties might point to an attempt to take over the process, pushing the OSCE and its Minsk Group aside; however that is not how the US sees it. Its Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Philip Gordon, recently affirmed that the Russians were acting transparently and keeping the other co-chairs of the Group constantly informed. Thus, in spite of the serious disagreements over Georgia, as far as attempts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are concerned, Russia and the West are in complete harmony, as will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

■ THE ROLE OF FOREIGN ACTORS

■ The OSCE

The efforts of the OSCE through the *Minsk Group* have not achieved the final resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, although at least they have led to the parties' explicitly acknowledging that there can be no military solution.

The bases for a peaceful solution have been clearly set out by the three countries co-chairing the Group - USA, Russia and France - in their joint declarations in L'Aquila in July 2009 and Moscow in June 2010 in the framework of the G-8 meetings and reiterated in December 2010 during the OSCE summit in Astana:

⁽²¹⁾ The last of them, held on 24th June in the Russian city of Kazan, at which the parties failed to agree on moving forward to the next phase of negotiations in which a draft peace treaty is supposed to be drawn up.

⁽²²⁾ For Russia, the difference between the two cases stems from Georgia's August 2008 assault on South Ossetia, in violation of the 1992 ceasefire, which invalidated any attempt at negotiation between the parties and the prospects of those territories being reincorporated into Georgia. No doubt an Azeri attack on the secessionist region or on Armenia itself would have a similar effect on Russia.

- Return of the seven provinces surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan.
- Approval of a provisional status for the region guaranteeing its security and self-government.
- Establishment of a corridor physically joining Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh (through the town of Lachin).
- Future determination of the region's definitive status by means of a legally binding consultation.
- The right of refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes.
- International security guarantee, including the deployment of a peacekeeping force⁽²³⁾.

Although both countries have expressed their agreement with these six points, as always when vital interests are at stake, *the devil is in the detail*: whereas the Armenians want to implement all the points at the same time, the Azerbaijanis insist that until the first one is fulfilled (the return of the seven provinces), the others cannot be negotiated, and as a result the talks have once again come to a dead end.

The reality is that, apart from certain differences between the parties about how soon refugees can return home, the sticking point in the process is the question of the region's final status, since Baku regards it as a foregone conclusion that if a referendum were held, the option of Nagorno-Karabakh staying within Azerbaijan would undoubtedly be resoundingly rejected, even if it were offered broad autonomy.

In short, little more can be done in the framework of the Minsk Group, where attention is now focused on secondary matters such as the debate on whether the European Union should take over from France as a co-chair. For moving negotiations forward, the tripartite initiatives led by President Medvedev of Russia, referred to in the previous section, are considered much more useful.

■ Turkey

Another important regional power is Turkey, whose role in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan is crucial and even more complex than Russia's. Turkey's first foreign initiative in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse was to try to strengthen ties with the former Soviet Republics whose peoples were of Altaic descent and spoke Turkic languages, including Azerbaijan, this policy of then president Turgut Özal being known as *Pan-Turkism*. Since then,

⁽²³⁾ The ceasefire agreement signed in May 1994 already envisaged the deployment of an international force of 4,000, largely Russian but under OSCE mandate. However, disagreements among the parties prevented this deployment, so there has never been international oversight of the armed incidents along the line of separation.

satisfactory bilateral relations have been maintained, but certain matters have clouded them in the past few years:

- The growing role of religion in Turkish political and public life following the coming to power in 2002 of the pro-Islam party Justice and Development, which is something President Aliyev is keen to avoid in Azerbaijan.
- The Baku regime's increasing links with the West in general and the USA in particular, at a time when Turkey is redirecting its foreign policy towards the Middle East and away from its old alliances.
- The way in which Azerbaijan seeks to make its good relations with Turkey conditional upon the latter's support in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which hampers Ankara's attempts to normalise its relations with Armenia.

In conjunction with this last point, and as alluded to in the introduction, relations between Turkey and Armenia are overshadowed to an extraordinary extent by the events that occurred during the First World War, commonly referred to as the *Armenian genocide*. For this reason alone Yerevan still considers Turkey as the number one threat to its security, whereas Ankara sees Armenia as just one more obstacle to its joining the EU, given the support of key countries such as France for the genocide version of events.

As part of its current policy of *zero problems* with its neighbours, since 2008 the Turkish government has promoted rapprochement with Armenia, its common border with which has been closed since 1993. In August 2009 two important protocols were signed in Zurich, envisaging the establishment of diplomatic relations and the reopening of the border. However, these protocols have not been ratified by the respective parliaments and at the beginning of 2010 the process was declared to have failed.

The reason is that Armenia decided that it would ratify the agreement only if Turkey did so first. For its part, Turkey has linked its ratification to progress in negotiations on Nagorno-Karabakh, in an attempt to avoid damaging its relations with Azerbaijan. The Armenian government's response is that bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia have nothing to do with that conflict, but the underlying reason is that Azerbaijan immediately voiced its objection to the Zurich protocols and has played the energy card⁽²⁴⁾ to influence Ankara and put a stop to the normalisation of relations.

⁽²⁴⁾ Some of the main pipelines for oil (such as the BTC, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan) and gas (such as BTE, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum) that export Azeri energy resources from the Caspian pass through Turkey, which obtains, as well as the corresponding supplies, lucrative revenues as a transit country. In a sense this puts Azerbaijan in a position of strength vis-à-vis Turkey, since Baku always has the option of exporting to Europe via the oil and gas pipelines joining it to Russia.

■ European Union

The EU's direct involvement in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is relatively limited, consisting basically of supporting the French initiatives in the Minsk Group. However it is important to study how this conflict may hamper the EU's cooperation initiatives in South Caucasus and above all the significant impact that any instability in the region has on the supply channels for energy resources to Europe.

As regards cooperation, 2004 saw the establishment of the *European Neighbourhood Policy* (ENP), the central features of which are the *Bilateral Action Plans* agreed between the EU and each of the participating countries. These plans establish programmes of political and economic reforms with short- and medium-term priorities. The action plans for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia were approved in 2006⁽²⁵⁾.

The latest reports of the European Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the ENP⁽²⁶⁾ make explicit mention of Armenia's high-level negotiations with Azerbaijan aimed at resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and with Turkey on the ratification of the Zurich protocols, but note the lack of progress on either. Moreover, Nagorno-Karabakh is a good example of the fact that risks to the security of the continent cannot be tackled using the ENP, given its bilateral nature, so the EU can only deal with this question separately with Armenia and Azerbaijan.

For this reason, in 2009 the EU launched a new initiative, the *Eastern Association*⁽²⁷⁾, which includes Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, as a complement to bilateral relations and to promote stability and multilateral trust. In the context of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) the EU asserts that the existing conflicts hamper cooperation work, and therefore highlights the need to resolve them as soon as possible based on the principles and rules of international law and the decisions and documents adopted in this regard.

The cooperation projects are being tackled using four subject platforms, only one of which, that dedicated to energy⁽²⁸⁾, is directly linked to the traditional concept of security. Focusing on energy, the *Caucasian Corridor* for supplying

⁽²⁵⁾ In view of the uprisings of the Arab Spring, the EU aims to relaunch the ENP. See document of 25 May 2011 *A new and ambitious European Neighbourhood Policy*, available at <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/643&format=HTML&agend=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

⁽²⁶⁾ Available at http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/documents_en.htm#3.

⁽²⁷⁾ Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit, 7th May 2009, available from: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/107589.pdf

⁽²⁸⁾ The other three are dedicated to good governance, economic integration and contacts among people, which would be brought together under an extended concept of security.

the EU, which over the past decade has been favoured as a way of reducing dependence on the Russian Federation, is directly affected by the frozen conflicts in the region. In the case that concerns us here, the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh partly determined the route of the abovementioned BTC⁽²⁹⁾ and BTE, forcing them to go the long way round through Georgia instead of directly through Armenia⁽³⁰⁾ (see figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4. BTC Oil Pipeline



This would be bad enough, but the possible outbreak of armed conflict between the two countries would affect the EU's major energy project in the region, the *Nabucco* pipeline which, starting in Erzurum in Turkey, will run for more than 3,000 km into the heart of Europe (see figure 4.5). Azerbaijan is the key country for the project, both in terms of providing part of the supplies and in its role as transit country for gas from Turkmenistan or even Iran, so its destabilisation, which would cause a war with Armenia, would practically make the gas pipeline non-viable.

As far as Spain is concerned, its interests in the region are very limited, and relations with the parties to the conflict are channelled through the international organisations to which it belongs (the UN, NATO, EU, OSCE). In the particular case of the energy transport corridors, Spain does not receive natural gas from the pipeline from Russia or from the Caspian Sea (its natural gas supplies come basically from Algeria, and to a lesser extent from Norway via France), as well as having substantial capacity in LNG regasification terminals which are supplied by ship from areas such as the Persian Gulf, so it is much less affected by supply through the Caucasus than other more Eastern members of the EU.

⁽²⁹⁾ The BTC, at 1,768 km (of which 443 in Azerbaijan, 249 in Georgia and the remaining 1,076 in Turkey) the second longest pipeline in the world, connects the Chirag-Guneshli oilfields on the Azeri coast of the Caspian Sea with the Turkish port of Ceyhan on the Mediterranean, from where a million barrels a day set sail for Europe.

⁽³⁰⁾ Apart from the longer route, it should be borne in mind that the clashes between Russia and Georgia in their brief war of August 2008 took place very close to both infrastructures, raising fears of their possible physical destruction.

Figure 4.5. Nabucco Gas Pipeline (would join up with the BTE in Erzurum)



■ Iran

Another of the countries in the regional context is the Islamic Republic of Iran, although in the case of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict its participation has been very limited. One has to bear in mind the historically poor relations between the (Altaic) Azeris and the (Indo-European) Persians, and the problem posed for Tehran by the existence of an Azeri minority in the north-east of its territory, representing 20% of the country's total population⁽³¹⁾. An additional source of friction is the Caspian Sea and the exploitation of its resources, since the five countries bordering it, some of them newly created following the collapse of the Soviet Union⁽³²⁾, have not been able to reach agreement on the legal status of its waters.

■ CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has remained in a tense status quo since the end of the military confrontations in 1994, despite constant armed incidents in the separation zone, and multiple peace initiatives by the international community have come up against the inflexible attitude of the parties to the conflict.

Looking to the future, one cannot exclude the possibility of an escalation in tensions leading to armed confrontation. Driven by fear inspired by the break-

⁽³¹⁾ Interestingly, the present Supreme Leader of the Iranian Revolution, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is of partly Azeri descent. The problems of integration for this minority are more cultural and linguistic than religious, since 85% of them are Shiite Muslims as against 15% Sunni.

⁽³²⁾ Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Russia and Iran maintain that the Caspian should have the legal status of a lake, whereas the other three assert that it is an inland sea. In 2003 Kazakhstan, Russia and Azerbaijan signed an agreement which adjudicated to them 27%, 19% and 10% of the Caspian Sea respectively, but Iran and Turkmenistan were not parties to this agreement.

way example set by Kosovo, Azerbaijan has relaunched its rearmament plans, supported by hard currency from exports of oil and gas and the warlike rhetoric of its leaders, which in turn could lead Armenia to carry out a pre-emptive military action to consolidate the enclave's defensive capabilities and those of its own territory.

In a sense, the leaders of both countries are faced with an insoluble dilemma; on the one hand they know that the solution to the conflict lies through the acceptance of the abovementioned six points of the Minsk Group, but on the other hand accepting them would be political suicide and would even lead to accusations of treason:

- In the case of Armenia, because Sargsyan would be accused of returning to Azerbaijan the provinces conquered in 1993-94, now inhabited by Armenians, without being forced to do so given their position of strength.
- In the case of Azerbaijan, because even if those provinces were recovered and the return of the displaced people achieved, it would only be a question of time before the Armenian majority of Nagorno-Karabakh decided to seek independence, leaving Aliyev in an untenable situation.

In any case, the most viable option is considered to be keeping the conflict *frozen*, and gradually adopting specific measures of a limited scope but which at least serve to create mutual trust. It is highly unlikely that either of the countries will take the first step to resume fighting, given that it would immediately have opprobrium heaped upon it by the international community. Therefore the role of external players is fundamental in keeping up the negotiating efforts and making the parties see that resorting to force would be totally unacceptable.

In this regard, the expectation is that Russia will continue its *delicate balancing act* in South Caucasus between Armenia, a sister nation and one of its most faithful allies, and Azerbaijan, with its energy resources and great geopolitical value. Quite apart from this duality, everything points towards Russia's meeting its bilateral and multilateral commitments to Armenia, and an armed attack by Azerbaijan would thus meet with a crushing response from Moscow.

Lastly, the role of Turkey is also crucial: although it has championed Azerbaijan's position, its present excellent relations with Russia (a clear alternative to the Caspian in terms of oil and gas supplies), together with its policy of maintaining good relations with all its neighbours (including Armenia), might cause Baku to back down from its hardline positions. If the Zurich protocols between Turkey and Armenia were finally to be ratified, this would be the most important step toward peace in Nagorno-Karabakh since the demise of the USSR.

■ CHRONOLOGY

Timeline of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict (1988-1994)

DATE	EVENT
February 1988	The Soviet of the autonomous oblast of Nagorno-Karabakh applies to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to be allowed to join the SSR of Armenia, which application is rejected. Demonstrations of support break out in Yerevan, and the Soviet media report the death of an Azeri in one of them, which gives rise to the anti-Armenian pogrom of Sumqayit.
January 1990	Moscow declares a state of emergency in Nagorno-Karabakh and on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Soviet troops deployed in Baku violently suppress the protests, killing 130 people.
May-June 1991	The Soviet army and special forces of the Azeri police evict thousands of Armenians from towns and villages in the North of Nagorno-Karabakh and neighbouring districts in Azerbaijan, deporting them to Armenia.
September 1991	The parliament of Nagorno-Karabakh proclaims the republic's independence; Armenia holds a referendum and leaves the USSR.
November 1991	Azerbaijan revokes the autonomy of Nagorno-Karabakh. Nagorno-Karabakh reacts by holding a referendum in which the vote in favour of independence is practically unanimous.
January 1992	Following the demise of the USSR in December, fighting spreads throughout the region.
Febrero de 1992	February 1992
May 1992	Armenian Karabakh forces conquer the town of Shusha and control the so-called Lachin corridor connecting the enclave to Armenia.
June 1992	Azerbaijan launches an offensive against the Armenians in Martakert, in the north of Karabakh, and in the neighbouring Azeri district of Geranboi/Shaumian, causing some 40,000 Armenians to flee.
August-September 1993	The Russian envoy Kazimirov negotiates a ceasefire that is supposed to last until November. President Aliyev of Azerbaijan meets with Russian President Boris Yeltsin and renounces a military solution to the conflict. Direct talks between Azerbaijani and Armenian Karabakh representatives take place in Moscow.
October 1993	Azerbaijan violates the ceasefire in force, launching a new offensive, which is repulsed by the Armenians, who counter-attack towards the East.

December 1993- February 1994	Azerbaijan launches a final offensive in the south of Nagorno-Karabakh, but after fierce fighting is forced to withdraw.
May 1994	In talks promoted by the CIS among representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh, the Bishkek Protocol is signed, giving rise to the ceasefire of 12th May.

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Chapter V

SOUTH SUDAN: THE UNCERTAINTIES OF A NEW STATE

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SUMMARY

9th July 2011 saw the birth of a new state: South Sudan. However there is no reason to think that this latest arrival on the complex international scene will have an easy childhood. As with almost all conflict scenarios, the delicate situation in South Sudan has its origins in a variety of factors, which cannot be simply reduced to ethnic or religious differences. It would be naïve to dismiss the risk that the new State might undergo internal political upheaval leading to further massive flows of displaced persons that could easily affect neighbouring countries.

Key words

Sudan, South Sudan, Abyei, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, Nuba, independence, civil war, conflict, geopolitical interests .

■ INTRODUCTION

North-East Africa has been the scene of some of the most dramatic episodes of the endemic violence that has been the almost ceaseless scourge of the continent. From interstate confrontations such as those between Ethiopia and Eritrea or Libya and Chad, to tremendous humanitarian disasters brought about by internal conflicts, notably that of Darfur, which have caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and displaced millions more. These are violent conflicts, which in the majority of cases remain open or have been falsely closed, leaving the region in a permanent state of unstable equilibrium, when not on the brink of a new episode of warfare.

For these reasons the region deserves to be analysed in depth, in view of the repercussions that another outbreak of violence could have for neighbouring countries and the geopolitical consequences for this part of the world, with its wealth of much sought-after resources ranging from the waters of the Nile (without forgetting its immense underground reservoirs), proven and probable oil and gas deposits and substantial deposits of some of the most strategic minerals for industrial development.

In this first look at the region it will not be possible to study all the past and present conflicts and draw conclusions from them for the future, so we have opted to focus on the most topical aspect: the arrival, on 9th July 2011, of South Sudan on the complex international stage (see Figure 5.1).

While its newborn status should perhaps confer the benefit of the doubt as to its viability and stability, there is no reason to think that this new country will have an easy childhood. Moreover, internal and external disturbances, particularly those concerning the country from which it has been carved - Sudan - may have significant influence and repercussions for events taking place in neighbouring countries and even Africa as a whole.

As with almost all conflict scenarios, the delicate situation in South Sudan has its origins in a variety of factors, which cannot be simply reduced to ethnic or religious differences. All in all there are many aspects and thorny issues, and no reductionist simplification is possible. The mix includes cultural, social, historical, economic and political factors as well as the religious and ethnic aspects already referred to, plus the international interests that have to be borne in mind.

For a start, as is the case with so many other African countries, South Sudan is largely the result of borders drawn arbitrarily by both colonisers and equally high-handed decolonisers, with scant regard for age-old differentiations among tribes, ethnic groups and religions.

Figure 5.1. South Sudan. Source: <http://knorpel.wordpress.com/category/politiquesos/page/2/>



Furthermore, South Sudan was much affected by the Sudan's policy of gradually Arabising and Islamising the whole country, as reflected in the domination of the Arab Muslim ethnic group over the black, mainly Christian or animist population that now forms the vast majority of this new African country.

There can be no doubt whatsoever that this ethnic polarisation between blacks and Arabs, quite apart from their religious identities, involving an unfair distribution of power, quality of life and influence between the races, was the permanent latent factor in Sudan, which needed only a spark to ignite it and for the South sooner or later to attain its longed-for independence.

However the differences between the North (Sudan) and the South (now South Sudan) go beyond this, and also affect social and economic aspects. Whereas agriculture and business are concentrated in the North, as are the few land and sea transport routes, the South has the prime natural resources, starting with oil, but also including minerals such as uranium and nickel, plus the fertile lands of Renk.

■ BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

On 9th January 2005 the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between the central government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army ⁽¹⁾ (SPLA), bringing an end to the clashes that had arisen from 1955 to 1972 and again since 1983. The main points of the agreement were: an end to conflicts; granting of broad autonomy to South Sudan for six years, following which in 2011 a referendum would be held on independence; equitable sharing of oil revenues between North and South; and imposition of Sharia law in the North only.

In April 2010 multi-party presidential elections were called for the first time in more than twenty years. They were held separately in the North and the South, so that a single representative would emerge for the peace talks and the referendum on independence. In the North, Al-Bashir was elected by a large majority, while in the South, Salva Kiir was elected.

On 9th January 2011 the referendum on independence was held. Preliminary results twelve days later showed 98.6% of votes in favour of South Sudan's becoming an independent state⁽²⁾.

Six months later, on 9th July 2011, South Sudan officially came into existence during a ceremony in Juba attended by 80 foreign delegations and some thirty heads of state or government. The leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), Salva Kiir Mayardit⁽³⁾, was elected president of the new Republic of South Sudan, which is the official name under which it has been registered with the UN.

■ THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CONFLICT

■ General Information

South Sudan is composed of ten states⁽⁴⁾. Its population is estimated at around twelve and a half million inhabitants⁽⁵⁾, approximately 163,000 of whom live in the capital, Juba (see Figure 5.2). Although the main language is Arabic, English is used extensively, especially in education and in the world of business.

⁽¹⁾ The parts played by the UN and the USA were of fundamental importance in making this agreement possible.

⁽²⁾ On 8th February 2011 Al-Bashir officially accepted the final results of the referendum on independence for the South.

⁽³⁾ Following the elections of April 2010, with 93% of the votes of the South.

⁽⁴⁾ Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Unity, Upper Nile, Warrap, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Western Equatoria. Until independence it comprised the provinces of Equatoria, Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile.

⁽⁵⁾ The figures are only rough estimates, since there has not been an official census. Some put it at barely eight million.

Figura 5.2. Source: <http://elbaluartedeoccidente.blogspot.com/2011/07/sudan-del-sur-capital-juba.html>



Moreover, in an effort to distance themselves from the history of domination by the North, its inhabitants are keen to study and practise English as opposed to Arabic. Living conditions are precarious, with a level of illiteracy close to 75%, rising in the case of women to 85%.

According to official South Sudanese figures, 60% of the population is Christian and 22% Muslim. From an ethnic point of view it is estimated that there are almost fifty major groups, divided in turn into many subgroups. The three major groups are the Dinka (some three million persons), who live mainly in Bahr el Ghazal; the Nuer (about two million), mainly occupying the regions of Jonglei and Unity; and the Equatorians⁽⁶⁾, who in turn comprise various ethnic groups, notably the Azande, the Bari, the Lotuko and the Moru.

At present almost the entire budget of South Sudan is based on revenues obtained from oil and gas extraction. As well as oil⁽⁷⁾, it is estimated that South Sudan has significant reserves of natural gas and deposits of minerals such as gold, silver, chrome, manganese, zinc, iron, lead, uranium, copper, cobalt, coltan and nickel, among other resources (including diamonds), the vast majority unexploited, and the exact quantities of which are unknown since the turbulent times it has been through have prevented any detailed prospecting.

⁽⁶⁾ This name is given to them because they come from the region of Equatoria.

⁽⁷⁾ It is calculated that South Sudan has gained possession of 75% of the crude reserves of the former Sudan.

■ Challenges and Opportunities for the New State

Now that it has achieved its long desired independence, new problems are arising for this newborn country. Among them is the lack of its own infrastructure for exploiting the oil deposits, and transporting or refining the oil.

Also, its internal problems have probably only just begun, since there are considerable doubts about the possibility of peaceful union among such a varied aggregation of ethnic groups and cultures which in many cases have been in conflict since time immemorial. It has to be borne in mind that a large part of the population has known nothing but war for the past half-century.

On the positive side, it should be pointed out that South Sudan represents a totally virgin market, which can pay using its oil revenues, a fact that will no doubt attract the attention of numerous investors and opportunists; it remains to be seen whether its leaders will be capable of taking advantage of this circumstance in a way that benefits its citizens.

Moreover, it has been calculated that at least 70% of its territory can easily be made extremely fertile⁽⁸⁾, implying great agricultural potential, and this may become an object of desire for many countries with serious problems in feeding their growing populations.

- *Structural Deficiencies*

Whilst it is true that the major part of Sudanese oil is now concentrated in its territory, Juba continues to be dependent on Khartoum as regards refineries and the oil pipeline to the Red Sea. For that reason it is interested in quickly building at least three refineries on its soil, as well as a new pipeline that would cross Kenyan territory. Also, having been deprived of its coastline, it has to rely on North Sudan, or on other countries, particularly Kenya, for the import and export of all products.

Another factor is that South Sudan may also be affected by accelerated population growth, which may exacerbate inter-ethnic conflict. By way of example, the population of the capital, Juba, has increased tenfold in barely three years, making it impossible for the authorities to provide the minimum basic services to this growing population, although it is true that there has been a serious construction drive in both public and private buildings ranging from hotels to banks.

- *Political and Ideological Problems*

While no one denies that the SPLM has worked tirelessly since independence, and although the new government that has arisen from its ranks is if anything almost too fond of talking about democracy, liberty and human rights, the truth is that it cannot be considered a political movement or party governed by au-

⁽⁸⁾ However, there are thousands of land mines that will first have to be removed.

thetically democratic values and principles⁽⁹⁾. Furthermore, in all these years the SPLM has not been able to gather enough support to be able to represent the great majority of the South Sudanese population. As if being accused of corruption were not enough, many people consider that it concerns itself only with the Dinka, in effect excluding other ethnic groups from social, political and economic benefits and opportunities.

Although Salva Kiir Mayardit, the current South Sudanese president, was the visible head of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), he is not considered an intellectual or a scintillating orator, so his capacity for political leadership is in question. For years overshadowed by the charismatic John Garang⁽¹⁰⁾, it was not until the latter's death in a helicopter crash that he became the main leader of the independence movement.

Another challenge that South Sudan will have to face is the transition from a mentality in which the use of force of arms is uppermost (not for nothing has it been in a state of war for over half a century) to one in which politics takes pride of place, advancing towards a democratic state in which human rights and liberties are respected.

For all these reasons it is a challenge for South Sudan to establish a state that is solid enough to be able to glue together a society with such diverse interests once the spectre of the common enemy has been banished.

- *Disarming and Demobilisation*

The government of South Sudan will now have to face the demobilisation, disarming and reintegration of the nearly 200,000 members of the SPLA. The reality is that since the CPA was reached in 2005 it has been almost impossible to reduce the numbers of South Sudanese forces to any meaningful extent⁽¹¹⁾.

The main complication was that following the CPA the soldiers belonging to the SPLA started to receive a regular salary which, after many years of fighting, they not only considered they deserved but also feared losing if they re-

⁽⁹⁾ During the parliamentary elections of April 2010, many voices were raised against the acts of voter intimidation carried out by members of the SPLM.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Both are from the Dinka ethnic group. Like Garang, Kiir was in the Sudanese army before deserting and going over to the guerrilla movement after refusing to put down a rebellion in the South.

⁽¹¹⁾ The CPA of 2005 established that by the time of the referendum on independence, South Sudan should have reduced its armed forces to just over 100,000 members. With financing provided by the United Nations Development Programme, at least 90,000 soldiers should have been reincorporated into civilian life. However only 12,000 laid down their arms, almost half of them non-combatants - women and elderly or disabled men. As if that were not enough, an internal audit accused this programme of having wasted most of the money that should have been paid to soldiers laying down their arms on such things as excessive personnel, luxury vehicles, unnecessary equipment, etc.

turned to civilian society. Moreover the great majority had no skills other than warfare, not having known any other way of life than survival by force of arms, and they would now have to transform themselves and adapt to civilian life, in a long and complex process fraught with risks⁽¹²⁾.

The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission is currently studying a new eight-year⁽¹³⁾ programme for approval by the donor countries. For the time being, the main security concern is the proliferation and growing strength of guerrilla groups. This violence has already led to some 3,000 deaths so far in 2011 and caused some 200,000 people to flee.

- *Internal Strife*

Of the five main rebel groups, the most active are those of George Athor Deng⁽¹⁴⁾ (Dinka) and Peter Gatdet Yaka⁽¹⁵⁾ (Nuer). Although Juba accuses Khartoum of supporting these groups, the government of Al-Bashir strenuously denies this. The South Sudan Democratic Movement brings together not only the forces of George Athor but also those of General Bapiny Monituel⁽¹⁶⁾ (Nuer), those of Captain Uluak Olony⁽¹⁷⁾ (Shilluk) and other minor factions. They are all united in opposing the supremacy of the Dinka tribe which currently dominates the South Sudanese political panorama. (Although Athor is a Dinka, the majority of his followers are Nuer.)

So far the opposition groups have not shown any inclination to join forces against the government, but if they were to do so they could constitute a major destabilising force with the power to mount a direct challenge to Juba.

■ Issues to be Resolved between North and South

Although the CPA dated from as long ago as 2005 and all the signs pointed to a referendum turning out in favour of independence, the country's split has left open a number of issues still needing to be resolved.

⁽¹²⁾ It has to be borne in mind that although the capital, Juba, is seeing some economic development (and indeed an almost manic construction boom), the rest of the country is at extremely low levels of development, there being practically no jobs to be found outside of agriculture.

⁽¹³⁾ Within this programme, Juba plans to place personnel from its armed forces at the disposal of the UN and the AU to take part in international peacekeeping missions. For the moment, in mid-August 2011 it already offered troops for participation in the Somalia mission.

⁽¹⁴⁾ He was Lt. General in the SPLA, and has his operational base in the Jonglei region. His forces are estimated to number about 2,000.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Based in the Unity region, which, like Jonglei, is an area rich in oil, Gatdet was a Major General in the SPLA, and is considered a brilliant tactician. He calls his group the South Sudan Liberation Army. On 4th August 2011 he signed an agreement on cessation of hostilities with the government, but his group immediately threatened to elect another leader if he did not revoke it.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Following the signing of the CPA in 2005, he joined the army of Khartoum,

⁽¹⁷⁾ With its operational base in the Upper Nile.

To start with, the two countries have to take a decision on how to share the debt of almost US\$40 billion, as well as the revenues generated by oil and gas, especially now that a large part of the reserves are in South Sudan.

Also still pending are the precise demarcation of the common border and the allocation of the Abyei region, one of the main oil enclaves, to one or other of the new countries.

- *The Fight for Cultivable Land*

Although this is not usually talked about, the North may end up being highly dependent on the South for its food supplies. The unproductive lands of the North are not capable of supporting the whole population. Meanwhile, those of the South are extremely fertile, and given the right programmes for efficient development they have huge potential to supply giant markets, starting with their immediate neighbour to the North. This is a trump card which Juba will no doubt know how to play.

- *Sharing of Oil Revenues*

Although the CPA of 2005 established the equitable sharing between Juba and Khartoum of revenues from oil, extraction of which is mainly in the South, this agreement came to an end when the South achieved independence. A new negotiating process therefore has to start now between the two countries in order to reach an understanding. For the moment, both governments have agreed that the South must pay for its oil to be transported across the North, although the price has not yet been set⁽¹⁸⁾. The most likely outcome is that for their mutual benefit the two countries will end up agreeing on a similar sharing system to that which was in place until independence.

In any case, in the event of a lack of agreement, the South has more to lose than the North. Whereas for Khartoum the South's independence meant the loss of 37% of its oil revenues, for Juba crude represents 98% of its revenues. Therefore whereas the North could survive, albeit with great difficulty, a blockade of oil and gas from the South, as things stand at present, i.e. until new routes are opened through other countries, South Sudan could not survive if it was unable to sell its oil. (Figure 5.3)

- *Expatriate Citizens*

Both governments must continue to move forward in such sensitive areas as the nationality of the Arabs living in South Sudan and the South Sudanese

⁽¹⁸⁾ On 25th July the secretary general of the SPLM stated that the North had asked Juba to pay \$22.80 per barrel of oil crossing its territory on its way to the Red Sea, which the South found excessive, since although Southern crude has a nominal value of about \$115, all the costs relating to its extraction and transport have to be deducted from this amount.

living in the North (some two million people) to whom Al-Bashir has threatened not to grant dual nationality. Moreover, the veiled threat that, once rid of the non-Muslims from the South, he would impose Sharia on the whole territory of North Sudan, may lead to many of these (mainly Christian) South Sudanese being forced to leave the North. Such a return to their ancestral lands by the original inhabitants of certain areas in South Sudan which they had left because of war, will no doubt give rise to disputes with the present occupants.

Figure 5.3. Concessions for Oil and Gas Prospecting



- *The Currency War*

Another thorny issue which is no less important is that surrounding the use of the currency⁽¹⁹⁾. South Sudan and the North had agreed that, after the former's independence, Juba would continue to use the Sudanese pound for at least six months. In breach of this undertaking, South Sudan issued its new currency on 18th July, barely nine days after independence, calling it the South Sudanese pound, with a value equal to that of the Sudanese pound, with the intention that within two months it should entirely replace the old currency.

In response to this affront, one week later Khartoum issued a new currency and at the same time prohibited the import of the old one, with the aim of rendering useless the South's reserves of Sudanese pounds, estimated at around US\$700 million in value.

On the brink of bankruptcy, the only thing Juba could do was to shorten the time for changing the old Sudanese pounds into new South Sudanese pounds to 45 days instead of the original two months.

In this currency war Khartoum seems to have the upper hand. Knowing that the South cannot do without the value of its reserves of old Sudanese pounds, it holds an ace which it will surely use in the ongoing negotiations on border conflicts and the sharing of oil revenues.

- *Demarcation of Borders*

Some 20% of the 2,100 kilometres of border between North and South still remain to be demarcated, the areas with proven or suspected oil and gas deposits being especially contentious.

- *The Issue of Abyei⁽²⁰⁾*

Probably the greatest tension is currently in the region of Abyei⁽²¹⁾, where the main armed confrontations are concentrated. Sandwiched between the two new countries, its membership of one or the other is still up in the air, waiting for the holding of a referendum on its self-determination to be unblocked⁽²²⁾.

⁽¹⁹⁾ This is a really key aspect in light of the fact that a similar situation degenerated into an accelerated slide into war when Eritrea adopted the nafka instead of continuing to use the Ethiopian birr.

⁽²⁰⁾ Although it is part of the North Sudan region of South Kordofan, because of its special importance it is being treated separately.

⁽²¹⁾ Abyei has special autonomy. For the moment, the Permanent Court of Arbitration of the Hague has defined the border precisely, which has led to the South's losing substantial oil deposits (specifically the Heglig and Bamboo oilfields), which have now passed into the hands of Khartoum. Juba has expressed its opposition and requested that the ruling be revised.

⁽²²⁾ It is at present part of North Sudan, although many of its inhabitants are black, mainly from the Nuba tribe, and have supported the Southern independence groups against the Muslim Arabs of the North.

Initially the referendum was scheduled for January 2010⁽²³⁾, but disagreements over who would be entitled to vote led to its being postponed *sine die*.

On top of the external struggle for control of this important oil region⁽²⁴⁾, the internal situation does not hold out much hope for stability in the short term either. The interests of the two main tribes living there are directly opposed. Whereas the Dinka (black farmers native to the area) are in favour of joining South Sudan, the Misseriya (Muslim Arab nomads) wish to continue being part of North Sudan. Moreover, there is fierce confrontation between the two groups over the access of cattle to water and pasture⁽²⁵⁾. If the referendum eventually does take place, North Sudan's political position is to offer the Misseriya the same voting rights as those of permanent residents, to which South Sudan, not surprisingly, is directly opposed since it would appreciably weaken its chances of gaining control of this desirable area.

On 21st May 2011, Khartoum forces invaded Abyei⁽²⁶⁾. For North Sudan, taking control of the oil wells of Abyei is a form of compensation for the loss of oil and gas suffered as a result of the South's independence. The North's military intervention forced more than 100,000 people to flee their homes.

In view of the clashes between Northern and Southern forces⁽²⁷⁾, which caused numerous casualties, international pressure was brought to bear, forcing an agreement on demilitarisation, ratified by North and South in June 2011 in Addis Ababa. This agreement, signed at the beginning of July, included a civilian administration and the setting up of an interim security force whose main responsibility would be to supervise the international border. The result was UN Security Council Resolution 1990, passed on 28 June, authorising, for an initial period of six months, a United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), composed of no more than 4,200⁽²⁸⁾ Ethiopian soldiers, 50 policemen and various civilian support personnel⁽²⁹⁾, with the mission of creating an appropriate environment for the holding of a referendum on the future of this strategic region.

Needless to say, Khartoum was angered by Abyei's being referred to as an integral part of South Sudan in the draft of its future constitution. For their part both the USA and the UK have expressed doubts as to the advisability of

⁽²³⁾ According to the CPA of 2005, it should have been held at the same time as that of South Sudan.

⁽²⁴⁾ Some estimates indicate that Abyei contains a quarter of all Sudan's oil. Others however consider this figure exaggerated, estimating potential output at some 2,500 barrels a day.

⁽²⁵⁾ In reality, what is at stake for these two tribes is their survival, in the form of the control of water and pasture for their cattle.

⁽²⁶⁾ All this was in spite of the city of Abyei's internationally recognised status as a demilitarised zone.

⁽²⁷⁾ In mid-May, troops from North Sudan occupied Abyei, giving rise to hostilities.

⁽²⁸⁾ At the time of writing, the number of UNISFA forces present there was about one thousand.

⁽²⁹⁾ On 2nd August, UNISFA suffered its first casualties. Four Ethiopian soldiers died when a mine blew up their passing vehicle. The UN protested to Khartoum since the mine was in a zone controlled by North Sudan.

holding a referendum in the current unstable circumstances. President Obama has again promised Khartoum, as a way of exerting pressure, that it will be definitively removed from the list of countries sponsoring terrorism if it agrees to facilitate the creation of the conditions necessary for holding the referendum. In any case, all the indications are that the longer the referendum is delayed, the greater the likelihood of major violence breaking out in the region, which will undoubtedly further exacerbate the humanitarian disaster.

- *The Complex Situation of the Nuba and Kordofan in the South*

One of the effects of the recent independence of South Sudan can be clearly seen in the North Sudanese province of South Kordofan, which is inhabited by the Nuba people who live in the Nuba mountains, right on the border between North and South Sudan.

The problem with this region⁽³⁰⁾ (whose borders are mainly undefined) centres on the fact that, with the independence of South Sudan, it has become Khartoum's main source of oil, making it non-negotiable for North Sudan, which has to confront the thousands of well-armed⁽³¹⁾ militiamen who have been fighting the government of Khartoum for years in this area.

The Nuba, who mainly practise animism and who to a great extent supported the SPLM in the days of struggle against the government of Khartoum, now find themselves under the full jurisdiction of North Sudan, which has led to violent clashes with Al-Bashir's forces. As a consequence, Khartoum is thought to be committing all kinds of atrocities in this region, in an effort to crush the spirit of the people. This situation will very likely prevail over time, since a firm condemnation is unlikely to come from the international community, which is now mainly focused on South Sudan and, to a lesser extent, Darfur.

On 5th June 2011, violent armed clashes broke out as a consequence of the elections for governor, the two main parties refusing to accept the result. The North Sudanese air force bombed various areas of South Kordofan, including the capital, Kadugli, and the Nuba mountains. Both actions led to the exodus of at least 150,000 people and prevented the distribution of humanitarian aid to half of them⁽³²⁾.

- *The Uncertainty of the Blue Nile*

Together with South Kordofan, the Blue Nile region (a province-state of North Sudan) has a sad history of violence, with nearly 100,000 deaths in the past

⁽³⁰⁾ Strictly speaking it should be called a «state», as it is one of those forming the federation of North Sudan.

⁽³¹⁾ It is mainly peopled by the Nuba tribe, who fought alongside the SPLM in the second North-South war.

⁽³²⁾ According to the UNHCR, Khartoum blocked the distribution of humanitarian aid by both air and land.

few years. Both provinces must now decide whether they prefer to continue to depend on the diminished North Sudan, where the future looks bleak, or to join the new South Sudan, where the immediate future is scarcely brighter, but which at least has the support of major members of the international community.

- *Current State of Negotiations*

In the Mekelle (Ethiopia) Memorandum of Understanding signed on 23rd June 2010, four working groups were established (citizenship; security; financial, economic and natural resources; and international treaties and legal issues) dedicated to solving these issues.

At the end of November 2010, a summit meeting was held between the two countries in Addis Ababa, in which Abyei was the focus of discussions, which ended without agreement.

In mid-June 2011 leading figures from the Juba and Khartoum governments met in Addis Ababa to negotiate on the situation of Abyei, South Kordofan and the Blue Nile, without any tangible outcome⁽³³⁾.

The current situation is that Juba refuses to enter into other negotiations until the case of Abyei (which has taken on symbolic importance) is resolved to its satisfaction. In this respect it asks for an administration of seven members, at least four of whom would be favourable to it. It also believes that the referendum on self-determination must take place before the end of 2011, and insists that only the Dinka inhabitants be allowed to vote. Naturally North Sudan finds the latter proposal unacceptable, since it would mean abandoning the Misseriya.

■ THE ROLE OF FOREIGN ACTORS

■ Regional Implications

- *Egypt*

Bearing in mind how vital it is for Egypt to continue to receive the same volume of water from the Nile⁽³⁴⁾, and that the new South Sudan now controls the tap in the form of the White Nile, there is no doubt that Cairo would have preferred a united Sudan as the lesser of two evils, convinced as it is that any future agreement on the water from the river is unlikely to be better than the one it had, since until now it only had to review the agreement (which is highly advantageous to Egypt) annually with a single country.

⁽³³⁾ The meeting was sponsored by the African Union High Level Panel.

⁽³⁴⁾ Under the Treaty of 1959, Egypt obtains 55.5 million cubic metres of water per year, while Sudan retains 18 million.

To this already delicate situation has to be added the fact that, if forecasts pointing to a doubling of Egypt's population to 150 million within fifty years are confirmed, tensions over control of the waters of the Nile can only increase.

The Egyptians are not unaware of the fact that Sudan, both North and South, may wish, or may even actually be obliged, to amend the treaty of 1959, with regard to their own need to use the water to irrigate cultivable lands, to generate hydroelectric power or even to allow others countries, such as Israel perhaps, to use this strategic resource. With a view to ensuring the best possible relations with the new country, Egypt had already opened a consulate in the South some months ago. Cairo is hoping that the new South Sudan will become an ally in the project to overhaul the rules for sharing water, as part of the Nile Basin Initiative.

- *Eritrea*

Eritrea once openly accused Sudan of supporting certain Islamist movements⁽³⁵⁾ operating in its territory, and used this as a reason for offering its support to the Southern independence movement.

- *Ethiopia*

Despite many years of favouring the Southern secessionists, to whom it provided military capabilities, more recently Ethiopia⁽³⁶⁾ has preferred to stay on the sideline in this dispute, probably because it is more concerned about other issues that pose a greater risk to its own security, both external (the latent enmity with Eritrea, or endemic instability in Somalia), and internal.

Certainly Ethiopia has much at stake in Sudan, which is why it spares no effort in seeking solutions that might lead to an understanding between North and South. Among its concerns is the possibility of the Khartoum regime's adopting an extreme Islamist stance. Moreover, it is host to a large number of Sudanese refugees (as many as 70,000 by some estimates) waiting for the situation to improve so that it can send them back to Sudan.

Also, the South's independence makes them worry lest the separatist communities of Oromo and Ogaden take advantage of these circumstances to press their claims. Or even that Al-Bashir's government might support these secessionist groups in order to destabilise the region to its own advantage.

Ethiopia also fears that tensions may arise with the new Southern state, with which it shares more than 1,000 kilometres of border, on either side of which live the Anyuak and Nuer tribes. In this regard, one of the biggest worries may be the border region of Gambela, historically marginalised, whose shared

⁽³⁵⁾ This was mainly a group called Jihad Eritrea, of which little is known.

⁽³⁶⁾ A Christian majority.

historical cultural roots with South Sudan could lead its inhabitants at some point to wish for integration with the South Sudanese, especially if the South manages to achieve rapid and stable development.

At present, relations between Juba and Addis Ababa can be described as cordial but with scope for improvement. Among other shared projects, one that stands out is the opening of highways from the Gambela region to the South Sudanese capital

- *Kenya*

Closely involved from the outset in the negotiations leading to the CPA, Kenya has a strong interest in the stability of South Sudan, with an eye to the possible benefits of having a virgin market as a neighbour, to which, as one of the main economic drivers in this part of Africa, it can supply a wide variety of goods and provide the infrastructure that is vital for its development. Moreover nearly 80% of its population is Christian, in common with South Sudan. It is estimated that some 15,000 South Sudanese live in Kenya.

One of the most promising projects is the construction of a pipeline which would transport crude from the oilfields of South Sudan to the coast of Kenya⁽³⁷⁾. This would enable South Sudan to avoid using the present pipeline that ends in Port Sudan, on the Red Sea, and thus to avoid dependence on North Sudan. The project⁽³⁸⁾ is currently being carried out by Japan's Toyota group, at an estimated cost of about US\$1.5 billion, which in the opinion of the government of South Sudan makes it economically non-viable, for which reason it prefers to negotiate the transit of crude through the North. Also under study is the possible construction of a large commercial port to the North of Lamu, which would be connected by pipeline to South Sudan.

It now remains for South Sudan and Kenya to resolve their disagreements over the Llemi Triangle, in which Ethiopia is also an interested party since the borders of all three countries come together at that point. There are those who think that Kenya might be handed this territory as a reward for services rendered to South Sudan⁽³⁹⁾ on its path to independence.

- *Uganda*

Kampala was one of the main supporters of the Southern secessionists, with whom it had close ties. It was made to pay for this support by suffering two

⁽³⁷⁾ More precisely, to the port of Mombasa. There is also another option under study, namely sending the crude to the port of Masawa, in Eritrea.

⁽³⁸⁾ It is known as LAPSSSET (Lamu Port-Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor) and is currently in the adjudication phase. Apparently China is very interested in building it.

⁽³⁹⁾ During the civil wars, Khartoum repeatedly accused Nairobi of supplying large quantities of war materiel to the South Sudanese rebels.

attacks by the extremely violent group known as the Lord's Resistance Army⁽⁴⁰⁾ (LRA), which has been very active since the turn of the century both in the north of Uganda and in the south of Sudan, where it has terrorised the local population.

Like Kenya, Uganda has made substantial investments in South Sudan, so its interest is in the maintaining of a certain stability so that it can obtain a good return on its investment. At present nearly 15% of Uganda's exports go to Sudan. More than 200,000 Sudanese refugees are thought to be living in Uganda.

■ Other Geopolitical Interests

- *China*

Although China had enormous strategic interests in Sudan, which it had helped with all its economic and diplomatic strength, it did not neglect to build good relations with the Southern independence movement, aware as it was that the oil reserves were in its future territories. Thus in 2008 it opened a consulate in Juba, converting it into an embassy two years later.

Beijing's interests in South Sudan are many and various, not confined merely to oil. For example, it is building (and providing the bulk of the manpower for) the Merowe hydroelectric power station⁽⁴¹⁾, near the fourth cataract of the Nile, in South Sudan, (although three other companies, one Swiss, one French and one German, are also involved to a lesser extent). With its traditional policy of non-interference in internal affairs, it does not seem in principle that Chinese interests in either country will suffer.

On the geopolitical level, we should not forget that Sudan, and now South Sudan, has been and continues to be one of the scenarios for confrontation between two giant powers: the United States and China.

Since China is one of the main interested parties, if not indeed the major one, in the stability of the two new countries, given their importance as sources of oil, it is to be hoped that Beijing will be a key element in guiding both governments along the path of peace and harmony.

- *Spain*

The business opportunities opening up in South Sudan could also present attractive outlets for Spanish investments. In a country that lacks everything, the capability and experience of our companies would be of great help in providing essential resources to the impoverished population.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Uganda has frequently accused the government of Khartoum of being behind the LRA guerrilla fighters.

⁽⁴¹⁾ With a budget of nearly US\$2 billion, it is estimated that it would be able to supply electricity to almost half the African continent, and even to export some to Europe.

Apparently the South Sudanese authorities are also aware of this possibility, as shown in statements made by the Minister for Energy and Mines during his visit to Spain last January in which he said that Spanish companies might be awarded the construction project for Juba's new airport.

- *United States*

In October 2002, the US passed the «Sudan Peace Act» forcing Khartoum to negotiate with the SPLA and to desist from interfering with humanitarian aid if it wished to see a lifting of the sanctions that had been applied for years as a result of its being associated with international terrorism. There is no doubt that the pressure thus exerted by the USA played a key role in bringing about the 2005 peace agreement which would pave the way for the process that eventually led to the South's independence.

In support of their policy in the region, the Americans carried out a major publicity and psychological campaign ranging from the use of well-known stars⁽⁴²⁾ who have protested against Khartoum's actions in the South, through to persuading the US administration itself to come out in favour of the establishment of a new democratic state⁽⁴³⁾.

Washington's offer to Khartoum, in return for the peaceful culmination of the process of independence for South Sudan, the resolution of the situation in Abyei and respect for the rights of South Sudanese wishing to continue residing in the North was: economic assistance; normalisation of diplomatic relations; and removal from the list of countries sponsoring terrorism. In this regard some analysts point to the fact that, after the approval of the CPA in 2005, Sudan started to receive significant remittances of dollars from the US government.

Moreover, between 2005 and 2010, the USA might have contributed more than US\$6 billion to South Sudan, to which could be added another US\$200 million in military aid. In exchange, the US has improved its presence in the area. For example, the main company involved in the construction of buildings for military use and in training the SPLA forces was and is the US firm Dyn-Corp International.

- *India*

Although less well-known than China, India also plays an active part in extracting crude in Sudan. This is not a new situation, since trading links between the two countries have a long history, which is partly why there is a significant Indian community in the country. The main company present is ONGC Videsh, with concessions in South Sudan.

⁽⁴²⁾ One example has been actor George Clooney, with his resolute support of South Sudan's independence. He even arranged for a network of commercial satellites to monitor the situation in the most disputed areas.

⁽⁴³⁾ Here he had support from Christian groups and the African-American community.

In view of its current interests in the South, New Delhi established diplomatic relations with Juba as soon as the CPA was signed in 2005, and these were strengthened with the opening of a consulate in 2007.

Since an unstable situation could only damage its interests, India, like China, is placing its stakes on support for the viability of South Sudan.

- *United Nations*

From 2005 on, the UN participated with the UNMIS (United Nations Mission in Sudan), approved by Security Council Resolution 1590 of 24th March (extended by Resolution 1978 of 27th April 2011 until 9th July this year) with a mandate to monitor compliance with the CPA.

By means of Resolution 1996 of 2011, approved on 8th July, it established the UNMISS (United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan), for an initial period of one year. This mission (which may eventually involve as many as 7,000 soldiers and 900 policemen, plus appropriate civilian personnel) has a general mandate to consolidate peace and security and contribute to establishing the conditions in which the Republic of South Sudan can develop.

Three days later, in Resolution 1997 it was decided to withdraw all UNMIS military and civilian personnel starting 11th July, with a deadline of 31st August. At the same time, in the same resolution, the Secretary General was asked to transfer the personnel, equipment, supplies and such other assets as might be necessary from UNMIS to UNMISS and UNISFA (the mission to the Abyei region already commented upon), and this has been happening little by little.

Also, it took part in South Sudan's referendum on independence, providing observers and logistical support.

- *African Union*

The African Union has never looked kindly on independence for South Sudan, for fear of setting a precedent for other parts of Africa, where the negative effect produced by decolonisation could lead to an almost unlimited number of states springing up if one were to be guided solely by differences among the main ethnic groups.

- *European Union*

Shortly after the independence of South Sudan, the EU representative in the area, Carlo Filippi, declared that the European Union wished to have a lasting association with Juba.

■ CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

The culmination of South Sudan's independence process probably does not mean that the goal of stability and peace has been reached, but is only a point of departure for a new situation that is very difficult to predict, but where everything points to uncertainty and even violence continuing to set the tone, at least for some time to come.

It would be naïve to pretend that this new state is not going to suffer violent internal political convulsions, seeing how the various ethnic and religious groups are starting to take up positions prior to making a grab for political and economic power. This situation could lead to a new flood of displaced persons and refugees, which could easily affect neighbouring countries, practically all of which have delicate internal situations, whether for political, economic or natural reasons, with unforeseeable consequences.

Some analysts see the independence of the South as the price that Al-Bashir has had to pay for staying in power in the North. Also, that it is because he has been promised great benefits (basically the sharing of oil revenues) or because he has become convinced of the futility of another war at a time when the international community's support for the South has perhaps been greater than ever.

In any case, the likelihood is that neither party, neither North nor South, is interested in returning to an armed conflict that could only pile up problems for them. In a world in which the main countries are subject to severe internal economic restrictions that prevent them from offering significant aid to third parties, the two Sudans, North and South, must start to get used to the idea of managing on their own. And to do so they need the flow of oil not to be interrupted, bearing in mind that this is the source of practically all the South's revenues and almost half those of the North. Thus the most likely (and the most desirable) outcome is that common, shared economic interests will bring together the two parties that until recently were mortal enemies. Moreover, at least for the time being, South Sudan is entirely dependent on the countries to which it owes its huge borrowings and the IMF, so its capacity for independent action is really limited.

However there is another, much more subtle (though no less relevant) way of looking at the independence of South Sudan: as well as acting as a brake on the attempts of certain countries to spread Islam throughout Africa, it symbolises the failure of integration between cultures, ethnic groups and religions, setting a bad precedent that might be followed in other areas with similar problems. Thus one cannot dismiss the possibility of its provoking a chain reaction in other countries that also suffer internal confrontations based on ethnic, religious, cultural, economic or political differences, such as Nigeria (between the

Muslim North and the Christian South), the Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of the Congo (Katanga region), Ethiopia (Oromo and Ogaden regions), Senegal (Casamance) and Angola (Cabinda region). Another example could be Somaliland, self-proclaimed as a state independent of Somalia in 1999, which has been closely following South Sudan's independence process. As for Khartoum, it feels obliged to act firmly in order to avoid the South's independence becoming a precedent to be imitated in other parts of the country. Therefore it is to be expected that it will act firmly, both in Abyei and in other areas with secessionist aspirations.

It is equally important to point out that in this new South Sudan the business opportunities are enormous, since everything remains to be done. In a country the size of Spain, there are practically no paved roadways, and 80% of its citizens are illiterate and lack the most basic social services. There can be no doubt that many countries have their eyes on this new African market, so it is to be hoped that the South Sudanese leaders will be able to take advantage of the opportunities offered by their new independence and offer its people the bright future prospects they have hitherto so sorely lacked.

■ **CHRONOLOGY**

Table 5.1. Timeline of the Conflict

TIMELINE OF THE CONFLICT		
1956	January	Independence of Sudan Creation of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)
1955-1972		First civil war (between Northern and Southern Sudan)
1972		Addis Ababa Agreement
1972-1983		Period between wars
1983-2005		Second civil war (between Northern and Southern Sudan)
1997		Khartoum Peace Agreement
2002	July	Machakos Protocol signed
2005	January	Signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)
2010	April	Multi-party presidential elections
2011	January	Referendum on independence for South Sudan
2011	July	South Sudan achieves full independence

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Chapter VI

SOMALIA: THE ARCHETYPAL FAILED STATE

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SUMMARY

For more than twenty years, Somalia has been embroiled in an internal conflict which has caused more than 350,000 deaths and resulted in some 1.5 million displaced persons within the country. We are currently seeing a confrontation between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), supported by the international community, and the Salafist jihadist Al-Shabaab (the Youth) organisation.

In 2007, the phenomenon of piracy reappeared in Somali waters. Since 2007, attacks by pirate groups have increased, and last year alone 49 vessels with around 600 crew on board were hijacked.

Key words

Somalia, failed State, piracy, Al-Shabaab, Transitional Federal Government

■ INTRODUCTION

«Me against my brother;
my brother and I against my cousin;
my brother, my cousin and I against the world»

–Somali proverb–

The traditional Somali greeting is «Are we at peace?», to which the other person normally answers «We are at peace». Unfortunately, peace is rather difficult to find in Somalia. For more than twenty years, the country has been embroiled in an internal conflict which has caused more than 350,000 deaths and resulted in some 1.5 million displaced persons within the country. Somali pirate groups are highly active in the waters of the Indian Ocean: at the end of summer 2011, 17 vessels were being held hostage with 375 men and women on board.

This situation has been aggravated by the worst drought in the last 60 years, which has led the United Nations to declare a famine in six of the country's regions. This humanitarian crisis is affecting around four million people in Somalia and could result in hundreds of thousands of deaths over the coming months. If this were not enough, the seriously unsanitary conditions and overcrowding of the thousands of displaced persons has resulted in an outbreak of cholera in Mogadishu and the south of the country.

This has occurred in what is considered the archetypal failed State, as shown by its position at the top of the Index of Failed States produced by the prestigious magazine *Policy* and the Fund for Peace. In addition to being a failed State, we must also add the endemic corruption that has also placed it at the top of the Corruption Perception Index published annually by Transparency International. Together, these two circumstances act as effective fuel for the problems and are the main obstacles to solutions.

One of the outstanding and unique characteristics of Somali society, with direct repercussions on the conflict, is that it is based on clans. The strongest feelings of loyalty for a Somali are to the clan, which takes precedence over any social, political or economic activity etc. which is carried out in Somalia. The clans unite people with the same origins and common history, and are usually grouped together in a particular area and led by patriarchs or religious leaders. In turn, the clans are usually divided into sub-clans or lineages, and these likewise into sub-sub-clans, etc. giving rise to multiple sub-divisions. There are six main clans: the Darod, Hawiye, Isaaq, Dir, Digil and Rahanwein. The Darod, Isaaq, Hawiye and Dir clans are historically nomadic, and account for 75% of the population. The Digil and Rahanwein

clans account for some 20% and the remaining 5% is made up of minor clans with little weight in society⁽¹⁾.

The internal conflict which has afflicted the country has mutated over the years. At the end of the 1980s, under the Siad Barre dictatorship, the country was involved in a *de facto* civil war between the government and opposition movements. The fall of the dictator and the resulting collapse of the state led to a violent power struggle between the various clans and warlords in the 1990s. However, over recent years, the situation has evolved into a more ideologically-based and global conflict.

The term most widely used to refer to Somalia's internal conflict is that it is a «hybrid war», which means that it combines conventional warfare capabilities and tactics with irregular groups that use terrorist tactics and employ violence and coercion indiscriminately.

We are currently seeing a confrontation between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), supported by the international community, and the Salafist jihadist Harakat Al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (the Mujahideen Youth Movement) organisation, more commonly referred to as Al-Shabaab (the Youth). Al-Shabaab controls practically all of the south and centre of the country, and has publicly declared its «loyalty» to the Al-Qaeda terrorist organisation, aspiring to spread its jihad to the whole of the Horn of Africa (see Figure 6.1) and to work with Al-Qaeda in its *global jihad against the West*⁽²⁾.

In 2007, the phenomenon of piracy reappeared in Somali waters. The chaos of Somalia is fertile territory for piracy, a business which is as old as sea trade itself. Over 30,000 ships sail through the Gulf of Aden (one of the world's major trade routes) every year, making this an inexhaustible resource for pirate groups. Piracy has been increasing since 2007, with 49 vessels being taken hostage last year alone, together with around 600 crew members from 18 countries⁽³⁾. In 2010 a study for the One Earth Future foundation⁽⁴⁾ estimated that maritime piracy costs the world economy between US\$7 and 12 billion per year⁽⁵⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Brian J. Hesse, *Introduction: The myth of Somalia*, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 2010, pg 247-259.

⁽²⁾ On 29th February 2008, the US State Department declared Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahidin to be a foreign terrorist organisation under section 219 of its Immigration and Nationality Act. On 29th August 2009, the Australian government also declared Al-Shabaab to be a terrorist organisation, under Article 102 of its Criminal Code.

⁽³⁾ ICC - International Maritime Bureau, *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships*, reported for the period of 1st January-31st December 2010. www.icc-ccs.org.

⁽⁴⁾ Boden, Anna, *The Economic Cost of Maritime Piracy*, One Earth Future Foundation, December 2010.

⁽⁵⁾ This study mainly analyses the costs resulting from ransom payments; increased insurance premiums; increased transport costs due to the need to use alternative routes; costs arising from the presence of naval units in the zone; the use of private security by ship owners; and putting pirates on trial.

Figure 6.1. Political Map of the Horn of Africa



Alarm bells started ringing in Spain when the «Playa de Bakio» and «Alakrana» fishing boats were seized in 2008 and 2009, respectively. These two events have led Spain to play an active role in all the activities undertaken by the international community against maritime piracy. The main efforts made by our country are focused on the participation of our armed forces in European Union (EU) operations «Atalanta» and the «European Union Training Mission Somalia» (EUTM- Somalia).

In this short paper we aim to describe the main aspects of the conflict in Somalia over more than 20 years, together with its causes, important milestones, main parties, future implications, etc. in order for the reader to understand the current situation in Somalia (see Table 6.1), and to identify aspects which may be relevant to the future of the conflict.

Table 6.1. Somalia General Information

SOMALIA. GENERAL INFORMATION	
Land area	637,657 sq. km. (slightly smaller than France)
Borders	Total: 2,340 km By country: Djibouti: 58 km Ethiopia: 600 km Kenya: 682 km
Kilometres of coastline	3,025 km (approximately half that of Spain)
Climate	Desert
Natural resources	Uranium Largely unexploited: iron ore, tin, gypsum, bauxite, copper, salt and natural gas
Population	9,925,640 (estimated July 2011)
Ethnic groups	Somali: 85% Bantu and others: 15%
Religion	Sunni Islam
Geographical distribution of the population	Urban: 37% Rural: 63%
Age structure of the population	0-14 years: 44.7% 15-64 years: 52.9% + 65 : 2.4%
Access to clean drinking water	City: 67% of the population Rural: 9% of the population
Gross Domestic Product	US\$5,896 billion (estimated in 2010)

■ BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

The earliest historic references to Somalia date back to around 2000 BC and describe commercial relations between the Egyptians and the people of the «land of the Punt». Since then, we can find interesting historical stories which are set in the «land of the aromas», as the area was called some centuries later by the Romans, in reference to the use of incense there. However, we will begin this brief historical overview in the 19th century, when European colonisation of the Horn of Africa began, as this marks the future of present-day Somalia.

■ European Colonisation of the Horn of Africa

The initial excavations for construction of the Suez Canal began in 1859, in a project promoted and led by the Frenchman Ferdinand Lesseps. Ten years later, on 30th October 1869, the Mediterranean and Red Seas were finally joined with the completion of this Pharaonic project bringing the European and Asian continents much closer together. This new artificial sea route turned the Horn of Africa region into a compulsory part of the route for intercontinental maritime trade, and so gave the region a new strategic value.

In the 19th century, the French, Italians and British established presences in different areas of present-day Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia. Over the rest of the century and almost until World War II, the three powers gradually increased their territories, creating three different Somalias: a Somalia under French influence, corresponding to what is now Djibouti; a Somalia under British influence, corresponding to what is now Somaliland; and an Italian Somalia, coinciding with the south and centre of today's Somalia.

In 1862, France bought the Obock anchorage from the Danakil, creating a protectorate which years later would become Djibouti. In 1896 this became a French colony, which it remained until 1977, when it became independent.

The British, who had occupied Aden (Yemen) in 1839, now turned their sights to the opposite shore of the Gulf of Aden in order to exercise greater control over the new trade route. However, their aspirations came into conflict with the Egyptian presence on the north coast of Somalia. Taking advantage of the 1882 Mahdi uprising⁽⁶⁾ in Sudan having caused a withdrawal of Egyptian troops from the area, the British established themselves in Zeila and Berbera. These initial settlements would give rise to the protectorate of British Somalia in the north of the Horn of Africa.

The Italians began to establish a presence in the region in 1869 when the Rubattino shipping line acquired some territory in the Bay of Assab (Eritrea) for the construction of a port to support its merchant fleet. This land was then bought by the Italian government, which gradually increased its territory on the coast of present-day Eritrea. From Eritrea, Italy extended its presence in Africa, mainly in present-day Somalia. The Italians colonised the largest and most fertile area of the country, creating Italian Somalia. In the summer of 1941, the Italian colony was occupied by British troops, who administered it until November 1949, when it became a territory under the United Nations Fiduciary Administration Council administered by Italy for a period of ten years.

⁽⁶⁾ In Islam, the Mahdi is the figure sent by Allah to avenge the injustices in the world. This belief is not accepted by Sunni Muslims, but is important to Shiites. A number of people have been given the title of Mahdi throughout history, with the best known being Mohammed Ahmed (1844-85), who led the uprising in the Sudan against foreign troops.

Italy prepared its ex-colony for liberation, and this example had repercussions in neighbouring British Somalia.

■ **The Birth of the Republic of Somalia**

Somalia became independent on 1st July 1960, officially calling itself the Republic of Somalia. This new country was the result of the union of the old British and Italian colonies. However, the then-embryonic country did not fulfil the aspirations of many Somalis, as it did not include some territories occupied by ethnic Somalis, particularly present-day Djibouti; the Ogaden region of Ethiopia; and territories in the north of Kenya. The dream of a greater Somalia, or pan-Somalism, would remain an everpresent factor in the history of the new country, and would be the cause of some of the most important episodes in its recent history.

The main political forces in the two ex-colonies united around the Somali Youth League, a political organisation which originated in the old Italian colony, and which was firmly committed to establishing a western democratic system. Abdullah Osman was elected as the first President.

The first general elections were held in 1967, and were won by Abdirashid Ali Shermarke, who was invested as the president of the country by the National Assembly. However, the young country then started to display signs of weakness: the clans began to exercise more and more influence in the political parties and the Assembly, leading to fights between the clans to win larger shares of power; corruption in the administration reached significant levels and some sectors started to criticise the government for its passivity towards the areas not included in the country. These problems came in addition to the delicate state of the economy, which led to fears for the country's future.

Legislative elections were held in 1969 but did not result in a clear winner; this made it difficult to form a new government with sufficient support to govern the country. On 15th October 1969, President Shermarke was assassinated, clearly signalling that the attempt to establish a democratic republic was close to failure.

■ **The Siad Barre Regime**

A few days later, on 21st October, a coup d'état was staged, led by the police chief, General Jamaa Jorsel, and General Mohamed Siad Barre. The two Generals justified the coup on the basis of lack of agreement over the formation of the new government and the corruption and chaos that appeared to be suffocating the country. General Siad Barre was designated the President

of Somalia. The new socialist State, as it was defined by the new President, changed its official title to the Somali Democratic Republic.

From the outset, it sought closer ties with the Soviet Union, which led to a Cooperation and Friendship Agreement in 1974. Signature of this agreement led to the arrival of Soviet military instructors and materiel, turning Somalia into a regional military power.

President Siad Barre only had very limited support in the country, as he installed a regime based on nepotism, authoritarianism and claiming Somali territory outside the country⁽⁷⁾. Corruption began to increase, and with it the number of opponents of the regime. In the search for ways to improve his image among the people, the President planned the occupation of Ethiopian territories in the Ogaden (see Figure 6.2) in order to protect the ethnic Somali population there. In 1976, he began to finance the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) insurgent group. However, the preparations for the confrontation with Ethiopia did not escape the attention of the Soviet military advisors who were helping the Somali army. At the time, both of these countries were within the Soviet fold, and the USSR was therefore keen to avoid a confrontation between two of its satellites. Siad Barre, angered by the lack of support from his powerful ally, broke the Cooperation and Friendship Agreement signed in 1974.

In May 1977, the WSLF blew up a number of Ethiopian railway lines, and the regular Somali army entered the Ogaden. The Soviets supported Ethiopia, and sent Cuban forces which had been deployed in Angola to the zone. With these Cuban troop reinforcements and the support of the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic, the Somali army was defeated and obliged to withdraw in January 1978. In a little under a year, the Somalis lost more than 25,000 troops, marking the beginning of the end for the regime.

However, the loss of its Soviet ally was offset from 1980 when it signed a number of cooperation agreements with the United States. The signing of these new agreements meant that Somalia was now once more a regional military

Figure 6.2. Ethiopian Territory of Ogaden



⁽⁷⁾ Vega Fernández, Enrique, «Crisis somalí, piratería e intervención militar», chapter 2 «El escenario», General Gutiérrez Mellado, University Institute, 2009, pag. 35.

power, as it had been under the shield of the USSR prior to the invasion of the Ogaden.

The economic and human cost of the Ogaden campaign boosted opposition to the regime, leading to new movements arising based on the dominant clans in each region. Violence began to slowly spread throughout the whole of Somalia. In the current autonomous region of Puntland, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) was created, led by the Darod clan. The Somali National Movement (SNM), based on the Isaaq clan, was created in Somaliland.

With Ethiopian support, in 1978 the SNM launched an offensive which took control of the main towns in the north-west of the region, including Harguisia, the capital of present-day Somaliland. Siad Barre ordered an example to be made in order to avoid further uprisings. With the support of South African mercenaries and the merciless use of artillery and aviation, Barre recovered the cities held by the rebels. It has been calculated that around 40,000 Somalis died in the subsequent repression, resulting in a mass exodus of the population to Djibouti and Ethiopia⁽⁸⁾.

Numerous armed opposition groups then emerged under the influence of different clans which gradually took control of small areas within the country. The most powerful of these was the United Somali Congress (USC), which was created in January 1989 and controlled by the Hawiye clan. This movement soon split into two factions led by influential leaders: the businessman Ali Mahdi, from the Abgal lineage, led one of the factions, based in Mogadishu, and General Mohamed Farah Aidid, of the Habar Guedir lineage, led the other faction, based in Ethiopia.

■ The Collapse of the Somali State

By 1990, Barre's power was very limited and the state's structure had practically disintegrated. Opposition forces, particularly those controlled by the Hawiye clan (USC), began to attack government facilities in Mogadishu and the surrounding areas. General Mohamed Farah Aidid marched on Galkayo in the south of Somalia, and from there reached the outskirts of Mogadishu. On 26th January 1991, surrounded by the Hawiye movements and abandoned by all of his supporters except his family, Siad Barre fled the country. He went into exile in Nigeria where he died in 1995, having been refused by Kenya.

The Somalis call the period between December 1991 and March 1992 the «burbur» (or «catastrophe»). In Mogadishu, Ali Mahdi proclaimed himself President of the country. However, this self-proclamation was opposed by many, led by General Farah Aidid. Mogadishu then became the scene of heavy fighting

⁽⁸⁾ Clarke, Walter S. *Recent History (Somalia)*, in Europe World online. London. Routledge 2003-2011.

between the supporters of the two leaders. It has been calculated that 25,000 people died in the first four months of fighting, and that 1.5 million Somalis abandoned the country and a further 2 million were displaced internally⁽⁹⁾.

In the south, the «bread basket of the country», different clans and sub-clans were fighting for power in the region, particularly for control of the important port of Kismayo. The situation in the north of the country at the time was relatively calm. Taking advantage of the generalised chaos in other areas, on 18th May 1991, the SNM declared the independence of the territories which had formed the old British colony under the name Somaliland. However, Somaliland has never been recognised as an independent state by any country, either at the time or since.

■ United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM)

Against this background of civil war, the country then suffered one of the worst droughts it had ever experienced, which led to the deaths of 250,000 people from starvation. In March 1992, the United Nations Security Council launched the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I) in order to guarantee the distribution of humanitarian aid and to support international efforts to secure a ceasefire.

This operation did not manage to meet its initial objectives, and this led the United States to launch operation «Restore Hope», based on an agreement between the US government and the United Nations Security Council. The US created an international task force (Unified Task Force) involving over 20 nations, which had some 30,000, mostly American, troops. In a short time, the Unified Task Force managed to significantly improve food distribution to the population, and made progress in establishing a ceasefire.

In May 1993, the United Nations launched operation UNOSOM II, which was designed to replace the Unified Task Force. This new operation was led by Pakistan and involved 30 nations; however, it only had around half of the troops of the force led by the United States. This new UN force was attacked by General Farah Aidid's forces. In May that year, in an attempt to capture General Aidid, two US helicopters were shot down with the death of 18 US soldiers. Under pressure from Congress, President Bill Clinton decided to withdraw his troops from Somalia. This US troop withdrawal was followed by the withdrawal of forces from the main UNOSOM II contributors. In March 1994, operation UNOSOM II finally came to an end, demonstrating the failure of the international community to rescue Somalia from itself, leading to a new stage of generalised confrontations between the clans, sub-clans and militias.

⁽⁹⁾ Bradbury, Mark and Healy, Sally, *Endless war: a brief history of the Somali conflict*. Accord review online. 2011. www.c-r.org.

In July 1998, the SSDF declared Puntland to be an autonomous region, with a government and administration independent of the non-existent central government.

■ **Fresh Attempts at Reconciliation. The Birth of the Transitional Federal Government**

There were 12 peace initiatives during the 1990s led by different international organisations, such as the Arab League, the Organisation of African Unity⁽¹⁰⁾ and the United Nations, all of which failed. The first conference to achieve significant advances took place in Arta in Djibouti in May 2000, led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)⁽¹¹⁾. This fresh attempt at national reconciliation, known as the «Arta Process», brought together 1,500 Somalis representing the clans in conflict and different sectors of Somali society.

The successes achieved include the creation of a Transitional National Assembly (TNA), which appointed Abdulkasim Salad Hasan as interim President of Somalia. However, despite the initial euphoria, the new government soon became unpopular. The President and many members of his government had been members of the Siad Barre regime; rather than being considered a government of reconciliation, it was perceived to be just another faction.

The 14th Somali reconciliation conference began in Eldoret in Kenya under the auspices of the IGAD. This brought together members of the Transitional Government, Puntland, leading warlords, representatives of civil society and members of the Diaspora. The Conference moved its headquarters to Nairobi in July 2003, and approved a Transitional Federal Charter and a Federal Assembly. In October 2004, Abdullahi Yussuf Ahmed, an ex-warlord from the Puntland region and leader of the SSDF, was elected President. The new President designated a Transitional Federal Government (TFG) which, for security reasons, was never established in Mogadishu.

■ **The Islamic Courts Union and the Ethiopian Offensive.**

The inspiration for the Islamic Courts, the heirs to the Islamic Union (al-Ittithad al-Islami, AIAI)⁽¹²⁾, was Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, a group pursuing a strict and literal application of «sharia» or Islamic law. In Somalia, they thrived in response to the need for a body to impose order and administer justice in

⁽¹⁰⁾ The Organisation of African Unity, which was created in 1963, is a regional body which paved the way for the creation of the African Union in 2002.

⁽¹¹⁾ The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is an African regional organisation which was created in 1996, involving six countries: Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, Sudan, Kenya and Uganda.

⁽¹²⁾ A Wahabi-inspired Islamist movement created in the 1970s in reaction to the anti-traditionalist, non-religious regime of Siad Barre.

a country mired in absolute chaos. The Islamic Courts were established in Mogadishu from among the militia fronts with the intention of reducing the criminality reigning in the capital. Each Court has its own militia to pursue criminals and ensure order in its area.

In 2004, the Islamic Courts spread throughout the whole of the capital, bringing them into conflict with the militias. These confrontations between the militias and the Islamic Courts led to the latter uniting to create the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), until it ended up being just like the many other militias. By 2006, the ICU had fourteen courts in Mogadishu and some fifteen thousand troops, making it the force which controlled the country⁽¹³⁾. That year, Mogadishu airport and port reopened after being closed for 10 years, allowing ships from the United Nations World Food Programme to dock.

The ICU then spread throughout the rest of Somalia and occupied the south, centre and north of the country almost as far as the borders with Puntland. The militias which supported the TFG were obliged to concentrate in the frontier enclave of Baidoa, where they were supported by Ethiopian army troops. On 6th June 2006, Sheikh Sharif Ammed was elected as the head of the ICU militias, and would subsequently take over the presidency of the TFG. The tensions between the two continued to increase, until they reached a peak with an unsuccessful terrorist attack on the President of the TFG in Baidoa. The TFG blamed the ICU for the attack, although the ICU denied this and blamed rivalry within the TFG for the attack.

The rise of the ICU was of great concern for the neighbouring Ethiopians, who were not willing to let the TFG fall. On 2nd December 2006, the ICU sent an ultimatum to the Ethiopian government to withdraw its forces from the border area of Baidoa. This gave the Ethiopian army an excuse to launch an offensive using its air force and tanks on 20th December, which reached the capital on 2nd January without great resistance. The ICU militias were obliged to redeploy to the south, whilst many of its leaders sought refuge in Yemen, Eritrea and Saudi Arabia.

Following its defeat in Mogadishu, the ICU split into two groups. The first involved the more moderate leaders who were in favour of combining with other non-Islamic militias opposed to the TFG formed the Alliance for the Re-liberation Somalia (ARS), led by Sheikh Sharif Ahmed. The second involved more radical members congregating around Al-Shabaab, an organisation strongly supported by Eritrea. Al-Shabaab continued the fight against the TFG and Ethiopian forces. Starting from the south, little by little they began to recover the territory they had controlled prior to the Ethiopian intervention.

⁽¹³⁾ Vega Fernández, Enrique, *op. cit.*

■ **The Djibouti Accords**

Based on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1772 (2007), on 19th January 2007, the African Union approved the launch of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to support the establishment of the TFG in Mogadishu, a city controlled by the Ethiopian army following heavy fighting with ICU forces.

The TFG took advantage of internal divisions within the ICU to start contacts with the more moderate ARS leaders and other forces against the rise of Al-Shabaab in Somalia. This initiative, which was supported by the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union and the United States, continued in Djibouti in April 2008. Representatives of the TFG and the ARS reached an agreement involving a ceasefire and the withdrawal of the Ethiopian army, opening the door to an election for a new TFG. In January 2009, Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, the ex-head of the ICU militias, was appointed as the new President of the TFG. The new President focused his efforts on getting support from the international community. To achieve this, he made many trips to other countries, with one of the highlights of these being his meeting with the US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton in Nairobi in August 2009.

The new TFG had little power; in reality, it only controlled some areas of the capital through the presence of AMISOM forces; Al-Shabaab on the other hand advanced unstopably from the south to the centre of Somalia (see Figure 6.3).

■ **THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CONFLICT**

A snapshot of Somalia in 2011 would show a country with stark differences between north and south. In the north is the self-declared independent country of Somaliland and the unilaterally declared independent region of Puntland which enjoy relative stability and are progressing in the construction of a real state; meanwhile, in the south indiscriminate violence continues and there is a total lack of governance.

■ **The Situation in the North and Centre of Somalia**

The Somaliland authorities (see Figure 6.4) have managed to maintain security and stability in their area; have fought successfully against piracy; and enjoy some fledgling democratic institutions. In Puntland there is relative stability, and progress has been made in the fight against piracy.

Figure 6.3. Regions of Somalia



However, in the areas traditionally disputed by Somaliland and Puntland (the eastern Sanaag and Sool communities), new violent groups have started to reach a certain size, these include the Sool, Sanaag and Cayn army and the militias of Mohamed Sa'id Atom. These two regions are more unstable than the north of Somalia, mainly because their population is divided between two administrations, a situation which violent groups are trying to use to their advantage.

Figure 6.4. Territories of Somaliland and Puntland



The Sool, Sanaag and Cayn army was created and financed by members of the Diaspora belonging to the Dhulbahante clan, and it is believed that most of the members of this army are mercenaries. Over recent months there have been open confrontations with the security forces of Somaliland and Puntland. Its objective is to convert these regions into a new independent region.

In eastern Sanaag, the militias of Mohamed Sa'id Atom, which oppose the Puntland government, have acquired significant military power. They were defeated by Puntland security forces in 2010, leading them to start

acting in the classic way of terrorist organisations with attacks on some of the main locations in Puntland. It is supported by Al-Shabaab and there are fears that it could develop into a launch pad for Al-Shabaab in the north of Somalia.

Although a large part of the centre of Somalia is controlled by Al-Shabaab, some areas in the centre have managed to develop local forms of government. For example, a large part of the region of Gaalguduud is under the control of militias opposed to Al-Shabaab, which are unified around the Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a group. This form of cooperation has managed to bring a halt to the spread of extremism and piracy in the centre of Somalia.

Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a was created in 1991 with the support of General Mohamed Farah Aidid to combat the spread of radical Islamist movements. Its confrontations with Al-Shabaab began in 2008 when Al-Shabaab, a Salafist jihadist organisation, tried to prohibit Sufi religious practices in the centre of Somalia. It is currently the most powerful combat force aligned with the TFG, having around 2,000 fighters.

■ The Situation in Mogadishu and the South of Somalia

In the south, the TFG is non-existent, with Al-Shabaab exercising true control over the region. It is faced with some opposition from some local militias and Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a. The disappearance of Hizbul Islam⁽¹⁴⁾ in December 2010 has left Al-Shabaab as the main opposition force to the TFG (see Figure 6.5).

⁽¹⁴⁾ Hizbul Islam was created in February 2009 as an alliance of four armed groups: the Asmara Faction of the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS-Asmara); the Somali Islamic Front; the Raas Kaambooni Forces; and the Anoolle Forces. Despite having a religious and nationalist basis, the essence of this group is clan based. In 2009 it was of some importance as a militia opposed to the TFG, but that importance declined until it was finally dissolved.

Figure 6.5. Territory Controlled by Al-Shabaab. May 2011



Mogadishu has been the scene of violent combat in recent months. Al-Shabaab has always maintained a significant combat capability in the capital, giving it control over large parts of the city. In August 2010, it launched the largest offensive of recent years (the «Ramadan Offensive»), which included the «Villa Somalia» presidential complex as a target. Al-Shabaab employed around 5,000 fighters in the operation, including many «child soldiers»; however, the offensive was defeated by TFG forces, the Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a militia and AMISOM troops (which were reinforced by 2,000 Ugandan soldiers). However, the offensive included several major attacks, such as that on the Muna Hotel, in which 33 people were killed, including four parliamentarians.

Since then, AMISOM forces have continued to take ground from Al-Shabaab in the capital. In the most recent AMISOM offensive, in February 2011, it took control of five of the seven districts in the city.

Somewhat surprisingly, on 6th August 2011 Al-Shabaab forces abandoned Mogadishu. The President of Somalia, Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, stated that this withdrawal signalled the start of peace and stability for Somalia, describing it as a «national victory». However, Al-Shabaab spokesmen described the withdrawal as simply being a «change of tactics».

The drought, which has hit the south and some areas of the centre particularly hard, has caused hundreds of thousands of people to search for food in refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia. The situation in the capital is dramatic, with many people from the south having gone to Mogadishu in search of food. Some 400,000 people are dependent on food distribution in the south of the city. International humanitarian organisations belonging to the United Nations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are facing enormous difficulties in performing their work. Al-Shabaab has prohibited their activities, claiming that they are western spies and are contaminating the customs of the Somali people. Many of these organisations had to suspend their activities for a time due to threats from the terrorist organisation. Very few aid programmes have been able to continue without putting the lives of their workers at serious risk. The consequence has been a shortage of humanitarian aid at precisely the moment when the situation is worsening as a result of the drought.

■ **The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and its International Support.**

The Transitional Federal Government owes its survival to the African Union's AMISOM operation, rather than its own forces. The government's security forces continue in general to be rather inefficient and disorganised⁽¹⁵⁾. Many experts consider the TFG's lack of vision and cohesion to be more worrying than its scanty military power, and the real reason why it is incapable of advancing the political process. In addition to internal tensions and the lack of an agreed political agenda, there have also been numerous cases of corruption which have affected the whole TFG administration.

Despite all of this, the TFG enjoys widespread support among the international community as it is the only option with any chance of providing a constitutional government in Somalia. In addition to AMISOM, some countries, such as France, have launched initiatives to train the TFG's security forces. One of the most important initiatives in terms of training of the security forces is the European Union Training Mission Somalia (EUTM-Somalia).

AMISOM's missions include support for national dialogue and reconciliation, and providing protection for the TFG and its key infrastructure. It currently has some 7,200 personnel out of a planned force of 8,000 belonging to Uganda

⁽¹⁵⁾ The TFG security forces consist of: the National Force (around 8000 personnel), the Police Force (around 10,000 personnel) and the National Security Organisation (which is responsible for collecting and analysing information).

and Burundi. Following the attacks carried out by Al-Shabaab in Kampala in the summer, the Ugandan government has publicly stated its intention to significantly increase its participation in AMISOM. The United States and the European Union are involved in financing this mission.

In February 2010, the EU approved EUTM-Somalia to contribute to training TFG security forces⁽¹⁶⁾. This mission is coordinated by the African Union, and supported by the United Nations and the United States. It is mainly taking place in Uganda. The headquarters of the mission are in Kampala (Uganda) and it has a support cell in Brussels and a coordination office in Nairobi (Kenya). The training activities are carried out in Bihanga (Uganda).

EUTM-Somalia has now completed two consecutive six-month training periods, each of which trained 1,000 Somali soldiers (officers, NCOs and troops). The mission has now been extended for one year to spring 2012.

■ The Salafist jihadist Al-Shabaab Organisation

Al-Shabaab was the elite of the militias of the Islamic Courts Union. Its leaders came from the radical Islamist organisation Al Ittihad Al Islamiah (AIAI), which was active from 1991 to 1997. This organisation offered protection and training camps to Al-Qaeda cells in the 1990s. Although, Al-Shabaab has publicly stated its commitment to the Al-Qaeda cause, it is believed that the connection between the two is currently more ideological than operational. The two most important figures in the organisation are probably: Ahmed Abdi aw Mohamud «Godane», the senior operational commander, and Ibrahim Haji Jama Mi'aad «the Afghan», the regional governor of Kismaayo.

The Somalia Supervision Group considers that Al-Shabaab is now focusing its efforts on controlling the economy of the south of Somalia, following the military reverses it has suffered in the capital over recent months. The Group estimates that Al-Shabaab generates annual income of between US\$70 and 100 million per year from the taxes it imposes, extortion in the zones it controls and cross-border smuggling⁽¹⁷⁾. A further major source of its income is «hawala»⁽¹⁸⁾, contributions from the organisation's sympathisers in the diaspora.

⁽¹⁶⁾ European Council Decision 2010/96/CFSP, of 15th February 2010.

⁽¹⁷⁾ United Nations. Security Council. Report of the Somalia-Eritrea Supervision Group. July 2011. S/2011/433. www.un.org.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Hawala, meaning transfer, is a system of informal and anonymous transfer of funds which is very common in Arab and Asian countries. The operation is carried out by intermediaries in the source and destination countries. There are no movements of money from one country to another, either physically or electronically. The intermediaries are paid a commission. Hawala is based on mutual trust among the intermediaries. Details are only kept whilst the operation is underway, but are destroyed once it is completed. This system is used to move billions of dollars, and it is thought to be used by Al-Qaeda to receive funds.

Al-Shabaab is also a regional and even international threat. The government of Ethiopia states that in 2009 an Al-Shabaab cell planned to attack 10 targets in Addis Ababa, although it was deactivated by Ethiopian security forces before it could carry out the attacks. Whilst there is not much information to confirm the Ethiopian government's claims, a year later Al-Shabaab carried out its first successful attack outside Somalia in Kampala (Uganda). These attacks targeted two locations often frequented by foreigners, and which were particularly popular on the day of the attacks (11th July) as it was the date of the football World Cup final between Spain and Holland. The first explosion took place in an Ethiopian restaurant in the capital; this was followed thirty minutes later by a second explosion at a rugby club. The two explosions killed 74 people and injured a further 70 to varying degrees.

It is believed that the organisation has a fighting core of some 2,500 personnel, although it can mobilise some thousands more on a temporary basis⁽¹⁹⁾. It is known that there are networks related to Al-Shabaab in Kenya which recruit new members, collect funds and train terrorists. This recruitment was exclusively aimed at Kenyan citizens from the Somali ethnic community; however, as mentioned in the 2011 Somalia Supervision Group report cited above, the terrorist organisation has spread its influence and attracted new members from non-Somali Kenyans; this is now the biggest and best structured non-Somali group in Al-Shabaab. Although we do not have accurate data, it has been estimated that the number of foreign fighters in Al-Shabaab is somewhat less than 1,000, with most coming from Kenya, Bangladesh, Chechnya, Pakistan, Sudan and Tanzania.

■ The Resurgence of Piracy

The absence of authority and control which reigned in Somalia in the 1990s attracted many fishing boats, mainly from Asia, Europe and the Arabian peninsula. These fishing boats, which often used fishing techniques prohibited in other regions, sparked a violent reaction from local fishermen in defence of their waters. The presence of foreign fishing boats was also seen by the warlords as a way of collecting funds for their militias and they organised small fleets to act as coastguards demanding payment of money from foreign fishing boats in exchange for protection whilst fishing. Many of these armed boats, which started out defending their waters, started to attack all types of shipping and crews, with no other motivation than simply to make money.

The number of fishing boats attacked is currently less than 6 percent of the total, and in all cases the boats were outside Somali territorial waters. Over the years we have seen this situation evolve from an understandable reaction by

⁽¹⁹⁾ It is difficult to estimate the total size of Al-Shabaab forces. Most sources estimate its numbers at around 15,000 personnel. The Somali news site sunatimes (www.sunatimes.com) reported in May that the organisation had 14,426 fighters.

local fishermen in defence of their way of life to an activity that fully fits the description of organised crime.

The phenomenon of piracy has been increasing along the Somali coast throughout the new century. By 2007 it had reached frankly worrying levels for shipping; the ships attacked even included those belonging to the United Nations World Food Programme, which were transporting humanitarian aid to Somalia. In 2008, the Spanish fishing boat «Playa de Bakio» and the French yacht «Le Pognant» were hijacked, putting the issue of Somali piracy onto the front pages of the western press.

According to the annual reports of the International Maritime Bureau, in 2007 there were 46 attacks on merchant vessels, resulting in 10 of these being taken hostage; in 2008 the proportion of boats attacked to those hijacked was 122/48; in 2009 this was 202/47; and in 2010 it was 219/49. The largest ransom paid was US\$9.5 million in 2010, for the South Korean oil tanker «Samho Drea». The ransoms demanded by the pirates have been increasing from year to year, and it has been estimated that the average ransom paid in 2010 was US\$5.4 million. The large ransoms demanded have significantly increased the time required by negotiations, and as a result the time that crews have been held. It has been estimated that crews are on average held hostage for 150 days⁽²⁰⁾.

The pirate groups are based in coastal communities in the north-eastern and central parts of the country. As with any other activity in Somalia, this activity is organised on a clan basis. There are two main networks: one of these is based in Puntland, consisting mainly of members of the Majerteen sub-clan; and the other is in central Somalia, consisting mainly of members of the Habar Gidir sub-clan. However, the fact they belong to one of these sub-clans does not rigidly limit the activities of these groups, as there is frequent cooperation between them. At present, the most important pirate bases are at Harardhere and Hobyo in the southern region of Mudug.

Attacks are usually carried out by three or four fibreglass launches equipped with powerful outboard motors. Each launch usually carries between four and eight pirates armed with Kalashnikov rifles and RPG-7V grenade launchers; they also have mobile phones and GPS. The first pirate to physically board the ship can «claim» it in the name of this group, and receives a special share of the ransom.

Once captured, it is moored close to one of the pirate bases, where the land team supplies and protects it whilst payment of the ransom is awaited. The land team may include negotiators who speak foreign languages, local public servants and people involved in money laundering who help to transfer the ran-

⁽²⁰⁾ Boden, Anna, *op.cit.*

som payment. At present, the ransom is usually delivered directly to the pirates on board the captured ship.

The United Nations Security Council has, through a number of resolutions, requested that the international community become involved in the protection of shipping in the zone, particularly ships belonging to the World Food Programme⁽²¹⁾. In response to these calls, units from the EU's «Operation Atalanta» began to operate in December 2008⁽²²⁾. In January 2009, Task Force TF-151 was created as part of the Coalition Maritime Forces (CMF), led by the USA and also involving ships from Singapore, Pakistan, Turkey, Australia and Korea. The third major anti-piracy operation (NATO's «Operation Ocean Shield») was launched in August 2009, although anti-piracy operations by ships under the NATO flag had begun prior to the start of this Operation. In addition to these three major operations, many countries (such as China, India and Russia) have a naval presence in the zone, underlining the importance of these waters for world maritime trade.

Operation Atalanta is the most important maritime anti-piracy operation currently underway. The main objectives of the operation are: protection of shipping belonging to the United Nations World Food Programme and the African Union AMISOM mission; to dissuade, prevent and stop acts of piracy; to protect shipping which is vulnerable to pirate attack; and to monitor fishing in Somalia's waters.

This aero-naval force usually has between 6 and 12 ships, and from 2 to 4 maritime patrol aircraft. The Spanish contribution is one of the largest, always having one or two warships and a maritime patrol aircraft deployed.

This pressure by international navies, the adoption of measures to prevent boarding by merchant ships, and the use of private security have significantly reduced the number of successful attacks in the Gulf of Aden and in waters close to Somalia in general. However, the pirate groups have spread their radius of action in order to elude vigilance by naval forces (see Figure 6.6). They have started to use mother-ships (usually kidnapped fishing boats and yachts) to act as platforms to launch attacks far from their bases. This has resulted in hijackings as far from Somalia as the coast of Oman, the Mozambique Channel and Minicoy Island in India.

Another factor which is seriously affecting the results of the aero-naval measures employed in the zone is the small number of alleged pirates captured who are ever put on trial. It has been estimated that 80% of the pirates detained are never put on trial, and are at liberty again shortly after being detained⁽²³⁾.

⁽²¹⁾ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1814 (2008), of 15th May.

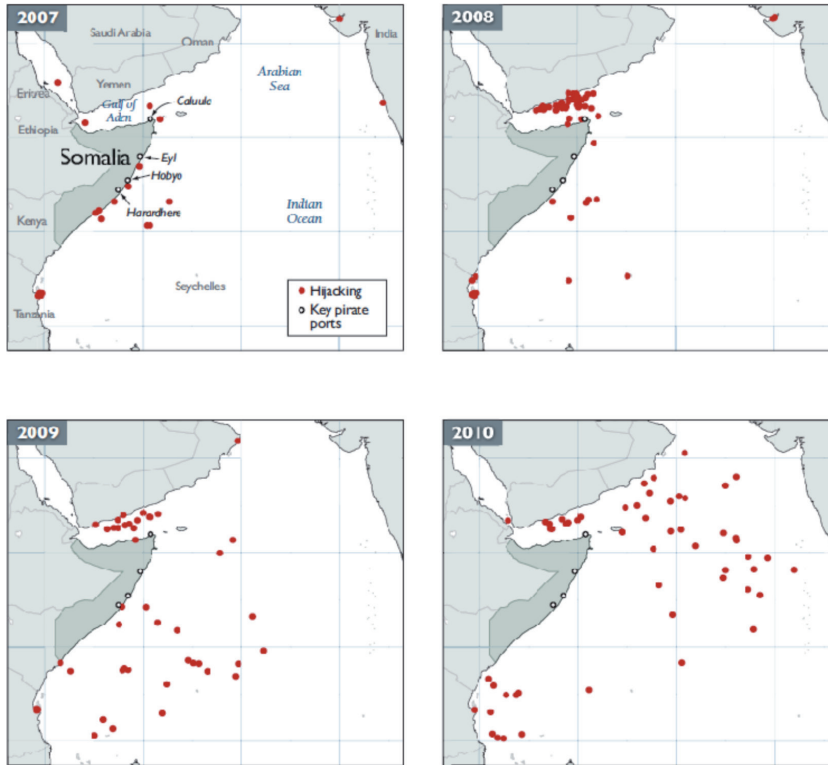
⁽²²⁾ «Operation Atalanta» was launched under United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1814 (2008), 1816 (2008), 1838 (2008), 1846 (2008) and 1851 (2008).

⁽²³⁾ For more information on the legal treatment of pirates, see:

http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_marco/2011/DIEEEM01-2011Atalanta.pdf

The lack of courts in Somalia which can judge the crime of piracy, and the insufficiency of agreements signed with countries in the region (Kenya and the Seychelles) results in most of these crimes going unpunished. A young Somali who joins a pirate group must feel that the risk of ending up in prison is very low, and in exchange, they can make enough money to change their lives.

Figure 6.6. Pirates Extend their Field of Operation



■ THE ROLE OF FOREIGN ACTORS

■ Regional Participants

Every country in the Horn of Africa is involved in the Somali conflict in one way or another. There can be no doubt that the most involved are Eritrea and Ethiopia, which have always taken a firm stance in favour of one group or another.

- *Ethiopia*

Ethiopian interest in the Somali conflict is basically motivated by two issues: the claims of Somali clans on the Ethiopian Ogaden region, and the fear of a radical Islamist regime being established in Somalia that might have domestic repercussions for Ethiopia. The Somali claim on the Ogaden has existed since the creation of Somalia as an independent state. Although it is impossible to envisage an armed conflict between the two countries over this issue in the short term, as happened in 1978, the support given by some Somali groups to separatist movements, such as the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), is a cause of domestic instability in Ethiopia. Another cause of instability for Ethiopia would be the establishment of a radical Islamist government in Mogadishu which might fuel the jihad in its country.

These issues, together with others such as the continuous flow of Somali refugees to Ethiopia, has maintained a keen interest in the conflict for the Addis Ababa government. Ethiopia took a very active role in the national reconciliation process in 2004 that concluded with the creation of the TFG, and exercised its influence in the election of its first president. Since then, it has always supported the TFG, not just diplomatically, but also through weapons and training for its security forces.

Ethiopia has also supported the Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a militia which has been involved in continuous confrontations with Al-Shabaab in the centre and south of the country. It also facilitated a cooperation agreement between Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a and the TFG in November 2009.

- *Eritrea*

Tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea did not end with the war between the two countries from 1998 to 2000. For Eritrea, Somalia is a territory where it can fight Ethiopia indirectly. Whilst Ethiopia has supported the TFG since the outset, the TFG's adversaries have always found a firm ally in Eritrea. This has led Eritrea to support the ICU and now Al-Shabaab. It is interesting that there is no ideological or religious affinity between the Asmara government and its Somali allies; quite the opposite, Eritrea's government is involved in its own internal struggle with the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (EIJM).

However, it is currently supporting Al-Shabaab with money, weapons, munitions and training. Eritrea has been reported on many occasions for violating the United Nations arms embargo imposed on Somalia in 1992.

- *Djibouti*

Unlike Ethiopia and Eritrea, Djibouti has generally maintained a mediating role in the conflict in a search for true national reconciliation. Despite being

included within the demands of «pan-Somalism», there have never been any heightened tensions between the countries over this issue. It played a mediating role between the TFG and the ARS which led to signature of the Djibouti Accords in 2008.

- *Kenya*

Kenya is one of the other major local players, and one of the most stable countries in the region. Kenya has received, and is continuing to receive, an interminable flow of Somali refugees, which constitutes a constant challenge for the country. In addition, some of its territory is included in the claims by the most nationalist Somali elements, and it is facing its own radical Islamist movement. Kenya has always acted through international organisations, particularly the IGAD, although many observers consider that it has not played as much of a role as could be expected of a regional power. Despite this, it provides one of the main international supports for the TFG.

- *Sudan and Yemen*

Sudan has not played a leading role in this conflict, and has always remained neutral, despite having an Islamist government. One event worth noting is its mediation in the meetings between the TFG and the ICU, under the auspices of the African Union, in Khartoum in September 2006.

Yemen has also only played a minor role in the conflict. Its major influence has been through the almost constant flow of weapons from Yemen to Somalia, whether to the TFG, Al-Shabaab or one of the many militias. There is no firm evidence that these weapon flows have the approval of the Yemeni government. There is also continuous illegal human trafficking from Somalia to Yemen, generally operated by organised crime gangs located in Yemen.

■ **The United States and the Fight against International Terrorism**

The United States has always taken strong action against Al-Shabaab, which it considers a terrorist organisation linked to Al-Qaeda, with regional scope and global aspirations. Its main leaders have always been a military objective for the United States, which has carried out a number of incursions into Somali territory to try to find them. An airstrike in 2008 by an AC-130 aircraft killed Aden Hashi Ayro, the leader of the organization at the time.

A year later, a US Navy Seals team killed Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, the head of the militias fighting for the organisation⁽²⁴⁾. In 2010, President Obama ordered all bank accounts related to the leaders of this terrorist group and its collaborators to be blocked.

⁽²⁴⁾ IISS Strategic Comments, *Somalia's Al-Shabaab steps up attacks*. The International Institute for Strategic Studies. 2009

Since the attacks on Kampala last year, the United States has become more actively involved in supporting the TFG and AMISOM.

■ CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

Finally, by way of conclusion, we will now describe some of the issues that may be key to the future of Somalia.

■ The 2012 Elections.

The President of the TFG, with the support of the leader of the Transitional Assembly, has decided to delay the legislative and presidential elections and the ratification of the new constitution, setting a final limit for these of 20th August 2012. These elections should have been held in August under the political agreement reached in 2009. The reason put forward for the delay is that it would be impossible to hold them while security remains so precarious.

There can be no doubt that these elections are a major milestone for the future. However, they need suitable security conditions before they can be held; something which does not appear likely at present. The mere fact of holding elections supported by most political forces would, in itself, represent a success.

The outcome of these elections is totally unpredictable given the current confused political situation. The TFG is subject to internal tensions and frequent confrontations with the leaders of the parliament, which are reducing its popularity. There is no sign of a leader who would be able to drum up the necessary consensus to lead a new political agenda which could guarantee the development of Somalia into a real state.

■ The Withdrawal of Al-Shabaab from Mogadishu. A NewTactic for Al-Shabaab?

On 6th August 2011, Al-Shabaab announced its withdrawal from the streets of Mogadishu in what it described as «new tactics». This surprising decision has raised some serious questions about the future of the organization. Furthermore, Al-Shabaab's attitude to the humanitarian emergency has only served to accelerate the decreasing popularity of the terrorist organisation. However, this lack of popular support has been offset by ever increasing income. Meanwhile, internal tensions between radical and moderate sectors of the organisation have increased over recent months. The moderate sector does not support the indiscriminate and systematic use of violence which was being practised against its fellow countrymen.

Faced with internal difficulties, the leaders of Al-Shabaab have been looking for closer connections with foreign terrorist organisations, and are trying to encourage the creation or expansion of similar groups in the region. This could lead to a change in this jihadist organisation's *modus operandi* so that it starts to act in a similar way to the Taliban in Afghanistan, giving up firm control over the territory and instead focusing on towns and sectors which are vital from an economic point of view.

■ The Participation of the International Community. The Comprehensive Approach.

In addition to the political commitment of the international community in support of the installation of a real government in Somalia, the operations implemented over recent years need to be maintained and reinforced. As we have stated, the TFG is sustained by the African Union's AMISOM mission. It is essential for the forthcoming elections that this mission remains in place and is expanded.

It is also important that the United States and the European Union, together with other bodies and countries, maintain their security efforts in order to create the security needed for the country's social and political development. International commitment is never easy during times of economic crisis. The continuation of military missions (such as AMISOM, Atalanta, Ocean Shield and EUTM-Somalia, together with other cooperation and development initiatives aimed at facilitating nation building) will be key to the future of Somalia.

Somalia is scourged by numerous problems, some of which have global repercussions, such as piracy and Al-Shabaab's connections with international terrorism. The international community must understand that the only solution to these problems is to facilitate the development of a real government in Somalia which is capable of controlling its territory; meeting the basic needs of the population; and stopping criminal organisations from acting with impunity.

■ Putting Pirates on Trial and in Prison

As we have seen in this study, one of the main challenges in the struggle against piracy is the very small number of alleged pirates who are ever put on trial and imprisoned. In a report in July 2010⁽²⁵⁾, the United Nations Secretary General stated the options which could be implemented to achieve the objective of putting those responsible for piracy and armed robbery at sea on trial and imprisoning them. This report proposed a number of measures in addition to increasing the assistance given by the United Nations to states in the region to increase their capacity to try and imprison alleged pirates, including:

⁽²⁵⁾ Report by the Secretary-General of the United Nations S/2010/394, 26 July 2010. www.un.org.

- Establishing a Somali court in another state in the region, with or without participation by the United Nations.
- Establishing a special court in the national jurisdiction of one or more states in the region, with or without participation by the United Nations.
- Establishing a regional court based on a multilateral agreement among the states in the region, with the participation of the United Nations.
- Establishing an international court based on an agreement between a state in the region and the United Nations.
- Establishing an international court through a Security Council resolution approved under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

The results of the fight against piracy will depend to a large extent on the successful implementation of one of these measures.

■ CHRONOLOGY

Table 6.2. Timeline of the Conflict

DATE	EVENT
July 1960	On 1st July 1960 Somalia achieves independence, officially proclaiming itself the Somali Republic. The new country is the result of the union of the former British and Italian colonies.
October 1969	Coup d'état led by generals Jama Korshel and Siad Barre. General Siad Barre is named president. The country changes its name to the Somali Democratic Republic.
May 1977	The Somali army invades the Ethiopian territory of Ogaden, whose inhabitants are mainly ethnic Somalis.
January 1978	The Ethiopian army, with the help of the USSR, the GDR and Cuba, routs the Somali forces.
January 1991	Besieged by opposing forces, General Siad Barre leaves Mogadishu, going into exile in Nigeria where he dies in 1995.
May 1991	Somaliland unilaterally declares itself an independent state.
March 1992	Some 250,000 Somalis die of starvation as a result of a prolonged drought. In order to ensure the distribution of humanitarian aid, the United Nations Security Council launches the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I). This operation is supported by the US-led Operation Restore Hope (UNITAF).
May 1993	A new United Nations operation is launched: UNOSOM II.
March 1994	Faced with a situation of growing insecurity, the United Nations and the United States bring their operations in Somalia to an end.
July 1998	The Democratic Front for the Salvation of Somalia (DFSS) declares the Puntland region autonomous, with an independent government and administration.
May 2000	A new attempt at national reconciliation, referred to as the «Arta process» begins under the auspices of the international community in Arta, Djibouti. A Transitional Assembly is established, and it elects an interim president. The initiative founders on the unpopularity of the interim government, which is largely composed of figures from the ancien régime of Siad Barre.
July 2003	The fourteenth Somali peace conference starts in Eldoret, Kenya, sponsored by IGAD. In July 2003 the conference moves to Nairobi and approves a Federal Transition Charter and a Federal Assembly.
October 2004	Abdullahi Yussuf Ahmed, a former warlord from the Puntland region, is elected as president by the Federal Assembly. The new president is supposed to establish a Transitional Federal Government (TFG).

2004	The various Islamic Courts that have been set up in the country join together to form the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). They enter the conflict as one more faction, and by 2006 they control the capital, the centre and the south of the country.
December 2006	Alarmed by the growing power of the ICU, Ethiopia invades the centre and south of the country. ICU forces are compelled to withdraw towards Southern Somalia.
January 2007	The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is launched to support the establishment of the TFG in Mogadishu, which is controlled by the Ethiopian army.
April 2008	Representatives of the TFG and the Alliance of the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) sign the so-called Djibouti Accord, which involves a ceasefire and the withdrawal of the Ethiopian army and is supposed to open the way to the election of a new TFG.
January 2009	Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, former head of the ICU militias, is elected president.
June 2011	The president of the TFG and the leader of the Transitional Federal Parliament decide to postpone the elections that were scheduled for August this year. The elections will now be held not later than August 2012.

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Chapter VII

AFGHANISTAN: THE BEGINNING OF THE END

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SUMMARY

Discussing the whole of the Afghanistan conflict would require more than the space available to us here, as the country has been involved in conflict in one way or another throughout most of its history. In this case, we will analyse the latest phase in this conflict. This has been characterised by the presence of an international contingent which, whether as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, or under the umbrella of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), is trying to stop Afghanistan from developing into a new sanctuary and launch site for international jihadist terrorism, and to help the Afghan government to build a viable state which can guarantee a certain level of stability and security. The recent start of a staged reduction in foreign troops has opened up a new horizon which needs to be prepared for.

Key words

Central Asia, Afghanistan, mujahedeens, Taliban, ISAF, ethnic, withdrawal.

■ INTRODUCTION

Central Asia is a region which has in some way stood apart from the main political and cultural current of history, even though its people have been «*in almost uninterrupted communication with neighbouring peoples*»⁽¹⁾; this multiethnic nature of the surrounding nations contributes to the instability in the zone, and is one of the key factors in the Afghan conflict.

The region consisting of the five ex-Soviet states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) plus Afghanistan, represents a geographic crossroads which is difficult to pin down: this region could be extended to include zones belonging to other nearby states based on ethnic, cultural and geographic arguments.

The degree of integration in the region is low. In addition to serious communication difficulties, there are also serious disparities in wealth and welfare among the various republics. For example, we can compare the relative economic success and development of Kazakhstan, whose GDP per head has increased by 50% since the fall of the Soviet Union⁽²⁾, with the performance of Tajikistan which now has 55% of its 1990 GDP level⁽³⁾, with an enormous variation in the region on other measures of development.

The main sources of wealth are also very unevenly distributed. The republics on the Steppes (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) have an abundance of hydrocarbons, enabling them to take part in international trade relations with powers such as China, Russia and the European Union; however, this compares to a lack of such resources in the mountainous republics of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which on the other hand control the sources of fresh water which feed the others.

The ethnic, economic, development and strategic resource factors which differentiate these republics, together with other elements which create instability, such as the presence of Islamist and jihadist groups, organised crime activities related to weapons and drug smuggling, and the flood of emigration to Russia and Kazakhstan all contribute to a regional scenario in which the possibilities of conflict are very real. The increase in defence spending from 2006 and forecast to 2015 is significant⁽⁴⁾ despite the economic crisis (see Figure 7.1), although the countries in the region have been affected less than

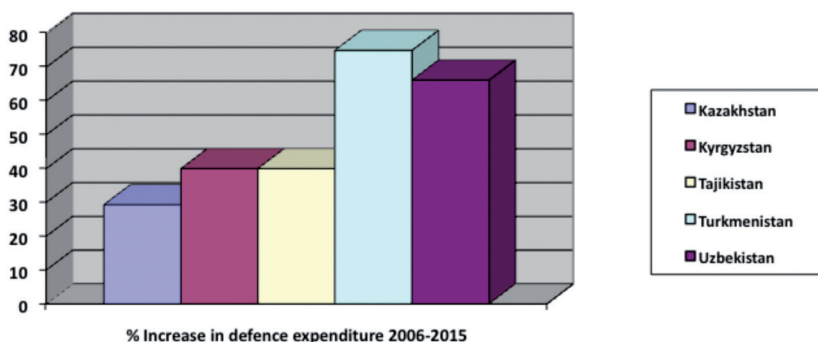
(1) Hambly, G. (1985). *Asia Central*. Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores.

(2) World Bank. <http://www.worldbank.org.kz/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/KAZAKHSTANEXTN>

(3) World Bank. <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/TAJIKISTANEXTN>

(4) Jane's Defence Budgets.

Figure 7.1. Increase in Defence Expenditure



other nations. We cannot talk about military escalation, but there have been substantial increases in this area⁽⁵⁾.

The regional potential for conflict, which has been influenced negatively by the Afghan conflict, led in 2007 to the creation of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) to boost prevention of conflict among the five ex-Soviet republics, promoting dialogue and confidence building.

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Another factor which is contributing to stabilisation of the zone is the presence of international and regional security organisations, although not all of these countries belong to them. The most important of these are the Organisation for Security and Cooperation In Europe (OSCE), which only Afghanistan does not belong to; the Community of Independent States (CIS), once again not featuring Afghanistan, and with Turkmenistan as an observer; the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), which is predominantly military; and finally the emerging Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which will be perhaps the most influential over the medium term, which does not include Turkmenistan, which has opted for isolationism and obscurity, and once again Afghanistan.

From this, we can deduce something of the specific nature of Afghanistan, which, in addition to its non-Soviet past, has also been habitually, and is still, a theatre of war. Its influence in a region which is predominantly Islamic is notable. A future scenario in which the most extreme forms of Islam take over in Afghanistan would lead to scenarios of instability spreading towards the ex-Soviet Republics, and even to Russia and China themselves. Therefore, the results of the Afghan conflict will have a huge influence on the future of the whole region.

⁽⁵⁾ Internally prepared chart

■ BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

■ Distant History

The territory occupied by today's Afghanistan has historically been the scene of conflict. A quick historical analysis reveals that it has always been the location for harsh and prolonged campaigns. For example, Alexander the Great was involved in a guerrilla war here which took up more time and caused more casualties than all of his previous campaigns in total. This could only be brought to an end through a policy of alliances, which finally ended a war which could not be won militarily⁽⁶⁾.

The Arab invasion was successful in major cities, such as Herat; however, in the arid and mountainous regions it met with fierce resistance, such as that waged against the contingent led by Al Ahmaf ben Quais along the Murghab river⁽⁷⁾.

Similar patterns have been repeated in all invasions and migrations, and in the formation and disappearance of kingdoms which created the varied ethnicity which is one of the most important and determining characteristics of Afghanistan. However, the events which have a direct influence on current events can be traced back to Afghanistan being considered one of the cards in what Kipling called «the Great Game»⁽⁸⁾. The struggle in Asia between the Russians and the British in the 19th century resulted in a series of Anglo-Afghan wars, the main consequence of this was the formation of the Afghanistan of today, and evidence that the irregular warfare practised by the Afghans and the harsh environmental and geographic conditions presented impossible challenges for regular armies⁽⁹⁾.

■ Recent History

Following decades of relative stability and numerous attempts to develop the country, the failure of the constitutional period which provoked the ousting of King Mohammad Zahir Shah in 1973, led by Lieutenant General Sardar Mohammad Daoud Khan, and supported by the pro-Communist faction led by Babrak Karmal, led to the spiral of violence which continues today. Although he had previously been pro-Soviet, when Daoud attained power he tried to decrease the influence of the USSR in Afghanistan by drawing closer to Pakistan, Iran and the United States. A further coup on 27th April 1978 led, following the assassination of Daoud, to a regime with closer ties to

⁽⁶⁾ Sekunda, N., Warry, J. (1998). *Alexander the Great, his armies and campaigns*. London: Osprey Publishing.

⁽⁷⁾ Hambly, G. (1985). *Asia Central*. Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores.

⁽⁸⁾ Kipling, Rudyard (2007). *Kim de la India*. («Kim of India») Barcelona: Editorial Vicens Vives.

⁽⁹⁾ Fremont-Barnes, G. (2009). *The Anglo-Afghan Wars 1839-1919*. London: Osprey Publishing.

Moscow being established. However, the radical measures of the new government of Nur Mohammad Taraki relating to land redistribution and ever-sensitive social issues were considered deeply un-Islamic by large sections of the population, who therefore rejected them. This rejection developed into opposition when the government attempted to impose the measures adopted, resulting in a reign of terror which was capable of launching air strikes against towns where the resistance was most pronounced. There were also purges of intellectuals and professionals who were considered to be a danger to the regime, taking the number of victims to over 50,000⁽¹⁰⁾. This led to the first training camps for the anti-communist Afghan resistance being established in Pakistan.

And as the insurgency grew stronger, the regime grew weaker. Following the assassination of Taraki, the new leader Hafizullah Amin, co-founder with Taraki of the pro-Soviet Communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, immediately began efforts to develop closer links with the West. These actions crossed the red line established by the Politburo, leading to the Soviet invasion.

■ Soviet Invasion and Mujahedeen Victory

172 | Although the invasion was planned to be a temporary occupation to reinforce the Afghan army and enable it to eliminate the insurgency, it developed into a considerable deployment of Soviet troops as a result of the inability of Afghan troops to win a military victory. This inability was also soon felt by the Red Army, which was not prepared for such a conflict. Nevertheless, hundreds of thousands of Afghans left the country to take refuge in Iran and, particularly, Pakistan, where many joined the resistance force which was being trained and armed there by Pakistan and the United States, who considered the Soviet Invasion to be just another chapter in the Cold War. These were the origins of the Mujahedeen⁽¹¹⁾ and their holy war against the atheist invaders.

Despite this training, the Mujahedeen quickly adopted the traditional strategy which had yielded such good results in previous decades. Their inspiration was the tactics used by the Basmachi movement, together with ideological indoctrination and the use of terrorism against the local authorities and the population in the areas in which they operated⁽¹²⁾.

The impossibility of achieving victory led the Soviets to withdraw in 1989, leaving behind an Afghanistan in which more than one million people had been killed: the country's scanty infrastructure had been destroyed; agriculture had

⁽¹⁰⁾ Ewans, M. Marsden, P. *Afghanistan: History*. London: Europa World online.

⁽¹¹⁾ Etymologically, «warriors for Islam»

⁽¹²⁾ The Frunze Academy. *Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan*. Translation by Grau, Lester Washington: National Defense University Press.

been seriously damaged; hundreds of towns and villages had been destroyed; the country had been littered with mines; and over 4 million people had sought refuge in neighbouring countries. The regime's strongman at the time, Mohamed Najibullah, tried to achieve some form of national reconciliation, but the end of the Cold War resulted in both sides losing the support they had from the United States and the USSR. The civil war continued, with the Mujahedeen leaders struggling among themselves to take control of Kabul.

■ **The rise of the Taliban**

This state of anarchy continued until Pakistan, in an attempt to control Afghanistan, decided to support a new player. Islamist students from Madrazas in the west of Pakistan and the majority Pashtun area of Afghanistan (known as the Taliban, radicalised by the most extreme currents in Islam and financed by Saudi Arabia) brought an end to the chaos caused by the Mujahedeen's leaders. Despite their radicalism and strict appliance of *Sharia Law*, they were welcomed by a significant part of the population (particularly the Pashtun majority) as a way of imposing order and stable laws. However, the Taliban regime never managed to control the whole of the country, as some Mujahedeen commanders (particularly Massud) from ethnic backgrounds other than the Pashtun, united in the Northern Alliance, managed to maintain control of some parts of the north and centre of the country, supported by Russia and the Central Asian Republics, who were alarmed at the prospect of a regime based on religious extremism near their borders. It was during this period that the leadership of Al Qaeda moved to Afghanistan and was given refuge by a regime with a similar outlook, which it contributed to strengthening through technical and economic assistance.

■ **The War on Terror and Deployment of the ISAF**

The attempts by the North American authorities in previous years to obtain Bin Laden's extradition from the Taliban's leaders had failed; however, following the 11 September attacks on the United States and the identification of Al Qaeda as their author, President Bush's declaration of war on terror removed all limitations, so that, when the Taliban once again refused to hand Bin Laden over, military intervention was launched. The defeat of the Taliban regime at the hands of the Northern Alliance and international forces was overwhelming. However, following the fall of Kabul and Kandahar, thousands of Taliban managed to escape to tribal areas close to the Afghan border in Pakistan.

This created the conditions for two aspects which have marked the development of the Afghan conflict. Firstly, its spread to the Pakistani regions close to the border, and secondly, from the base of this «sanctuary», the progressive recovery in Taliban activity in Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, at the outset there was an appearance of relative peace which made it possible to begin work on the reconstruction and stabilisation of the country. To this end, under the authority of the United Nations, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was created with the initial mission of securing the capital and impeding the resurgence of a power struggle among leaders. A widely representative provisional authority was created under the mandate of Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun, to create a constitution and set an electoral timetable which would enable the country to return to normal.

However, this stabilisation has never been fully achieved. Despite free elections being held and a legitimate government being formed, the power exercised by local warlords, the extensive cultivation of opium and drug trafficking, bandit activity, corruption and, above all, the gradual but continuous recovery of the Taliban, have stymied the pacification of the country.

From the outset, the allied intervention suffered from the problems inherent in the country. The division of the terrain, the mountainous geography, the extreme weather and the lack of communications infrastructure have hampered North America's «Enduring Liberty» operations and the operations of the ISAF contingent.

■ **Strategies Applied to the Conflict**

- *Conventional Warfare Strategy*

The US intervention was based on a conventional strategy which aimed to achieve the military defeat of the Taliban-Al Qaeda axis. This began with a bombing campaign on 7th October. Aircraft destroyed bases, training camps, weapons and the regime's critical infrastructure; in addition, the US administration decided to support the Northern Alliance by financing the weapons and equipment it was being provided by Russia. The deployment of special operations teams embedded in the Alliance ensured the effectiveness of air support. The conventional attempts to defend territory by the Taliban were overwhelmed in a few weeks.

However, the search for the leaders of Al Qaeda was not successful, as they managed to escape to Pakistani territory, avoiding capture and destruction, both in the bombardments of Tora Bora and in «Operation Anaconda» in the Shah-e Kot mountains. The fall of the Taliban regime was completed in Spring 2002, and international aid focused on supporting President Karzai in re-establishing state structures, mainly the Afghan army and the police (the ANA and ANP) and extending the government's control to the whole of the country.

- *Anti-terrorist and Counterinsurgency Strategy*

The dominant idea of the US administration at the time was the elimination of those behind the attacks on their country: whilst easily comprehensible, this had a negative effect on how the campaign developed. By focusing on this activity, it was assumed that the defeat of the Taliban was irreversible, and most efforts were focused on training and equipping new ANA units; however, these were infiltrated by many Taliban, some of whom then carried out attacks against their instructors.

At the same time, the deployment of ISAF and most of the available Afghan troops mostly in Kabul left much of the country in the control of local warlords, making it difficult for the Afghan government to extend its actions beyond the capital.

It soon became apparent that operations needed to aim both at eliminating the remains of the Taliban presence and controlling the activities of the warlords related to organised crime and the cultivation of opium poppies: this revealed that the anti-terrorist strategy pursued until that time was mistaken, or, at the least, insufficient. 2004 was a turning point in this regard, coinciding with two very important initiatives.

The first was the Afghan government programme known as Disarm, Demobilise and Reintegrate. Incentives linked to agriculture, business opportunities and integration into the ANA or the ANP resulted in huge quantities of weapons being handed over to the authorities, and thousands of combatants leaving the resistance; it also attracted some influential warlords into the government fold, such as Ismail Khan.

In parallel to this, the United States changed its strategy and applied classic counterinsurgency doctrine, which began to yield positive results. Nevertheless, it soon became clear that this strategy required the presence of a much larger military contingent than that deployed in Afghanistan at the time, deploying troops in smaller units and covering the whole of the country. This forced an increase in US and ISAF troop numbers, which were gradually deployed throughout the country; this prepared the ground for the first presidential elections, which were held in late 2004. As a consequence of the collaboration of many warlords who had joined the government and the extension of the international mission to cover the whole country, the outlook seemed positive.

However, somewhat surprisingly, the situation deteriorated due to a number of factors which we need to examine. Despite the increase in the number of soldiers, their presence throughout the whole of the country meant that they were too thinly spread; as a result, counterinsurgency strategy, whilst conceptually

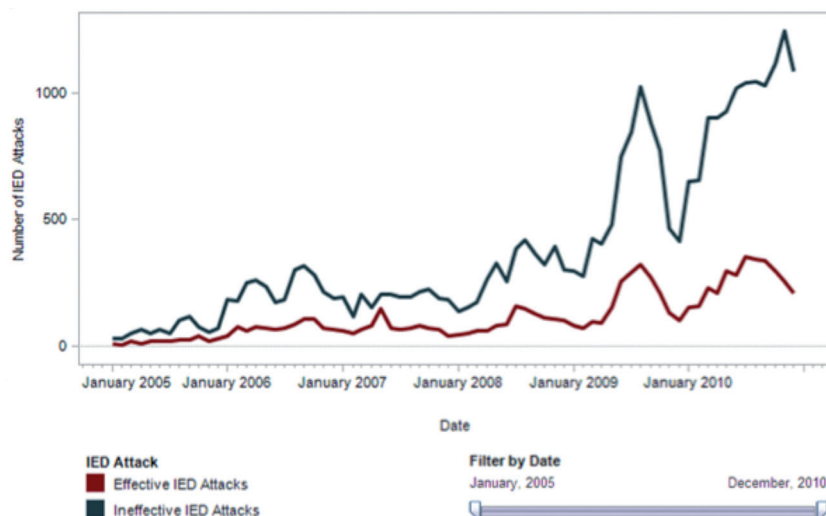
correct, was not implemented robustly enough, resulting in slow and transitory progress, as troops took responsibility for areas on an essentially temporary basis.

However, whilst troop numbers were insufficient, the actual number had a dual negative effect. On the one hand, the sustained effort on the part of many of the contributing countries became very heavy, with casualties and tiredness exhausting troops and domestic public opinion. On the other hand, the presence of these forces became sufficiently dense to provide multiple targets. In addition, the habitual form of demonstrating a presence in rural areas, travelling along the few tracks and paths available, enabled the insurgency to make the most of their Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) as patrols had to pass through certain points which became ideal spots for planting mines, using IEDs and ambushes (see Figure 7.2).

Although the use of IEDs has not been the sole method of attack used by the insurgency, which has also used mortars, rockets, rifle fire and even, more recently, suicide attacks, this developed into the most frequent method used to attack allied forces, as can be seen from the chart.

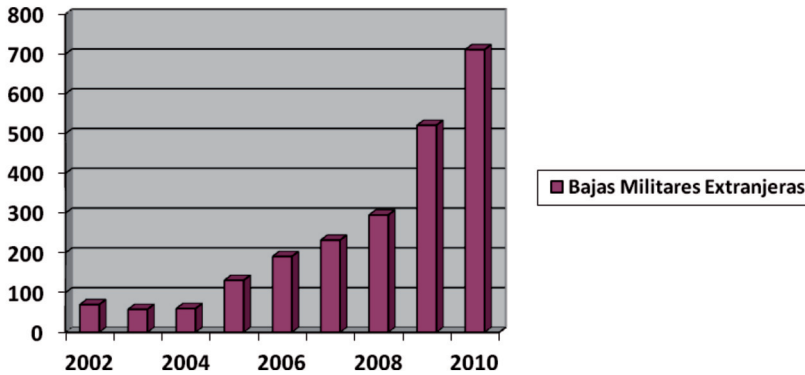
As a result, the number of such attacks has been constantly, and significantly, increasing since 2005, with a corresponding increase in the number of allied casualties⁽¹³⁾ (see Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.2. Statistics on Attacks using IEDs Carried Out by Insurgents*



* Source: Human Security Report Project. <http://www.conflictmonitors.org/countries/afghanistan/facts-and-figures/violent-incidents/ied-attacks>

Figure 7.3. Foreign Military Casualties



Below we give a brief summary of the main events in the conflict.

■ THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CONFLICT

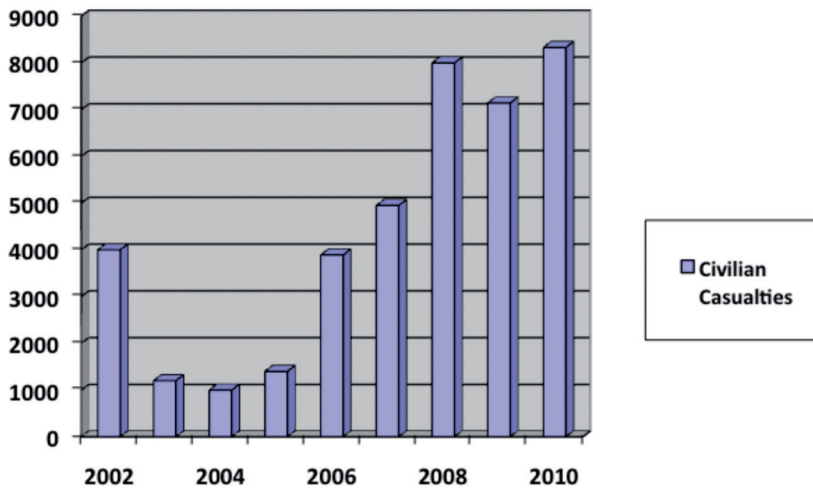
The main consequence of the increasing number of casualties has been the wearing away of public opinion, even in the US, and a feeling within governments that they are up against a problem which is becoming ever more expensive and difficult to resolve. Nevertheless, in this period some milestones have been achieved which are sustaining the situation of the conflict as these words are being written.

• *Successes and Failures*

Despite the data on casualties, some important successes have also been achieved: there has been progress in the construction of productive and communications infrastructure; the highest rate of female schooling in history has been achieved and illiteracy has been reduced; and, in particular, and despite the problems inherent in the process, police and army numbers and capabilities have improved, giving the government ever more effective instruments for taking action throughout the country - this will be of crucial importance in developments over coming years. In fact, insurgent activity has fallen substantially in large parts of the country. From this point of view, despite its high cost, the counterinsurgency strategy can be considered a relative success which gives some hope for the coming years.

However, there is also some data from which we cannot extract particularly optimistic conclusions, such as civilian casualties from 2002 to 2010 (see Figure 7.4).

Figure 7.4. Civilian Casualties



Certainly we cannot say that a strategy which has been unable to avoid such an increase in violence, excessive counterinsurgency attacks and serious collateral damage has been an unmitigated success.

In addition, the geographic distribution of responsibility among the various leading nations involved through the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) (see Figure 7.5) has resulted in differing levels of counterinsurgency pressure throughout the country. In some areas there has been serious combat, resulting in heavy losses for the insurgency; however, in other areas the number of engagements has been much lower, enabling insurgents to seek refuge in these areas where they can recover, recruit new members, train and rearm.

One of the elements that has been most difficult to control since the start of the intervention is drug production (see Figure 7.6). This is one of the basic pillars of the weak Afghan economy: production has continued to increase on a yearly basis, with record production in 2007 and 2008, despite the presence of international troops in all the country's provinces. As a result, Afghanistan has continued to be the world's main supplier of heroin, accounting for 92% of the total in 2007⁽¹⁴⁾; this would seem inconsistent with the international presence.

Increased anti-drug activity since then, and in particular since June 2009, has gradually decreased production, as can be seen from the previous map which provides information on the areas of production during this year.

While we must recognise the impossibility of rapid eradication of opium poppy cultivation, as this would condemn a huge number of farmers to even

⁽¹⁴⁾ Afghanistan opium survey 2007. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

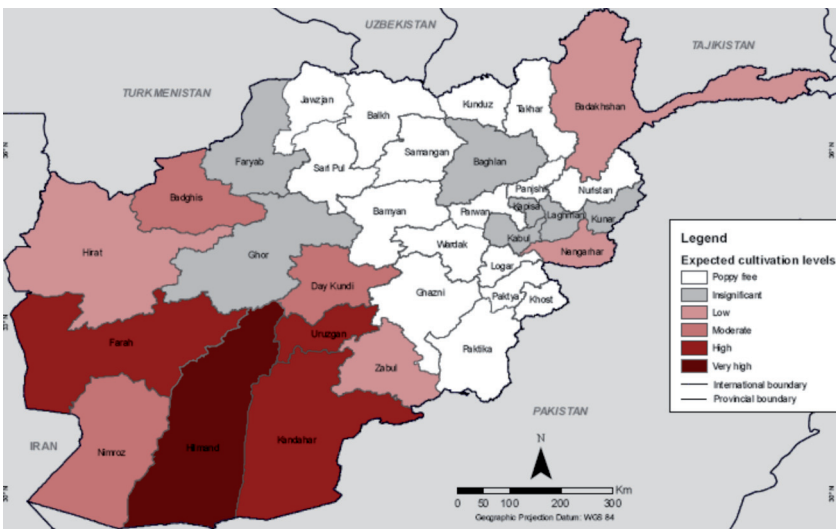
Figure 7.5. Distribution of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)*



greater poverty, there are also other apparently high-priority measures which impeded firm support for substituting opium production with traditional crops, subsidising the difference in income this creates for farmers. Furthermore, the large profits made on this trade are traditionally the main source of income for many local leaders and warlords, thus establishing a source of power which they are not willing to renounce. As a result, the cultivation and sale of opium which financed the Taliban regime is now financing the insurgency, providing

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Figure 7.6. Estimated Opium Production for 2011



the material resources to continue the fight and, above all, sufficient financial capacity to spread corruption and even pay for a large number of professional insurgents, who are generously paid to join or collaborate with these parties.

«*Drugs are a cancer fuelling the insurgency*»⁽¹⁵⁾, declared General Craddock, and it is also true that many traffickers and common criminals involved in drugs have found it convenient to collaborate with the insurgency, often being indistinguishable from them, thus increasing instability and insecurity. Despite the fight against drug trafficking being the responsibility of Afghan forces, as stated in the Constitution, their inefficiency in this task led General Craddock in the same declaration to demand the competency for NATO forces in Afghanistan of carrying out anti-drug operations; this was an implicit recognition of the errors made and the need to adopt a different strategy.

For these reasons, the fight against opium cultivation has developed into one of the main problems for the international intervention. This is amply demonstrated by the increase or decrease in violence in Afghan provinces and their cultivation of opium, and the efforts made starting last year as part of the NATO-Russia Council framework to increase Russian involvement in the fight against drugs, both in its own territory and in the ex-Soviet republics. This collaboration has replaced the accusations which Russia used to make against

Figure 7.7. Main Routes for Afghan Drugs to Europe



the United States and NATO about inaction towards Afghan drug production, contributing through this omission to the problem of drug addiction in Russia (see Figure 7.7).

A further difficulty in the process is the lack of confidence that the Afghan government has generated over these years, both among the international community and among its own people. The main reasons for this are the many accusations of corruption against the administration; its alleged connivance, if not direct participation, in drug trafficking; and its inability to pass the benefits of copious international aid through to the daily lives of the population. This is in addition to accusations of electoral fraud in the re-election of President Karzai, creating a feeling of desperation and frustration which has further fuelled the insurgency.

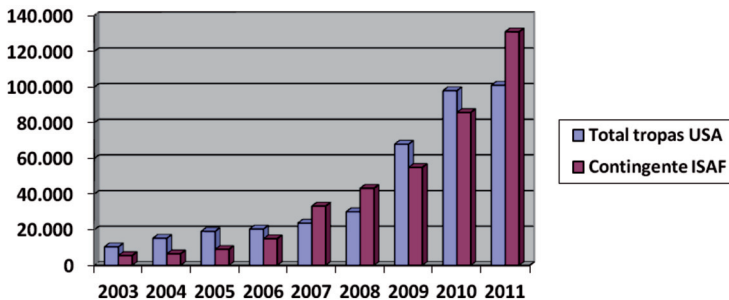
- *Searching for a Way Out*

In 2009, the US administration began to plan a process which would enable its troops (most of them at least) to withdraw from Afghan territory, forcing the other allies to do the same, in a similar or shorter period. Following consideration by the various government departments involved, President Obama set out the main points of a new strategy in his address at West Point, in December 2009.

These consisted, paradoxically, of a major initial increase in troops on the ground - over 30,000 US troops (freed up by improvements in Iraq in 2010) and a further 10,000 allied troops - in order to deliver devastating military strikes against the Taliban in their traditional strongholds in the south and east of the country (see Figure 7.8).

In parallel to this, a substantial increase in training and equipment efforts for the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) – including both the ANA and the ANP – in order to create the conditions required for the Afghan government to take responsibility for its own security and for control of its territory. Of

Figure 7.8. Changes in the number of foreign troops in Afghanistan



course, this was not a new strategy; it simply aimed to reproduce that applied in South-East Asia and which was known as «Vietnamisation» of the war, as a result, this was soon dubbed «Afghanisation».

A third initiative, which was both necessary and complementary to the two already mentioned, was to increase the role of Pakistan in the fight against Taliban sanctuaries on the border between the two countries, through an increase in financial and military aid to Pakistan. Together with these three lines of action, and as a result of the positive effects it was hoped they would achieve, the President declared that US troops would begin to disengage from Afghanistan in 2011.

Amongst other considerations, behind this statement was the need for the United States to reduce considerably the cost of its foreign operations; this necessity is shared by the main allied countries at this time of economic crisis. However, it was not just about economic cost, but also about human, social and political costs⁽¹⁶⁾.

- *Change of Objectives and Strategy*

As was to be expected, the troop reinforcements enabled extensive operations in Kandahar and Helmand provinces - areas with major insurgent presences and opium poppy production; however, it also demonstrated that the counterinsurgency strategy available to the coalition would not, on its own, be capable of ending the conflict satisfactorily. As the campaign increased in intensity, so did the violence, allied casualties, costs and the need for more troops to continue its progress. The military solution demonstrated that it would be insufficient, and that it was therefore necessary to bring politics into play.

As a result, the option of a negotiated solution, which had been timidly explored under the leadership of Saudi Arabia, has since 2010 been the focus of attention for bringing the conflict to a reasonably satisfactory end. This has brought with it a further change in US strategy, which now focuses, as at the start of the intervention, on counterterrorist action, trying to detain or neutralise remaining Al Qaeda and extremist Taliban elements that are opposed to involvement in the political game in the new Afghanistan that is currently being sketched out.

Of course, this requires the ANSF to be capable of taking responsibility on their own for the safety of the public and institutions, meaning that the main efforts at the moment are focusing on training and strengthening the ANA and the ANP, rather than just on combat operations.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Eisenhower Study Group. *The Cost of War since 2001: Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan*. June 2011.

This is set against a background in which, despite the rhetorical declarations, there has been a change in what is considered to be the desired final outcome. In other words, the objectives have been reduced substantially. It is now considered sufficient to ensure that Afghanistan does not once again become a platform or sanctuary for international jihadist terrorism, stopping the export of terrorism from Afghanistan to other countries. Furthermore, at least from the viewpoint of the main military contributor, the United States, the death of Bin Laden has created a sensation of «mission accomplished», both in terms of public opinion and in the administration, contributing to increased desire to leave the theatre of operations.

In reality, definitively achieving this objective (which it should be remembered was the motive which initially led to the intervention) would make the end of the conflict highly positive, as it would substantially increase the security of our nations, including Spain.

- *Inteqal*

As a result, at the moment the *inteqal* (a word common to both Pashtun and Dari, the two most widely spoken languages in the country, which could be translated as «transition») is fully underway. Gradual transfer of authority to the ANSF has begun in provinces with limited insurgent activity, with the objective declared by President Karzai being to take responsibility for the whole of the country by the end of 2014⁽¹⁷⁾. However, NATO will be involved in collaboration well beyond this date. This support, depending on how the process develops, could vary from technical, logistical and financial support to the almost certain presence beyond 2014 of a «hard core» of Western troops to ensure the irreversibility of the process, the continuity of the government and to avoid the reappearance of fratricidal power struggles in Kabul. The «*Joint Afghan-NATO Inteqal Board (JANIB)*» was set up to design and control the transfer process; the Board recently produced an extensive report which has been adopted by NATO as a guide to the process.

Obviously, the transfer of provinces to the Afghan government is related to the withdrawal of coalition troops, the decrease of which has already begun. The initial numbers for this withdrawal are modest, but they will increase substantially in 2012, with President Obama having announced the withdrawal of 33,000 US troops by summer next year. The other allies will be following a similar path, although the pace will depend on the particular situation in the areas in which they operate. If the *inteqal* progresses adequately, it is hoped that by the end of 2014 there will only be a small contingent of troops remaining in the country, under a formula which has yet to be defined, awaiting the development of events.

⁽¹⁷⁾ The July 2010 Kabul Conference.

Of course, this process is not without difficulties. A particular example of interest to Spain is the transfer on 21st June 2011 of responsibility for security to the Afghan authorities in Herat. However, prior to this, and following its announcement in March by President Karzai, there was a notable increase in insurgent activity in the province, including the planting of bombs and an attack on the Italian PRT in Herat itself. It appears that this pattern will be repeated for each transfer, and it is therefore clear that the insurgent strategy is to harass this process wherever it occurs, in a clear challenge to the capacity of the ANSF to control the situation. However, recent declarations by Taliban leaders of their willingness to negotiate with NATO and the Afghan government⁽¹⁸⁾ would seem to indicate that these actions are a repetition of the ancient tactic of demonstrating military strength when sitting down at the negotiating table.

■ THE ROLE OF FOREIGN ACTORS

■ Iran

Despite differences over its nuclear programme, the involvement of Iran in the AFPAK group of representatives indicates that Iran will have an important role in the future of Afghanistan. Its cultural and economic influence in the west of the country and the Tajik ethnic group is huge, as is its «sponsorship» of the Hazara, the only Shiites in Afghanistan.

Of course, a scenario of triumph for an extremist Sunni regime is not an acceptable outcome for Tehran, which is always sensitive about instability in Baluchistan and Sunni power, in addition to the numerous Afghan refugees who remain in Iran. In summary, a reasonably stable Afghanistan controlled by a moderate government is as important for Iran as it is for the West, and it can therefore be expected to play a supportive role in the transfer process.

■ The Ex-Soviet Republics

The Central Asian Republics are also interested in an Afghanistan which is pacified, stable and moderate. This would give them two main advantages. The first of these is containment of Islamic extremism, which affects all of them to some degree, and which would be boosted by an eventual Taliban victory.

The second is the opening and bringing on stream of projects related to export of their increasing hydrocarbon wealth: gas and oil pipelines running through Afghan territory would be extremely vulnerable if security cannot be guaranteed.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Alissa J. Rubin. *The New York Times*. 03/08/2011

As a result, they will probably try to influence ethnically similar Afghans (particularly Tajiks and Uzbeks) to achieve and maintain stability. In order to achieve this, they also have an important role in the control of their borders with Afghanistan with regard to drug and weapons smuggling.

■ **The Russian Federation**

The high percentage of Muslim populations and the internal conflicts in the Caucuses, together with concern about the consumption of Afghan heroin among the population, makes it essential for Russia to seek a favourable solution in Afghanistan. In fact, for some time now it has been increasing its collaboration with the coalition to achieve this, whilst at the same time using its influence in the Central Asian Ex-Soviet Republics to the same end. Russia's common interests with the United States and NATO outweigh considerations about the undesirability of triumph by the latter in the conflict, particularly since it has become clear that such a triumph is not going to occur, thus judging the results of the campaign to be a relative success full of uncertainty in the longer term: as a result, Russian efforts towards a multi-polar distribution of power and global influence will to some extent be seen to have been rewarded.

However, the possibility of gas and oil pipelines running through Afghanistan, thus avoiding Russia, is an inconvenience for Russia's global strategy and its energy policy. It is highly likely that Russian interests in this regard will be best served through the influence of Central Asian governments, whilst minimising the threat of jihadist expansion remains a priority objective for Russia.

■ **China**

The role China will play is very similar to that of Russia as a result of its Uyghur Muslim minority. However, it has a much greater interest in Afghan natural resources. It has already made significant investments in the country, and may in future become the main investor and economic prop for the country. Its position in international markets, its access to finance and the probable existence of untapped resources in Afghanistan represent a scenario in which China will be best positioned to become the main socio-economic partner of the Afghan government. In order to bring about this situation, China needs there to be sufficient level of stability and security, meaning it would therefore also be adversely affected by any failure in the transition process.

■ **India**

India has traditionally sought an ally in Afghanistan against its adversary Pakistan, and therefore a Taliban government with religious and political ties to

Pakistan would not be in its interests at all. As a result, following the departure of the majority of international forces, India may become the main ally of the Afghan government, competing with China for the position of being the main socio-economic partner and exploiter of natural resources in the country.

The United States could well be a winner from this struggle, given the intense relationship that currently exists between the two nations, and because it would probably prefer India rather than China to be the main support and influence in Afghanistan.

■ **The Western Bloc**

The continuing presence through an unknown but doubtless lengthy period of Western civilian and military advisors, probably accompanied by a small contingent of troops, together with the maintenance of economic contributions, will continue to make the relationship with the Afghan government intense; however, after almost fifteen years of a massive, mostly American, presence the fatigue regarding the Afghan question is evident. Spain is fully subject to this perception, and our future role in the country is inseparably linked to that of our main allies; we are faced not by a lack of understanding of the issue, but by a reduction of its importance in national priorities. This perspective, and the need to prioritise domestic questions and security closer to home, will probably result in something of a vacuum of influence which will be filled by China and India, providing that Afghanistan does not again start to represent a direct threat to the security of the West and, of course, Spain.

■ **Pakistan**

Afghanistan's most complex regional relationship is with its neighbour, Pakistan. With a disputed common border (a question which has been put on the back burner for the moment) there is no doubt that Pakistan is essential for the future of Afghanistan. Although its top priority continues to be its conflict with India, the Pakistani government has not abandoned its aspirations to control Afghanistan, just as successive Afghan governments have made efforts to avoid this occurring.

Pakistan is currently faced with a situation which is difficult to resolve. Obviously, a secular government would favour the entry of China and India as the country's main partners, displacing Pakistani influence. However, the problems of Islamist extremism in its own country are sufficiently serious to create doubts about the possibility of this being encouraged for foreign policy purposes, despite the tacit pact with Afghan Taliban refugees in the tribal zones in the west of the country ensuring they do not get involved in Pakistan's internal affairs.

Dependent to a large extent on US military and economic aid, and the good offices of the US in the face of the Indian government, which have enabled the Pakistani army to deploy troops to contain Islamist tribal militias, the Pakistani government has consented to operations by special operations teams and unmanned aircraft against the Afghan Taliban in its territory. However, the operation to eliminate Bin Laden has put the government in a difficult position, chilling its relations with the US government to such an extent that they are now extremely strained, or perhaps even in crisis, as is shown by the freezing of US\$800 million of the US\$2 billion dollars of US military aid planned for this year⁽¹⁹⁾.

Pakistan's main instrument of pressure on the United States, which is the level of its troops on the Afghan border, thus to a greater or lesser extent controlling the transit of Afghan insurgents (as demonstrated by the major increase in IED attacks since Pakistan reacted to this cooling in relations by decreasing pressure on the unrestricted entry of explosives into Afghanistan⁽²⁰⁾), will cease to be quite as important as the number of US troops in Afghanistan decreases dramatically; this could result in the support Pakistan has received in the past being greatly reduced, thus worsening its expectations against India in the conflict over Kashmir and against Islamist militias in its own country. In such conditions, the option of permitting or encouraging the Afghan insurgency could have a «boomerang effect» in the medium term which could be potentially lethal for Pakistan's government by strengthening Islamism in the region, which could end up triumphing not just in Afghanistan, but also in Pakistan. This situation, absolutely intolerable in a nuclear power, could have very serious consequences.

Table 7.1 details Afghanistan's trade relations, as a sign of the role played by other countries in its economy, and as a result its dependency on these countries at present.

Table 7.1. Trading Partners

TRADING PARTNERS	USA	INDIA	PAKISTAN	TAJIKISTAN	GERMANY	RUSSIA
AFGHANISTAN EXPORTS %	24,9	24,2	23,9	8,9		
AFGHANISTAN IMPORTS %	24,9	7,7	22,3		5,1	4,3

⁽¹⁹⁾ Antonio Caño. El País, 13th July 2011.

⁽²⁰⁾ Yochi J. Dreazen. National Journal. 03/08/2011

■ CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

The conflict has entered a potentially final stage marked by a perspective based on:

- A reduction in the objectives to be achieved, limiting these to avoiding Afghanistan once again becoming an exporter of jihadist terrorism. As a result, the remains of Al Qaeda and irreconcilable Taliban elements are the only enemies to defeat.
- If this is achieved, the remaining conflict is essentially an Afghan affair, and responsibility for that should be in the hands of its government.
- As a result, intensive training has been carried out of the Afghan military and civilian personnel who are to perform these official tasks.
- The Afghan government currently has the most powerful tools it has ever had for developing the roles of the State and its governance. This is the main legacy of the many years during which the international community has been present in the country.
- The military solution complemented by humanitarian and reconstruction tasks was not sufficient to resolve the conflict; as a result, a political solution has been imposed.
- This political solution necessarily involves national reconciliation through negotiations which will give appropriate shares in power to each ethnic group, clan and faction.
- It is therefore essential to continue supporting the Afghan government so that there is no repeat of the civil strife which created the perfect conditions for the growth of jihadist groups in the country. In this task, intelligence and any occasional actions which might be necessary, will be required over an extended period of time.
- The staged withdrawal of international troops will be completed by 2014, but a contingent will remain in order to continue with training and support tasks, and to ensure the survival of the Kabul government.

If this transition process which is underway is successful, and it is difficult to see it being reversed, although it should be measured by the results obtained in the provinces transferred, the resulting Afghanistan will probably be very similar to that which existed under royal authority, but with a central government which is much stronger and more capable than it was at that time. The role of ethnic groups and the warlords will probably be determining factors in the various territories; their interpretation of the law, Islam and tradition are likely to prevail, although accepting the higher authority of the elected president, who will be the sole interlocutor with the international community. In this context, the government should use all the measures within its reach, which exceed those available at any time in its history, to maintain a balance among the various internal parties, ensuring that certain red lines are not crossed, and making a decisive contribution to stability.

Poppy cultivation will probably continue to be important, although with lower volumes (this should be one of the aforementioned red lines) than those seen over the last decade; however, the amount processed and exported as heroin may well increase.

All the other countries in the region and those with direct interests in Afghanistan are interested in the definitive stabilisation of the country, with the possible exception of some parts of Pakistan's population and government. The return to normal of the country depends to a large extent on how the situation develops in Pakistan, which is now much more critical than the situation in Afghanistan.

Finally, it should be stated that, despite the difficulties, the intervention in Afghanistan has done a great deal to develop the country, and continuing progress on this path and improving conditions for the population is now in Afghan hands (refer to table 7.2)

Table 7.2. Comparison Afghanistan/Spain

INDICATOR	VALUE/ in Spain
GDP per capita	1.419\$/30.452\$
Inflation	<5%/3,092%
GDP growth rate	8,2%/0,1%
Balance of trade*	-US\$2.47 billion/-US€46.36 billion
Defence expenditure as % of GDP	1,9%/0,66%
Human development index	0,349/0,863
Gini index	sin datos/32,8
Corruption Perceptions Index	1,4/6,1
Literacy index	28%/98%
Life expectancy	44.6 years/82 years
Infant mortality	149,2/1.000/4/1.000
Population growth	2,375%/0,6%
Doctors per/1,000 inhabitants	n/a/4.8
% Urban Population	24%/78%
% Population under 15 years old	42,3%/14,3%
% Population below the poverty line	42%/no comparable data available

From the point of view of the defence of our security, the mission has been a success, as the capacity for international jihadist activity based there to attack our country and population has decreased substantially. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to regard this situation as irreversible. As a result, unlike what happened during the Taliban regime, the international community must remain vigilant as events develop, supporting an equilibrium which, although it is very different to ours, provides sufficient stability and hopes for progress for Afghanistan.

■ **CHRONOLOGY**

Table 7.3. Timeline of the Conflict

TIMELINE OF THE CONFLICT		
1761	January	Battle of Panipat. Consolidation of the Durrani dynasty by Ahmed Shah Durrani, father of the Afghan Nation
1775		Timur Shah Durrani establishes his capital in Kabul
		Primera Guerra Anglo-Afgana
1833-1842		First Anglo-Afghan War
1878-1881		Second Anglo-Afghan War
1919-1921		Third Anglo-Afghan War
1973		Mohammed Zahir Shah, the last king, leaves Afghanistan
1979	December	Soviet invasion begins. Assassination of Hafizullah Amin
1989	February	Soviet withdrawal and start of the Civil War
1996	September	The Taliban capture Kabul
2001	October	United States starts aerial bombardment of Taliban and Al Qaeda positions. Launch of Operation Enduring Freedom
	November	Northern Alliance captures Kabul
	December	The United Nations Security Council creates ISAF by means of Resolution 1386. Creation of Provisional Authority presided over by Hamid Karzai
2004	October	Elections held, in which Karzai is elected President
2009	November	President Karzai is re-elected
	December	President Obama's speech at West Point. Start of the exit strategy from Afghanistan
2005-2010		Constant escalation of violence. Continued increase in civilian and military casualties
2011-2014		Process of transition («Inteqal»). Gradual «Afghanisation» of the conflict
2014		End of the process of reducing Western military presence in Afghanistan

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Chapter VIII

THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT: THE LONG-RUNNING CONFLICT IN KASHMIR

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SUMMARY

The Kashmir region has been a source of conflict ever since the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947. The first Indo-Pakistani war of 1947 divided the region between Islamabad and New Delhi. The second war in 1965 failed to move the dividing line, or Line of Control (LoC). India is now up against the majority of the Muslim population of Kashmir: whilst India considers this to be an internal affair, Pakistan regards it as an international dispute. Organised anti-India and pro-independence militancy in the part of Kashmir administered by India has increased significantly since 1980, allegedly with support from the government of Pakistan; this, together with both countries having acquired nuclear weapons, has increased the potential danger of this conflict. Infiltration by Pakistan-backed guerrillas into Indian-administered Kashmir in 1999 led to the Kargil conflict. Diplomatic pressure on both countries to demilitarise the tense border areas resulted in a negotiated ceasefire along the LoC in November 2003, with an increase in transport links across this Line. However, high-level dialogue over Kashmir was suspended after India blamed Pakistan for providing a platform for the attacks on Mumbai (Bombay) in 2008. Since the summer of 2008, there has been an increase in disturbances in Indian-administered Kashmir in protest at the behaviour of security forces in the region. Despite the ceasefire, the internal conflict in the region has resulted in over 42,000 deaths since 1989.

Key words

Kashmir, India, Pakistan, Jammu, Kashmir Azad, Aksai Chin, Shaksam valley, UNMOGIP.

■ INTRODUCTION

The Indian subcontinent is the geographic region comprising most of the historic territory of India. It is currently divided into the states of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan (see Figure 8.1). For cultural and geographic reasons, the island states of Sri Lanka and the Maldives are also considered part of this subcontinent. For many centuries, the Indian subcontinent was known as Hindustan, and covered the territory known as «British India», until the disappearance of the British Raj in 1947. The total area of the subcontinent is around 4,480,000 km².

Figure 8.1. Map of the Indian Subcontinent



For what were known as the East Indies until 1947, partition involved the division of the territory between the states of the Indian Union and Pakistan. Subsequently, the eastern part of Pakistan broke away under the name of Bangladesh. Many inhabitants of Pakistan and Bangladesh reject the term «Indian subcontinent», as they consider that the adjective India should only apply to the current Indian Union. The term Hindustan would be more appropriate because of its history and origins; however, this is not much used at present. An alternative name for the region is Southern Asia, although this definition sometimes also includes Afghanistan, Iran and even Burma.

The region is delimited to the north and the east by the Himalayas; and to the south by the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. The Hindu Kush mountain range between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran is considered to be the north-west frontier of the subcontinent. The Sulaiman Mountains separate the western part of Pakistan, Baluchistan, from the subcontinent; as a result, this is not geographically part of the same region, as it belongs to the Iranian plateau.

Geologically, the region is considered to be a subcontinent because it is on a different tectonic plate - the «Indian plate», which is part of the Indo-Aus-

tralian plate. Originally this was a small continent which collided with the Eurasian plate, forming the Himalayas and the Tibetan plateau. The Indian plate is currently continuing to move northwards, increasing the height of the Himalayas by a few centimetres every decade.

The Indian subcontinent is one of the most densely populated regions of the world. It is home to almost 1.6 billion people, a quarter of the world's population. Its population density (350 people per km²) is seven times higher than the global average.

There are a number of conflicts in the region, not only within India but also in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Of these, we are concentrating on the conflict in Kashmir as it is the oldest and involves a confrontation between two nuclear powers in India and Pakistan.

Kashmir is located in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent (see Figure 8.2). Historically, Kashmir was the name of the valley to the south of the most western part of the Himalayan mountain range. However, politically the term also extends to the regions of Jammu and Ladakh.

Figure 8.2. Map of the Kashmir Region



Kashmir is a disputed region with a population of around 13 million. When India gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1947, the parts with majority Muslim populations were separated into the state of Pakistan. However,

the principality of Kashmir was the exception. In order to handle an internal rebellion, its Maharaja asked for help from India, which agreed providing that the territory would come under its jurisdiction.

The Kashmir Valley is relatively low and extremely fertile; it is surrounded by mountains. The region is currently divided between India, Pakistan and China (see table 8.1), and is the location of one of the most important international disputes of present times.

Table 8.1

INDICATOR*	INDIA	PAKISTÁN	CHINA
GDP	US\$1.54 trillion	US\$172 billion	US\$5.73 trillion
GDP per capita	1.273 \$	933 \$	4.234 \$
Inflation	13,2	11,7	3,2 %
GDP growth rate	8,5 %	3 %	3,524
Balance of trade*	-US\$44.09 billion	-US\$3.49 billion	US\$269.87 billion
Defence Budget	US\$38.4 billion	US\$5.2 billion	US\$76.4 billion*
Defence expenditure as % of GDP	2,5 %	3,02%	1,3 %
Literacy index	63% (2006)	56% (2008)	94% (2009)
Life expectancy	63,1 (2000-2007)	65,2 (2006)	73 (2009)
Infant mortality (number per 1,000 inhabitants)	66 (2009)	87 (2009)	19 (2009)
% Urban Population	27,8% (2007)	24%	49,68% (2009)
% Population under 15 years old	29.7%<15 years	35.4%<15 years	17.6%<15 years
% Population below the poverty line	41,64%	22,59%	15,92%
Population	1.21 billion	184 million	1.35 billion
Religious groups	Hindus 80%; Moslems 14%; Christians 2%; Sikh 2%	Hindus less than 3%	Tibetans, Uyghurs and other non-Han 8%

*Data for 2010, except where otherwise indicated in brackets.

Pakistan controls the north-western region (the Northern territories and Azad Kashmir)⁽¹⁾; India controls the central and southern sectors (Jammu and Kashmir)⁽²⁾; and China has occupied the north-eastern region (Aksai Chin and the Shaksam valley). Within Kashmir, there are groups which support its independence (refer to table 8.2).

⁽¹⁾ Muzaffarabad (the administrative centre of Kashmir Azad).

⁽²⁾ Srinagar is the capital of the state of Jammu and Kashmir during the summer, while in the winter it is Jammu.

Table 8.2

Claimed by	Area	Population	% Muslim	% Hindu	% Buddhist	% Others
Pakistan	Northern areas	approximately 3 million	99%			
	Azad Kashmir		99%			
India	Jammu	approximately 7 million	30%	66%		4%
	Ladakh		46%		50%	3%
	Kashmir Valley		95%	4%		

The Kashmir region has been a source of conflict ever since the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947. The first Indo-Pakistani war of 1947 divided the region between Islamabad and New Delhi. The second war of 1965 failed to move the Line of Control (LoC). India is now up against the majority of the Muslim population of Kashmir: whilst India considers this to be an internal affair, Pakistan regards it as an international dispute. Organised anti-India and pro-independence militancy in the part of Kashmir administered by India has increased significantly since 1980, allegedly with support from the government of Pakistan. The acquisition of nuclear weapons by both countries has increased the potential danger of this conflict. Infiltration by Pakistan-backed guerrillas into Indian-administered Kashmir in 1999 led to the Kargil conflict which lasted for ten weeks. Diplomatic pressure on both countries to demilitarise the tense border areas resulted in a negotiated ceasefire along the LoC in November 2003, with an increase in transport links across this Line. However, high-level dialogue over Kashmir was suspended after India blamed Pakistan for providing a platform for the attacks on Mumbai (Bombay) in 2008. Since the summer of 2008, there has been an increase in disturbances in Indian administered Kashmir in protest at the behaviour of security forces in the region. The populations of Jammu and Kashmir live in poverty. The internal conflict in the region has resulted in over 42,000 deaths since 1989, despite the ceasefire.⁽³⁾ Much of the region’s infrastructure has been destroyed; many social networks and communities have been uprooted; economic activity has been destroyed; and tourism has been practically eliminated. The violence perpetrated by organs of the states of India and Pakistan and by separatist terrorist

⁽³⁾ The number of victims of the Kashmir conflict includes the victims of the three Indo-Pakistani wars, the war with China, terrorist acts and extrajudicial executions: according to information from the respective armies and governments, the first Indo-Pakistani war caused the death of between 3,500 and 4,000 Indian people and 1,500 and 5,000 Pakistanis. During the second war, the Indian army lost around 3,000 soldiers, whilst Pakistan lost between 3,800 and 7,000 members of its army. The last war caused 3,800 Indian deaths, fewer than on the Pakistani side. The number of Bengali citizens killed ranges from 300,000 to 3 million depending on the source. The three wars have caused millions of people to become displaced in Kashmir.

groups in the region has created a climate of terror and fear, which has contributed significantly to hampering the development of the region.

In addition to religious differences, the conflict is also based on two other issues. On the one hand, the region is a strategic point for control of rivers and frontier crossing points. And on the other, it symbolises the construction of national identities in each of the states.

■ BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

■ Kashmir Following the Partition

On 15th August 1947, the British Empire declared the independence of the Indian subcontinent, which had been occupied and converted into a British colony in 1858. In terms of formal legality and international law, the transfer of power took place as a result of the agreements reached between the Indian nationalist leadership and the British government, according to which, the Indian Empire would be divided into two independent states: India and Pakistan. This division was based on the majority religion in different areas.

Majority Muslim provinces became part of Pakistan, which was divided into Eastern Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and Western Pakistan (the provinces of Baluchistan, Sindh, the North-West Frontier and other parts resulting from the so-called «Mountbatten Plan»). The North-West Frontier separated Western Pakistan from India from that time. This partition resulted in mass exoduses and deportations between the two states, provoking hostility and tension between the two communities as they passed one another en route to their new homelands.

Kashmir had an additional difficulty: a majority Muslim population but a Hindu government. Hari Singh, the last Maharaja of the principality of Jammu and Kashmir, signed an agreement before independence with India and with Pakistan to gain time for possible independence of the territory; however, two months after this was signed, Pakistan invaded the western and northern parts of Kashmir, believing that the religious majority and the fervour of the people would press the Maharaja into accepting annexation to Pakistan. Without sufficient capacity to defend the region, Hari Singh was obliged to seek help from India, which made this help conditional on signature of a treaty ⁽⁴⁾which granted it control of the territory.

As a result, the region was divided into three parts: the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir; Kashmir Azad in Pakistan; and Aksai Chin under Chinese control.

⁽⁴⁾ For more information, visit http://www.jammu-kashmir.com/documents/instrument_of_accession.html

The dispute over the region entwines with the ideologies which underlie the creation of the two states: India is a lay state, where the presence of the Muslim population is seen as proof of the viability of a multi-religious country, while Pakistan is a Muslim state, which believes that the population which adheres to this faith should belong to the Pakistani state.

As a result, the integration of Kashmir into India immediately launched the «*first Indo-Pakistani war (1947-1948)*», in which Indian power stopped the advance of Pakistani troops; in January 1949 it requested the intervention of the United Nations (UN). In resolution 47/1948, the UN dictated the withdrawal of Pakistani armed forces and reduction to the minimum possible level of Indian troops so that a referendum could be held on self-determination in the region. However, neither India nor Pakistan accepted the resolution and the war continued until the end of 1949, when a ceasefire was signed. The UN then deployed an observer force in the zone. This was the *United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan* (UNIMOGIP). Failure by the parties to agree on the dismantling of this mission has resulted in UNIMOGIP remaining deployed in the area to the present day.

In parallel to the signature of intervention by the United Nations, a separation line was established between the two parties. With the promulgation of the Indian Constitution in 1950, special status was granted to the region of Jammu and Kashmir, as this was one of the conditions established by Hari Singh prior to signature of the Instrument of Adhesion with the intention of remaining in power.

■ Kashmir in the Context of the Cold War

The global geostrategic panorama changed radically following World War II. Opposing political interests and the race to be the most influential nation on the planet led the USA and the USSR to become involved through proxies in disputes and tensions in different countries, polarising the global situation. As a result of the alignment of India and Pakistan in different blocks (the former with the USSR and the latter with the USA), the conflict between the two countries intensified. Kashmir developed into the scenario and territory where each of the countries began to build opposing national identities.

With the explicit support of the USSR as the background (the Soviet power had even vetoed the demand for a referendum in Kashmir as agreed at a meeting of the United Nations Security Council at the request of Pakistan), the then Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, vehemently threatened Pakistan in reference to its alliance with the United States, stating that «(Pakistan) is not permitted to do anything in Kashmir, particularly grant bases to others.»

Tensions between India and Pakistan reached new levels in 1965, resulting in the «*second Indo-Pakistani war*». This second armed conflict was mainly generated by Pakistan's desire for revenge, added to a significant increase in its armed forces and the traditional religious conflict between Hindus and Muslims. Hostilities began on 23rd August 1965, when regular Pakistani troops crossed the ceasefire line imposed by the United Nations and were repulsed following a violent clash with Indian army forces.

The United Nations Security Council then became involved and issued a resolution demanding a ceasefire. The agreement was signed on 2nd September 1965. Subsequently, on 10th January 1966, the Indian and Pakistani authorities agreed the *Declaration of Tashkent*, which stated that by 25th February 1966 their troops would be withdrawn to the positions they occupied before the start of hostilities.

As a result of this second conflict, India consolidated the annexation of Kashmir as part of its territory, thus retaining the economic benefits generated in the region and counterbalancing Chinese action to the benefit of Pakistan by using its closer ties with the USSR. Pakistan, on the other hand, whilst it did not achieve its objectives of annexing the territories of Jammu and Kashmir, managed to unite its population around this shared objective, and the government was strengthened as a result of the conflict. In addition, it also managed to maintain its territorial integrity, improving its international position. However, the second war was more costly in terms of personnel and material than the 1947-1948 conflict: India suffered some 3,000 casualties and Pakistan around 3,800.

Meanwhile, India and China were in conflict in 1962 over the control of Aksai Chin (and over the north-eastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh). In addition, China also controlled the Trans-Karakoram area, also known as the Shaksam valley, which was ceded to it by Pakistan in 1963 and established as the line of control between China and Pakistan. Aksai Chin is administered by China, but is claimed by India. The area is an enormous salt desert, also known as the Soda Plain, which is practically uninhabited. However, it is of extraordinary strategic importance for China. One of the main reasons for the «*1962 Sino-Indian war*» was India's discovery that China had built a road in the territory. India claims the area as part of the Ladakh district of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. However, both parties have now agreed to respect the current LoC.

Following several years of apparent calm, the «*third Indo-Pakistani armed conflict*» erupted at the end of 1971; the cause of this was reprisals by Pakistan for India's alleged support for the independence of Bangladesh. Major internal confrontations in the territory resulted in millions of refugees fleeing to the north of India, from Bangladesh to the neighbouring Indian state of West Ben-

gal. In May 1971, there were 9.8 million refugees, forcing the United Nations to implement a massive humanitarian aid programme.

Following two weeks of Indo-Pakistani confrontations, hostilities ceased on 17th December 1971, and in July 1972 the authorities of the two countries signed the *Simla Agreement*. This established a line of control which almost exactly followed the ceasefire line of the Karachi Agreement of July 1949. The Simla Agreement established the independence of Bangladesh, and that future disputes between India and Pakistan should be settled through diplomacy.

As a result of this war, India ensured its eastern flank as it now bordered Bangladesh; repatriated thousands of Bengali refugees; and demonstrated its military power, establishing its superiority in the zone. Pakistan, on the other hand, felt like the loser. It suffered major losses of territory, population and economic resources as a result of the formation of the State of Bangladesh.

In 1974, as a result of the difficult balance between India and Pakistan, India developed its first nuclear bomb. This set off a *nuclear arms race* between the two countries, making the Kashmir question even more important. In 1984, the Indian army annexed the Siachen Glacier region, a zone which is still disputed today by India and Pakistan, situated between the northern territories and Jammu and Kashmir.

■ Kashmir Following the Disintegration of the USSR

As a result of the fall of the Berlin wall and the dismemberment of the USSR, India lost a powerful ally. Its relations with the United States at the time were terrible and marked by feelings of distrust and paranoia. Against this background, a new armed conflict in the interior of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir began, in which Indian security forces took on a number of armed opposition groups, some of which favoured integration into Pakistan and others wanting independence for a unified Kashmir, which would combine the territories under the control of both India and Pakistan.

The population of Kashmir, believing in the independence of their territory, and seeing a weakened India after having lost the support of the USSR, rose up to push for their demands through violence. Pakistan saw this uprising as an opportunity to get involved and destabilise the region, and supplied support to groups such as the Al Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF)⁽⁵⁾. India accused Pakistan of using its secret services (ISI) to create armed groups committed to the idea of merging with Pakistan, including in particular: Hiz-b-ul-Mujahedeen, with Islamist ideology and consisting mostly of Kashmiri guerrillas; Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), consisting of non-Kashmiri guerrillas and professing a very strict form of Sunni Islam; and Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen,

⁽⁵⁾ International Journal On World Peace, Vol. XXVII n° 1 March 2010.

comprising guerrillas from various international armed groups which operate in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Sudan, among other countries.

The appearance of these radical international Islamist movements worsened the conflict and turned it towards terrorism. This policy which Pakistan was beginning to develop boosted fanatical Muslim movements in the region and neighbouring countries such as Afghanistan; however, this policy was not approved of by the United States or the international community, which led to the progressive political isolation of Pakistan. India therefore played its trump card of accusing Pakistan of promoting terrorism. The conflict took another turn for the worse at the end of the 1990s when both countries carried out nuclear tests in the frontier desert region of Thar.

Shortly after this, Pervez Musharraf, the commander of the Pakistani armed forces, ordered a military offensive around the Kargil region, supported by radical Islamist groups financed by Pakistan, which crossed the line of control and occupied strategically important areas. India limited itself to repulsing the invaders from its side of the line without bombarding other Pakistani positions, thus winning widespread international recognition. This episode is known as the «*Kargil War*» (1999).

With the objective of reducing tension, the then Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Pakistan and, together with the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, signed the *Lahore Declaration*, in which they undertook to develop an area of security and confidence and to develop cooperation policies between the two countries.

- *Kashmir's Place in the World post-9/11*

The December 2001 attack on the seat of India's parliament served to aggravate the conflict and provoke the deployment of around one million troops on both sides of the frontier. India accused the armed Kashmiri opposition groups Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed of being behind the attacks. The attacks in New York on 11th September 2001 resulted in closer ties between the United States and Pakistan, as the latter became an ally in the global «War on Terror»: this forced the Pakistani government to distance itself from the Kashmiri insurgent groups, and to redeploy its troops to the frontier areas with Afghanistan.

Under international pressure, in January 2004, Pakistan's President, Pervez Musharraf, declared at a meeting with the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee that he would not «permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support any terrorist movement, under any circumstances». Since then,

tensions in Kashmir have reduced, although the latent conflict remains and the tensions between the two powers have not disappeared.

In 2006, the Indian Prime Minister and the President of Pakistan agreed to start a peace process between the two countries at the 14th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Cuba.

■ THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CONFLICT

Two years later, in November 2008⁽⁶⁾, a number of bombs planted in luxury hotels in the city of Mumbai by a terrorist group from Pakistan killed 166 people. This attack once again highlighted the seriousness of the conflict and the urgent need for a peaceful solution; however, negotiations in the peace process between India and Pakistan remained on hold after India accused its neighbour of being behind the 10 Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) extremists who had entered India on board a fishing boat from the Arabian Sea with, it would seem, help from the interior of the country.

In May 2010, Pakistan transferred 100,000 soldiers who had been posted on the frontier with India to the frontier with Afghanistan. At present, tension on the frontier is much lower than in the past, and the government of Pakistan is focusing its attention on fighting Taliban forces.

In 2010, violence in Jammu and Kashmir remained at levels similar to those in 2009, halting the downward trend recorded over the last decade. According to figures from the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 364 people were killed in 2010, a figure similar to that of 2009. Tension in the area became more apparent from June, when the death of a Kashmiri student at the hands of the police in Srinagar led to a series of mass protests against the Indian authorities, which in turn developed into a series of conflicts with the security forces. These protests, which are considered to be the most serious since the outbreak of the revolt in 1989, continued, despite the restrictions and regular curfews. The leader of the coalition of independent Kashmiri parties, All Parties Hurriyat Conference-Mirwaiz (APHC-M), Mirwaiz⁽⁷⁾ Umar Farooq, denied that the armed group Lashkar-e-Taiba was behind the protests, and insisted that they were demonstrations by the population of Kashmir.

Against this background, at the end of September the Indian government released an eight-point plan for establishing a dialogue; however, the proposal

⁽⁶⁾ The last elections in Indian-administered Kashmir were held from 17th November to 24th December. Despite separatists calling for a boycott, the turnout was 50%. The National Conference party (which is considered to be pro-India) won a majority and formed a coalition government with the National Congress party.

⁽⁷⁾ The Mirwaiz (from the Urdu words Mir-head and Waiz-priest) has an important religious and political role in the Kashmir Valley.

(which included the release of jailed demonstrators, a reduction in security force deployments in the area and the appointment of a consultation group) was received suspiciously by the Kashmiri opposition as it did not include certain of its key demands. In mid-October, the Indian government appointed a team of three people with a mission to establish peace talks with separatist leaders in the region. This group announced its intention to establish a framework for a permanent solution to the conflict in a period of six to nine months.

However, the separatist leader of the APHC, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, warned that he would not take part in any peace process unless five preconditions were met: that it be recognised that Kashmir is a disputed territory; that Indian security forces withdraw under international supervision; that the severe laws imposed by the government be repealed, including those granting special powers to the armed forces; that all political prisoners be released; and that soldiers accused of firing on demonstrators in the recent protests should be put on trial. During the year, Pakistan called on the USA several times to put pressure on India to resolve the Kashmir dispute. In November it was revealed that secret conversations had been taking place between New Delhi and Islamabad following Barack Obama's visit to the region.

However, two weeks before the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan were due to meet in 2011, India was once again subjected to a series of attacks. A triple bomb attack on Mumbai on 13th July killed 24 people and injured 141 others. According to India's Home Office, *the attacks could have been carried out to derail the conversations between India and Pakistan*. At the end of June, representatives of the two countries had met to discuss the «normalisation of relations» and to prepare for a meeting of Foreign Ministers at the end of July⁽⁸⁾. This was to be the first bilateral meeting since the Mumbai attacks in 2008.

Intelligence sources told The Hindu newspaper that at first sight the explosives used could have been made by Indian Mujahedeen with support from the Pakistani terrorist organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)⁽⁹⁾. The sources also stated that the attacks were of the same type as those in Mumbai in 2008. This attack also took place at a critical moment in relations between the USA and Pakistan, as the USA sought to accelerate the withdrawal of its military forces

⁽⁸⁾ See «Máxima alerta en India tras los atentados» («Maximum alert in India following the attacks»), El País, 14th July 2011

⁽⁹⁾ Lashkar-e-Taiba, the army of the pure. LeT was founded in 1990 in Afghanistan by Hafz Mohd Saeed. It is one of the most active terrorist organisations in Southern Asia. It is currently based in the part of Kashmir administered by Pakistan. The objective of its violent struggle is to end the Indian annexation of Jammu and Kashmir and to spread Islam to the whole of the subcontinent. It is considered to be a terrorist organisation by India and the United States, and was outlawed by Pakistan in 2002 after being considered responsible for an assault on the Indian parliament.

from Afghanistan. The 2008 attacks revealed the extent to which Pakistani Islamist groups such as LeT collaborate with jihadist groups such as Al Qaeda, seeking to provoke a crisis between Islamabad and New Delhi. Such a crisis would complicate US-Pakistan agreements on Afghanistan, and would potentially serve the interests of Al Qaeda and factions within Pakistan by ensuring the negotiations between the USA and Pakistan fail.

Prior to the meeting of Foreign Ministers, the Pakistani Foreign Minister met Kashmiri leaders. There was a further meeting of the two Foreign Ministers in New Delhi on 27th July 2011, preceded the day before by a further meeting of the Working Group of Secretaries of State. Amongst other issues, this meeting addressed the fight against terrorism and the Kashmir conflict. On the latter point, they agreed to continue conversations continuously in order to reach a peaceful solution which reduces differences and promotes convergence. On trade and transport across the LoC, the ministers decided upon some small but significant concessions to decrease tension on the Kashmir frontier⁽¹⁰⁾. These measures⁽¹¹⁾ will increase and facilitate existing trade and transport links. It was further agreed that the Joint Working Group would meet twice per year to review current agreements and to suggest additional measures.

According to the Indian Foreign Minister, India wants to: *«work with Pakistan to reduce the trust deficit and move forward in a friendly manner... in an environment free from terrorism and violence.»*

■ THE ROLE OF FOREIGN ACTORS

The armed conflict in Kashmir involves a large number of actors, each with their own position and agenda. We will now examine the main players involved in the conflict, examining their points of view and opinion of the confrontations.

■ The Government of Pakistan

The Pakistani government is of the opinion that the historic independence enjoyed by the States of Jammu and Kashmir prior to their annexation by India is the key to understanding their current aspiration for political freedom. Further-

⁽¹⁰⁾ Refer to www.nytimes.com/2011/07/28/world/asia/28india.html?pagewanted=print, as consulted on 2nd August 2011. The measures include: doubling the number of days per week for commerce across the frontier to four; allowing visits for tourism and religious pilgrimages; and reducing the time taken to issue travel permits from 3 or 4 months to 45 days. The next progress meeting will be in the first half of 2012.

⁽¹¹⁾ Refer to www.mofa.gov.pk/mfa/pages/print.aspx?id=778&type=1, consulted on 4th August 2011.

more, it believes that a unilateral annexation decision cannot be legitimised, and argues that the region is a disputed territory the political and administrative future of which should be determined by the people who live there. Pakistan does not accept that the Jammu and Kashmir region and the Siachen Glacier area are part of India, and calls them «Occupied Kashmir»⁽¹²⁾.

Pakistan is believed to have created or supported guerrilla groups which are fighting for the independence of Kashmir or its incorporation into Pakistan. The government of Pakistan has stated that the disturbances are the natural manifestation of the dissatisfaction of the people of Kashmir, and of their desire to be part of Pakistan. However, the government of Pakistan has also shown support for the Kashmir region obtaining independence. The President has stated that there are three options for resolving the conflict: independence, demilitarisation of the territory under the supervision of the United Nations or a referendum for self-determination by the people of Kashmir. It would however be unacceptable for Pakistan for the LoC to be determined as being a permanent frontier.

Despite Pakistan believing that the situation in the «occupied territories» has been worsened by India's military presence and the abuses committed by the Indian authorities against the people of Kashmir, there has been considerable progress by both parties, such as the restarting of bus services between the two capitals. Nevertheless, Pakistan continues to believe that a large part of the responsibility for the current conflict belongs to India as a result of it not being prepared to accept international mediation or multilateral participation to resolve the tensions.

■ The Government of India

Despite the international community recognising the status of Kashmir as a «disputed territory», according to the Indian government this was legitimately defined under the Instrument of Adhesion in 1947, and in its official publications it considers Kashmir to be a district within its territory. It would regard a referendum for self-determination by the people of Kashmir as being unacceptable. However, the Indian government does not deny the violence and officially recognises that the separatist struggle has resulted in around 42,000 deaths over the last 20 years.

The government of India claims the whole region, including the areas currently under Pakistani control, which it calls «Kashmir occupied by Pakistan», and

⁽¹²⁾ Global Affairs, «Pakistan: la frontera y las armas nucleares» («Pakistan: the frontier and nuclear weapons»), Francisco Zicari, Number 15/June-July 2009, <http://www.globalaffairs.es/es/pakistan-la-frontera-y-las-armas-nucleares/>, consulted on 27th July 2011.

those under Chinese control; it prohibits all publications which describe Kashmir as a «disputed territory» rather than as an integral part of India⁽¹³⁾.

One of the noteworthy elements when analysing the policy of the Indian government towards the Kashmir region is its ambivalence. On the one hand, Delhi has applied an extremely harsh militaristic approach, supported by large-scale military operations. This policy has given rise to many accusations of serious human rights violations as a result of the anti-terrorist laws it has introduced, in particular the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, AFSPA⁽¹⁴⁾. Nevertheless, there has been a proliferation at the same time of ceasefire agreements with insurgent groups which have led to peace talks, both formal and informal. The hard-line approach is based on the risk that the region will develop into a support base for terrorist groups and the risks of uncontrolled proliferation of weapons, with this argument being based on the events of 11th September.

■ The Kashmiri People

Over recent decades, the Kashmiri population has developed into a new player in the armed conflict in the region. The majority support the separatist movement, which considers the conflict to be an internal matter. As a result, since 1989 the conflict has moved to the interior of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, where a multitude of insurgent groups which are in favour of full independence or unconditional membership of Pakistan are confronting Indian security forces⁽¹⁵⁾.

The current of opinion favourable to integration into Pakistan has ever more supporters, as an increasing number of armed jihadist groups are emerging from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Sudan. Many of the people of Kashmir think that leaving India in order to become part of Pakistan would mean changing from one form of oppression to another; for this reason, they are increasingly coming out in favour of independence. Increasing numbers of people consider that they have suffered the effects of violence which is still continuing, and that the abundance of natural resources in the region (such as oil, wood and tea) is benefiting everyone in the country except the population of Kashmir.

■ Armed Groups

There over 120 guerrilla groups operating in Kashmir. They can be divided into two main groups: those which favour independence and unification of the areas

⁽¹³⁾ For example, this has resulted in it prohibiting the import of copies of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Refer to http://www.mha.nic.in/pdfs/armed_forces_special_powers_act1958.pdf

⁽¹⁵⁾ Alerta 2011! Informe sobre conflictos, derechos humanos y construcción de paz, Escuela de Cultura de Pau. («Alert 2011! Report on conflicts, human rights and peace building», School of Peace Culture)

which are currently in the power of India and Pakistan; and those which want the part of Kashmir controlled by India to merge with Pakistan.

The first of these is represented by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), which was created in the UK in 1977 by veterans of the movement. This organisation was established in Azad Kashmir in 1982 and in Jammu and Kashmir in 1987. It is fighting for the independence of Jammu and Kashmir outside the administrations of India and Pakistan, and supports the self-determination of all the inhabitants of the region. Furthermore, it states that the basis on which it would found the new state would be the fundamental freedoms of democracy, social justice, the welfare state, respect for human rights and no discrimination based on «beliefs, caste, sex or culture». In 1995, the JKLF divided into two branches: one which renounced violence, led by the leader of the Jammu and Kashmir faction, and that which continued to support violence, based in Azad Kashmir.

The second group, in other words the Islamic wing, consists of dozens of small groups, which include Hizb-ul-Mujahedeen (the Party of the Mujahedeen), Al-Badr (Lightning), Allah-Tigers, Dukhtaran-e-Milat (Sons of Islam), Jammatul-Mujahedeen (the Community of the Mujahedeen), Harakat-ul-Ansar (the Movement of the Ansar), Harakat-ul-Mujahedeen (HuM, Movement of the Mujahedeen), Jaish-e-Mohammad (which claimed responsibility for the suicide attack on the Kashmir parliament, which killed 25 people) and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Other groups, such as Harakatul-Ansar, have been accused of committing indiscriminate killings of Hindu civilians.

■ The United Nations

In January 1948, the General Council approved resolution 39⁽¹⁶⁾ establishing the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) to investigate and mediate in the dispute. In April 1948, Council resolution 47⁽¹⁷⁾ decided to expand the number of members of UNCIP and recommended a number of measures, including the use of observers to halt the confrontations. In July 1949, India and Pakistan signed the Karachi Agreement, which established a ceasefire line to be monitored by observers. In March 1951, following the dissolution of the UNCIP, the Security Council decided that the «United Nations Military Observers Group for India and Pakistan» (UNMOGIP)⁽¹⁸⁾ should continue to monitor the ceasefire in Kashmir (see Figure 8.3). Its roles include observing, reporting on and studying complaints about breaches of the ceasefire, and presenting its conclusions to each of the parties and to the Secretary

⁽¹⁶⁾ Refer to UN resolutions 38 of 17th January and 39 of 20th January 1948 at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/048/51/IMG/NR004851.pdf?OpenElement>

⁽¹⁷⁾ Refer to resolution 47 of 21st April 1948 at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/048/59/IMG/NR004859.pdf?OpenElement> and resolution 51 of 3rd June at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/048/63/IMG/NR004863.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁽¹⁸⁾ See: <http://www.un.org/spanish/Depts/dpko/unmogip/>

General. However, as a result of disagreement between the two parties about the mandate and functions of UNMOGIP, the UN Secretary General established that UNMOGIP could only be dissolved by a decision of the Security Council.

The official position of the United Nations supports the holding of a referendum, so that the population of Kashmir can decide on its future status; this has been demonstrated by its resolutions which support the desire for self-determination in Kashmir. However, the UN has recently recognised that the conditions required for a referendum established in previous resolutions have not yet been met, and it has recommended that the zone should first be demilitarised through a withdrawal of troops by both sides.

Figure 8.3. Deployment of United Nations in March 2011



Map No. 3829 Rev. 15 UNITED NATIONS
March 2011 Colour

Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section

■ The Perspective of the European Union and Spain

In 2004 the EU launched a strategic association with India. At the last EU-India summit, which was held in 2010, a year after signature of the Lisbon Treaty, it was agreed, among other things, that a new chapter of political cooperation in defence and security would be opened, focusing in particular on the fight against international terrorism, which has affected London, Madrid and Mumbai (this cooperation was reflected in a joint declaration). The commercial aspect of this should not be forgotten: the EU is the largest destination for India's exports, whilst India is the ninth largest market for European exports. Total trade in goods had a value of EUR 52,000 million in 2009.

A safe, stable and prosperous Pakistan is also in the interests of the EU. At the meeting of its Foreign Affairs Council in July, the EU reaffirmed its commitment to building a strong and durable association with Pakistan, supporting its government and democratic institutions, together with civil society. This covered aspects such as cooperation, the provision of humanitarian aid and development. As this relationship matures, cooperation will be sought in areas such as security and human rights, protection of minorities, freedom of worship and expression, together with structural, economic and fiscal reforms.

In the particular case of Spain, it has relationships with the three countries, but advises against travelling to the zones of Kashmir and Pakistan as a result of the risk of terrorist attacks. Spain is open to Asia, and particularly to India and China as emerging powers, while sharing the European position on Kashmir.

■ CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

The conflict between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir region is deep rooted and complex, involving religious and political (in terms of the strategic geographic position of the territory) issues, as well as those regarding the right of the people to free self-determination. In 1989, the dispute, which at the outset was international in nature, moved to the interior of the region with the flourishing of Islamic insurgent movements calling for the independence of Kashmir. These movements are still active, although the intensity of their activities has varied over the years.

The current global situation, with Pakistan being pressured by the USA and the international community to step up the fight against Taliban forces within its borders, has resulted in it changing the deployment of some of its troops from the frontier with Indian-administered Kashmir to the frontier with Afghanistan. However, the violence of the conflict has not decreased, although a negotiated peace process has been restarted. For its part, India remains adamant about the

impossibility of independence for Kashmir, and does not accept the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. At present, some progress has been achieved in bringing the two powers closer together, such as the increase of trade and the flow of persons over the Line of Control, and boosting the diplomatic route for resolving the conflict, despite the recent attacks which aimed to disrupt the negotiations which are considered to be a top priority by both countries.

In this regard, India and Pakistan have to extend their bilateral relations to areas of cooperation such as water, expanding trade, and joint participation in a stable Afghanistan. At the next conference in December in Bonn, the USA and its allies hope to pursue a regional strategy including peace in Afghanistan; to this end both India and Pakistan need to be actively involved in resolving their differences.

■ CHRONOLOGY

Table 8.3. Timeline of the Conflict

DATE	EVENT
1935	Government of India Act passed.
1937	Autonomy for all provinces of British India.
1947	Partition into India and Pakistan. In October Pakistan invades Western and Northern Kashmir.
1947-48	First war between India and Pakistan
1949	Intervention of the United Nations and signing of a ceasefire.
1950	Secular constitution for India.
1956	Islamic constitution for Pakistan.
1957	The government of Jammu and Kashmir, approves the Constitution of 1957 ratifying the state's accession to the Union of India.
1962	India loses part of the sparsely inhabited border territory of Aksai Chin following a brief war with China.
1963	Ayub Khan, president of Pakistan, gave to China more than 5,000 sq. km of Kashmiri territory to Peking.
1965	Second war between India and Pakistan
1966	Declaration of Tashkent.
1971	Third armed Indo-Pakistani conflict.
1972	Signing of the <u>Simla Agreement</u> seeking to normalise bilateral relations.
1974	India makes its first nuclear bomb.
1977	Establishment of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), which fights for independence for the Indian territory of Kashmir.
1984	The Indian army annexes the Siachen Glacier region.
1990	Establishment of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a terrorist organisation aiming at independence and Islamisation of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.
1998	Pakistan carries out tests of nuclear-capable missiles, to which India responds with a number of underground nuclear tests.
1999	Kargil War, started by radical Islamist groups financed by Pakistan. General Pervez Musharraf carries out a coup d'état in Pakistan
2001	Musharraf proclaims himself president of Pakistan.
2002	Musharraf calls and wins the first general elections since the coup d'état.

2003	Pakistan declares a ceasefire in Kashmir. India seconds the declaration.
2004	Manmohan Singh (Congress Party) elected prime minister of India.
2007	India and Pakistan agree to create a joint mechanism for bringing an end to terrorism.
2010	Pakistan transfers 100,000 soldiers from the border with India to the border with Afghanistan.
2011	India and Pakistan resume talks on the Siachen Glacier.
2011	Terrorists again wreak havoc in Mumbai with three coordinated explosions leaving some twenty people dead and over a hundred wounded.

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Chapter IX

COLOMBIA: DISSUASIVE ALLIANCES FOR A NEW STRATEGY AGAINST THE GUERRILLAS

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SUMMARY

Against a more favourable international backdrop, Colombia (see Table 9.1) is fighting to return to normal everyday life, free from the fear of violence which paralyses and destroys even the most basic social relationships.

In order to focus on the fight against the armed groups it is combating, the government has implemented a system of alliances to avoid the possibility of new diplomatic crises arising, and is trying to neutralise the international support which the guerrillas still have. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC after its Spanish acronym) have been weakened by pressure from the army, but have adapted to the new situation by resorting to purely terrorist tactics, trying to undermine military morale by causing physical and material damage.

Over the coming months, the government will need to take on the new guerrilla tactics, which are obtaining partial success, and assess the opportunities for starting a peace process, as demanded by Colombian society.

Key words

Colombia, guerrilla, paramilitaries, drug trafficking, armed conflict

■ INTRODUCTION

South America is bounded by the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans, which surround the subcontinent from Cape Horn to the Panama Canal.

Each ocean represents a foreign policy trend in the region. Orientated towards the West, the former is influenced by the United States and the European Union. This is characterised by economic openness and alignment with the security agenda of the western powers. In South America, Chile and Colombia have been the traditional defenders of this strategic alliance.

The latter, on the other hand, is more hostile to the Atlanticist outlook, and looks for alternatives in anything which provides a counterweight to western leadership, which is being ever more questioned. This approach is represented by Venezuela, and also by Ecuador and Bolivia.

Meanwhile, Brazil marks the transition of South America towards a multipolar order that we are now beginning to discern. In accordance with its scale and position, it is trying to retain a balance between its role of regional hegemony, the various sensibilities which exist in South America and the presence of new external players, attracted by the economic and geo-strategic potential of South America.

Table 9.1. Indicators for Colombia

GDP per capita	9.500\$
Inflation 2010	2,3%
Growth rate (2010)	4,3%
Unemployment rate	11,7%
Gini coefficient	58.5
Balance of trade (US\$)	9.032.184.280
Life expectancy	73,4
Population under 15 years of age	32%
Infant mortality rate	16,39
Human development index	0,689
Corruption Perceptions Index	3,8
Defence spending	4,1%
Unemployment rate	12%
Population below the poverty line	37.2%
Urban population rate	75%
Population growth rate	1,156%
Literacy rate	92,7%
Doctors per 1,000 inhabitants	1,5

South America requires foreign capital so that its level of hydrocarbon output can match the scale of its reserves. From the other side of the Pacific, China is expanding towards the East and the West, a process which moves in parallel with the juggernaut growth of its economy, leading those external actors who are investing in South America, and also seeking a privileged position in this new geo-strategic space. The proximity of the subcontinent to the United States is another of the region's assets for attracting emerging powers.

Unlike the pragmatic position of Beijing, Russia and Iran are pursuing alliances based on political criteria and aiming to create new blocs which reinforce their position in the new global scenario. The agreements they have reached with Venezuela (their main ally in the region) focus on energy and military issues.

On the other hand, South America is a good example of the new global threats to security. The drug trafficking and organised crime networks which have become established in the region represent a serious challenge to these states. The most effective method for combating these is to expand areas of joint cooperation, and to establish joint action mechanisms to neutralise the power that these mafias have acquired. The efforts of governments, as channelled through UN-ASUR and other cooperation mechanisms, are focusing on policing, military and legal cooperation, border control and zero tolerance of political corruption.

In this context, few conflicts can have been so prolonged and devastating for a society and its institutions. Several generations of Colombians do not know what it means to live in peace, particularly in jungle areas, which are the worst affected by the conflict, and which cover half of Colombia's territory.

It will soon be five decades since various groups of armed peasants united to form the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), the guerrilla group which was threatening to encircle Bogota and take power in the mid-1990s.

Despite the loss of life and the social and economic dislocation caused by the violence, and the resources wasted on the long-running internal war, many Colombians are clinging to the hope that the last stage of the route to peace is now in sight.

However, there are many risks which threaten to undermine the progress made and return the country to its darkest days.

In its favour, Colombia has a vibrant economy, with a growth rate which reflects dynamism in its expanding productive sector. The climate of insecurity in the country has not stopped it obtaining a good rating in the World Bank's Doing Business index⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Which measures the difficulties faced by entrepreneurs when trying to start their businesses

On the political front, there has been a period of relative stability. For the moment, it seems that dissension within the governing coalition will not stop the re-election of Santos in 2014.

However, there are symptoms of political and social polarisation which could put the current government's security policy at risk, if they worsen. There are also more worrying symptoms which suggest there might be further difficulties for law and order forces. The perception of insecurity is increasing, and the unease among soldiers is boosting the will to fight among violent elements.

■ In the Footsteps of the FARC

The most notable progress of the last decade in terms of security has been the demobilisation of the paramilitaries and loss of troops from the ranks of the guerrillas. As a result, the number of kidnappings every year has decreased by nearly 90%.

In its relations with its neighbours, Colombia has overcome the isolation of recent years and is projecting an image of a country with a decisive role in the formulation of South America's geopolitics.

However, in the debit column, guerrilla violence is returning and the embers of the paramilitaries are reigniting. These organisations have rethought the tactics of their attacks, and this has increased the feeling of being threatened among the Colombian public.

■ BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

■ From the March of Silence to the FARC Terror

«Lord, put a stop to the violence. We want human life to be defended, which is the least a people can ask for. Instead of this blindly unleashed force, we should take advantage of the people's capacity to work in order to benefit Colombia's progress».

Jorge Eliécer Gaitán

In 1948, Jorge Eliecer Gaitán was the frontrunner in the presidential race to succeed the conservative Mariano Ospina Pérez in the Nariño presidential palace⁽²⁾. Gaitán was a renowned lawyer who had trained in Rome and who attracted the support of large sections of the population. He had quickly won the leadership of the Liberal Party, overcoming the resistance of the pro-government sector.

⁽²⁾ The official residence of the President of the Republic.

With his irresistible charisma and energetic public speaking, his pronouncements fulfilled the aspirations of millions of Colombians, who wanted to protest against the corruption reigning among the elites of the two-party system at the ballot box. When Gaitán reached his peak, political violence had spread throughout the whole of the country. Thousands of people died for being liberals when the conservatives were in power, and vice versa⁽³⁾. The country was mired in insecurity.

In April 1948, the capital hosted the 9th International Conference of American States. With the signing of its founding charter, the conference was the origin of the Organisation of American States⁽⁴⁾. On 9th April, whilst official delegations were negotiating formulas for integration, Gaitán was gunned down in the street. Accounts from the time describe the furious reaction of passers-by who, within a few minutes, had killed the assassin and started a revolution⁽⁵⁾. These violent confrontations only intensified when the police and soldiers distributed rifles among the people in the uprising. This was the start of a new stage in the civil war, which lasted until 1953⁽⁶⁾.

In reality, there had been an intensification of «party violence», which had begun at the end of the 19th century. However, many Colombians regard the events of 1948 as the starting point for the armed conflict started by the FARC half a century ago.

The guerrillas added an ideological factor to the conflict which gave new meaning to the traditional power struggles. This set events off on a slippery slope which soon led a generalised state of terror. Favoured by structural gaps in social and political institutions, violence became, at one time, its own cause and effect.

Those who took up arms against government forces, have not been able to recognise that their refusal to put down their weapons is the factor which is most harming progress and social justice. Meanwhile, those whom the public had entrusted to sustain state legitimacy have not been able to stop violence from sometimes becoming mixed up with the management of public issues.

The FARC aimed to repeat Fidel Castro's successes in the Sierra Maestra in Colombia, taking power by force in order to impose their economic model. The ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional - National Liberation Army), the M-19 and other smaller guerrilla groups (almost all of which are inactive) took up arms in pursuit of this social revolution⁽⁷⁾. And then more rifles were added,

⁽³⁾ Due to the unfair distribution of land, according to the guerrillas.

⁽⁴⁾ http://www.oas.org/es/acerca/nuestra_historia.asp

⁽⁵⁾ Today, the disturbances which followed Gaitán's assassination are known as the «Bogotazo».

⁽⁶⁾ For this reason, Gaitán's assassination is regarded as being the direct cause of the conflict.

⁽⁷⁾ The ELN (or «Elenos» as they were called) dared to dispute the monopoly in left-wing subversion with the FARC.

this time at the service of local bosses, who had reinvented themselves as drug traffickers. These were the fearsome paramilitaries. Meanwhile, the civilian population fled from this absurd crossfire of everyone against everyone.

■ Violence as a Way of Life

The power accumulated by violent elements could only be maintained by collecting funds to finance weapons and occupying territory, particularly in the institutionally weakest areas, where it was less likely that the authorities would take action. This resulted in the government's presence being dissipated, and with it the social institutions which enable peaceful everyday life.

The illegitimate occupation of power in these areas established the weakness of Colombia's institutional structure until the country was bordering on becoming a failed state. Control of agricultural and farming activities by armed groups guaranteed that they had food and a constant source of income. In addition to forced payments (the feared «vacunas» or vaccines, as they were known) with which they penalised trade and transport of goods, they also demanded compensation from their victims, in exchange for scanty protection. As a result, millions of people lived in terror, and many others were forced to abandon their homes and land.

More than any other issue, the displaced population demonstrates the drama of the conflict in Colombia. According to various Colombian and international organisations involved in protecting the rights of these displaced persons, there are over four million of them; the government recognises the figure as being three and a half million up to 2010, somewhere between six and ten percent of the total population⁽⁸⁾. These refugees are only outnumbered by those of the bloody civil war in Sudan⁽⁹⁾. Among these displaced persons, those who are not registered in the official records suffer the greatest hardships.

The land these people abandoned was occupied and used to grow coca leaves or other illegal crops. One of the most serious cases of this is the cultivation of African Palm trees by paramilitaries in the Chocó region⁽¹⁰⁾.

⁽⁸⁾ Refer to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, «Mejora la respuesta gubernamental, aunque es insuficiente para atender a las necesidades de la creciente población desplazada» [An improvement in the government response, but this is still insufficient to meet the growing needs of the displaced population], December 2010, which includes links to reports on the situation of the displaced persons. Available at: [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpEnvelopes\)/C0180ED58E890E57C12577F4005D592C?OpenDocument&count=10000](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpEnvelopes)/C0180ED58E890E57C12577F4005D592C?OpenDocument&count=10000)

⁽⁹⁾ Refer to the IDMC report.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Refer to «La palma africana en Colombia: del ensueño a la pesadilla» (The African Palm tree in Colombia: From a Dream to a Nightmare), Swiss Info agency, 21st July 2005. Available at: http://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/Portada/Archivo/Palma_africana:_del_ensueno_a_la_pesadilla.html?cid=4628646

In late 2010, the government launched its first land restitution plans, which was one of the priorities established by Santos when he won the elections. In summer 2011, the Restitution was approved, under which it is hoped to return four million hectares to their original owners, together with compensation. This measure was called for by many sectors of political and social life, and has been welcomed by the United Nations. However, its implementation in full depends on the security conditions in the areas where land is to be returned to its owners. In many parts of the country where the action of the army is more limited, it will not be easy to move forward from formal recognition of rights to actual application of the law, and the land owners will continue to be threatened by violent elements.

■ THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CONFLICT

The last decade has been very favourable for the government from the military point of view, with unprecedented social support for the policies which Uribe implemented against the guerrillas following the failure of the peace talks which Pastrana had held in San Vicente del Caguán.

As soon as he took office, Álvaro Uribe wanted to seize the initiative. He designed a strategic rethink based on Security and Democracy. This required the armed groups to be weakened and the zones that had been overrun to be brought back under legitimate state control. As a result, military action was intensified, increasing pressure on enemy positions, with the main innovation being the active participation of the air force.

The army carried out operations which were international in scope, such as the release of Ingrid Betancourt in 2008 (Operation Jaque) and the bombardment which killed the guerrilla leader Raúl Reyes (Operation Fénix). These successes by the intelligence services were a major blow to the morale of the guerrillas, who thought they had been infiltrated en masse by government agents⁽¹⁾.

At the same time, a stage of institutional restoration and strengthening was initiated, focusing on re-establishing state control over the whole of the country, thus further boosting democracy. This included the demobilisation of the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC - United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia), the main paramilitary organisation. The indiscriminate killing of civilians, and the need to break any possible connection between the State and these groups, obliged the government to act to disband the AUC.

⁽¹⁾ See Douglas Porch and Jorge Delgado, «Masters of today: military intelligence and counterinsurgency in Colombia, 1990-2009», *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 21-2, 2010. Pages 277-302. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2010.481421>

On the international front the Security and Democracy policy was strongly backed by the United States, through its controversial Colombia Plan, which was designed to eradicate coca cultivation and to reduce international drug trafficking. Uribe aligned himself fully with Washington's foreign policy in exchange for greater US support in national security affairs.

This support from Washington and policy differences distanced Colombia from neighbouring governments, culminating in diplomatic relations being broken off with Venezuela and Ecuador. Tension increased to such an extent that there was a danger of armed conflict with these countries. Colombia's increasing international isolation did not decrease society's consensus about Uribe's security policy, and his approval ratings were over 80% at the end of his mandate.

However in terms of internal stability and regional security, the halting in the courts of Uribe's re-election bid has been beneficial. The country's situation requires democratic institutions to preserve their independence and remain above personal ambitions. It seems that the forced re-election of Uribe would have weakened Colombia's democracy at a time at which it needed to be seen to be as robust as possible to its internal enemies⁽¹²⁾. Furthermore, it would have added a serious risk of social fragmentation, which the guerrillas would have taken advantage of.

The identification of Juan Manuel Santos with Uribe's security strategy (he was the Minister of Defence until 2010) boosted his candidacy, enabling him to win the presidency in the 2010 elections. In fact, Santos received the highest number of votes (over nine million) in the country's electoral history. However, internal security is the issue where Santos is encountering most resistance to his leadership. This is particularly because insecurity and fear are feelings which statistics supporting the government's actions can do little to assuage⁽¹³⁾.

Some regard the change in the trend in security policy, with armed groups starting to recover, as dating back to 2008⁽¹⁴⁾. The reason for this new feeling of insecurity in Colombia stems from a change of strategy and tactics by the guerrillas. In order to avoid pressure from the army, they now avoid large-scale attacks which involve the mobilisation of large troop numbers. The army's evident advantage in such operations has led the FARC to reconfigure its units, with an enhanced role for what are known as the «explosivistas», small groups which detonate car bombs and plant explosives on railway and oil infrastructure. The FARC's actions represent a turning point from a defensive strategy to the start of an offensive⁽¹⁵⁾. For the moment, the FARC have managed to regain the initiative to some extent as a result of the impact of their latest attacks.

⁽¹²⁾ Independently of the popular support shown in the polls

⁽¹³⁾ In August, Rodrigo Rivera was replaced as Defence Minister after less than a year in the post

⁽¹⁴⁾ Refer to «La seguridad en entredicho» («Security in Doubt»)

⁽¹⁵⁾ Russell Crandall, «Requiem for the FARC?» *Survival*, 53:4, 2011. Pages 233-240. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2011.603574>

The FARC's ten thousand active guerrillas keep the organisation active in twenty-four of the country's thirty-two regions. Despite having lost half of its manpower in a decade, it has found a way of making its attacks more effective, thus regaining a strategic advantage over the Colombian state.

Meanwhile, the ELN has also been revived and with some two thousand members is now trying to join the offensive launched by FARC in the areas where it is strongest. These two guerrilla groups have maintained their operational capacity as a result of revenue from drug trafficking.

This reawakening of the guerrillas has also revived the remains of the paramilitaries. Human rights organisations have warned that some of the demobilised «paracos» are regrouping. It has been estimated that there are some nine thousand men in the various groups, which are very active on the Atlantic coast and in the southern regions. The government is trying to adapt its military strategy to deal with this situation. The plan published in May soon prove to be out of date, if the forces of law and order are not able to halt the increase in terrorism.

Juan Carlos Pinzón, the new Defence Minister, who is very close to the president, is preparing a reshuffle of the military high command. The aim is to improve coordination between leaders, avoiding dysfunctions and internal disputes.

It is likely that they will launch major operations against rebel leaders in order to raise the morale of soldiers, whilst at the same time maintaining pressure on guerrilla positions. However, the forty thousand members of the standing army do not appear sufficient to simultaneously increase the intensity of the offensive whilst also maintaining security in rural areas.

Santos is well aware of the short-term difficulties that face him. On the one hand, there is the need to make the guerrillas feel weakened and to consolidate state control in the areas recovered by the army. On the other, there must be an acceptable level of public security in order to effectively apply the restitution programmes for victims. Any failure in the government's social initiatives would create new social tensions which would only add to the conflict. Against such a background, it would not be possible to continue the essential process of strengthening the country's institutions.

With things as they are, it would seem increasingly unlikely that the peace process mooted over recent months will actually begin.

■ Dissuasive Alliances and Strategic Patience

Santos' major contribution to date has been the change of direction in foreign policy, with a clearly defined priority: to bring to an end the country's regional geopolitical isolation, returning Colombia to its position in integration and

joint decision-making processes. The ex-Chancellor María Emma Mejía was appointed Secretary General of UNASUR, despite competition from the candidacy of Lula da Silva. Colombia held the presidency of the Security Council in April, at the peak of the Arab spring.

In the UNASUR security and defence space, mechanisms are being created to prevent and resolve conflicts between member states, in order to avoid a repeat of the 2008 diplomatic crisis. In addition, Colombia is one of the main driving forces behind the Eje del Pacífico (Pacific Alliance), a cooperation forum which is opening up significant political and economic possibilities for the countries which share the eastern shore of this ocean basin.

■ THE ROLE OF FOREIGN ACTORS

■ «My New Best Friend»

Following the increase in tension during Uribe's second term - with threats exchanged between the Nariño presidential palace and the Palacio de Miraflores - Santos has adopted an approach based more on dialogue, with a considerable dose of what he has called «strategic patience» towards the Chávez regime. However, this has sometimes led him to being overly effusive to an extent which is hardly credible, saying outlandish things such as «my new and best friend». At a press conference during his visit to Argentina, he went so far as to state that Venezuela's leader had become a force for political stability in the continent. The refusal to allow joint use of military bases with the US army, in accordance with the treaty signed with Washington, was a defining moment in re-establishing bilateral relations along the two banks of the Maracaibo. Chávez praised the decision and, as a sign of goodwill, ordered the start of partial payment of the amounts Venezuela owes to Colombian exporters⁽¹⁶⁾.

Another powerful reason for greater understanding is the need for cooperation on energy issues. There is a mutual interest in taking full advantage of oil infrastructure, and this requires unequivocal cooperation. In this regard, developments are encouraging, as the Oleoducto Binacional oil pipeline carrying crude oil to Colombia from Venezuela is operating relatively normally, affected only by terrorist attacks on facilities or against concessionaire companies.

This «strategic patience» which has resulted in the improvement of relations between Bogota and Chávez's government was amply demonstrated when Santos dismissed Admiral Celi, the head of Colombia's army, after he raised the unpunished presence of guerrillas in Venezuela. According to José Neira, the priest responsible for the Cáritas charity on the Táchira frontier, the ac-

⁽¹⁶⁾ Venezuela receives most of its imports from its western neighbour, evidence of the close trade relations that the two countries have always had.

tions of the FARC and the ELN in the region are terrorising the population, with numerous examples of kidnappings and blackmail, whilst guerrillas and drug traffickers continue operating from Venezuelan territory, even making a mockery of the vigilance of the authorities. One of every three kilos of cocaine circulating in Europe passes through this country.

However, Santos appears to be persevering with his strategy, trying to avoid involving Chávez in the fight against the guerrillas. His intention is to focus all efforts on the objective of neutralising violent elements without getting into counterproductive arguments and unnecessary distractions. An increase in tension on the frontier would result in added breathing space for the rebels, which would help them to reinforce their operational capabilities.

However, it would be good news if the guerrillas were obliged to maintain a defensive deployment along the long frontier. This area is largely unpopulated and far removed from the centres of political power and economic activity. It is to be expected that withdrawal to the margins of the country would lessen the impact of attacks.

Despite the advantages of this terrain for the guerrillas, the army appears to be consolidating the positions recovered in some of the areas worst affected by the armed groups, mainly around the Andes region and in the main agricultural and oil-producing states. At this point in the conflict, limiting the guerrillas' scope for action to a perimeter line to the east of the country's mountain range is an achievable medium-term objective. This would improve the protection that security forces can give to important infrastructure, particularly the rail network and oil installations, which the rebels have chosen as some of their main targets.

Depending on how the political situation develops in Venezuela, guerrilla activity may be perceived to be an extra security problem for Caracas, particularly if the groups persist with kidnappings, robbery and blackmail of Venezuelans. Venezuela is currently at the epicentre of the production and distribution of cocaine. The drug is obtained in Colombia and Peru, and the cartels then send it to Europe or North America, often taking advantage of official and police corruption⁽¹⁷⁾.

«Chavism», or whatever follows it, must make a determined stand against rampant public insecurity and organised crime. The figures for violent crime are even worse than those in Colombia and Mexico.

Nevertheless, pressure on the cartels needs to include joint operations with Colombian forces, extraditing the guerrillas arrested⁽¹⁸⁾. Therefore, the ideal

⁽¹⁷⁾ Refer to International Crisis Group, *Violence and Politics in Venezuela*, Latin America Report, 38, 17th August, 2011. Summary and link to the pdf at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/latin-america-caribbean/andes/venezuela/038-violence-and-politics-in-venezuela.aspx>

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situation for Bogota would be for the Venezuelan army to match the Colombian army's efforts to combat political violence and the associated international crime from the rebels' rear.

If Venezuela's authorities decide to cooperate more actively, it would bring the end of violence in Colombia much closer. However, it is not very likely that this will occur in the short term. Bogota will therefore have to accept continuation of the current dialogue phase.

■ **Ecuador: from Operation Fenix to the Security Agreement**

The new cooperation strategy under Santos' foreign policy also stretches to Ecuador. The differences between Álvaro Uribe and Rafael Correa were at their worst during Operation Fenix in the jungle areas stretching through Putumayo and Sucumbíos province in north-east of Ecuador. However, there are signs of an improvement in these relations, and the threat that «Santos might be arrested if he visits Ecuador» has given way in just three months to lengthy and detailed discussions.

In June, Bogota and Quito signed a treaty which aims to increase border security and to pursue violent groups in their refuges in the jungle. Subsequent negotiations will also address questions such as establishing the frontier in areas where the thickness of the vegetation overwhelms the political limits of states.

Ecuador's president Correa has taken a more pragmatic position in seeking closer ties with Bogota. His messages (in line with Bolivarian orthodoxy) do not stop him seeking agreements with Chile and Colombia, the traditional allies of Washington and main proponents of an opposing political approach.

Nevertheless, greater involvement by Ecuador's armed forces is essential to the success of the fight against the guerrillas. Its frontier states are among some of the worst affected by FARC activities. In August, at least fifteen police officers were killed in a number of ambushes whilst carrying out routine monitoring work in the state of Nariño. The arrest of Ecuadorian citizens carrying rifles and explosives to Caquetá provides evidence that the FARC are receiving weapons from Ecuador through their links to drug trafficking networks. The recent security agreement should be the first step in coordinating joint action to neutralise the impact of guerrilla attacks in the south-west of the country.

It is only through cooperation, a sign of healthy bilateral relations, that it will be possible to avoid misunderstandings such as that arising over Operation Fenix. In this regard, the efficiency of Colombia's army should also be re-

flected in fluent communication with the Quito authorities in order to avoid any weakening of ties between these two Andean countries.

■ **Under the Shelter of Argentina and Brazil**

The visit by Colombia's president to Buenos Aires in the summer, the first by a Colombian president in over ten years, has helped to thaw bilateral relations with Argentina, one of the closest South American governments to Hugo Chávez, even though it is not part of his Bolivarian project. The economic difficulties Argentina has suffered over recent years have not stopped it maintaining its significant weight in South American politics. Together with Brazil and Ecuador, it is leading the shaping of the UNASUR agenda, the most ambitious integration project ever undertaken in South America.

At the same time, Colombia has begun a strategic alignment with Brazil, which has resulted in the signing of a global security agreement. The understanding with Dilma Rousseff's government (which some analysts consider to be marked by mistrust and suspicion) will contribute to Colombia consolidating its international projection, gaining influence in the region⁽¹⁹⁾. Lula Da Silva seconded the fierce criticisms by the Bolivarian axis of the treaty which allowed the US military to use Colombian bases. Meanwhile, Bogota has been reproaching Brazil for the limited cooperation it gets from its neighbour on the Amazon in combating organised crime and guerrillas⁽²⁰⁾. The global security treaty aims to establish mechanisms to stop shared territory in the Amazon providing a permanent refuge for the rebels. The appointment of Celso Amorim as Defence Minister should not be an obstacle to implementing this clause.

■ **San Andrés and Providencia**

As with the rest of the Bolivarian camp, Colombia's relations with Nicaragua have also been improving. The level of tension in both parties over the long-running dispute about this tourist enclave in the Caribbean has reduced.

■ **Chile and Mexico**

These two governments - which are most in tune with Santos' policy, and most open to alliances with Washington and the west - continue to play a significant role in Colombia's foreign policy. However, both are more concerned with internal problems: organised crime in Mexico and increasing social and political tension in Chile. The emerging Alianza del Pacífico (Pacific Alliance), an

⁽¹⁹⁾ «Colombia and Brazil: less far apart», the Economist, 13th August 2011: www.economist.com/node/21525913

⁽²⁰⁾ Eduardo Vuelvas, «Evolución y perspectivas de las relaciones entre Colombia y Brasil» («Evolution and Perspectives of Relations Between Colombia and Brazil»), Plataforma Democrática, Working Paper n° 14, 2011. Available at: www.plataformademocratica.org/Archivos/Plataforma_Democratica_Working_Paper_14_2011_Espanhol.pdf

economic area with enormous potential, will channel some of this cooperation, expanded through bilateral treaties, such as that signed by Santos and Calderón on collaborating to fight organised crime. The many connections between drug trafficking networks open up areas for bilateral cooperation with enormous security possibilities.

■ **Dissuasive alliances**

The transformation of Colombia's foreign policy has been very well received by all the governments in South America. This new system of alliances has a clear dissuasive effect in terms of avoiding a conflict with Ecuador or Venezuela. Santos has pulled off a skilful strategic movement, which will be even more advantageous if the decline of the bloc promoted by Hugo Chávez is confirmed⁽²¹⁾.

Having recovered its cooperative role, Colombia is no longer perceived as a defender of Washington's interests, as the country which provided the US with an open door to interfere in the region's politics. The Nariño presidential palace is now taking part in amicable debates and projects with the governments of the leading Latin American countries. With the backing of Brazil and Argentina, it will not be so profitable to strain relations with Bogota, or to try to open up a common front against it, or to push the position in the event of diplomatic conflict. This will be even more the case should the Andean country participate actively in UNASUR, a common security and defence area, the objective of which is to eradicate the instability associated with these conflicts from regional geopolitics.

■ **The FARC's Havana Inspiration**

Cuba is one of the parties that is most negatively affected by this strategic advantage which Colombia has created for itself. Whilst Chávez continued his hostile position, the Cuban government had a major opportunity to intervene in regional politics. This was particularly true in the case of Colombia, where the revolutionary leaders are not well received because of their ideological identification with the guerrillas. Despite the clear inspiration that FARC took from Fidel Castro, Castro himself published a harsh letter in *Granma* following the liberation of Ingrid Betancourt, strongly criticising the treatment and living conditions imposed on kidnap victims.

■ **Santos and the Dilemma of a Truce**

Therefore, the possibility of a new diplomatic crisis on Colombia's frontiers with its neighbours has been neutralised for the moment.

⁽²¹⁾ It would seem that Bogota also considers it inevitable that there will be some change in Venezuela's Palacio de Miraflores, whether as a result of a worsening in Chávez's health or due to an electoral defeat for his regime, which is less improbable than the Venezuelan government presumes

If the possible start of a process of dialogue involving the Colombian government and representatives of the two guerrilla movements is confirmed, this will open up a number of scenarios which are as uncertain as they are hopeful.

The hope that Colombia is taking firm steps towards ending the conflict has to be conditioned by a number of factors. Firstly, the real intentions of the guerrilla leaders who sit down to negotiate with the authorities: whether they have really decided to search for a peaceful solution or if, on the contrary, this is just a stalling tactic whilst they rebuild their internal structure, strengthen their new commanders and renew their financial and operational capabilities. This is the fear among a large part of the Colombian public, based on the traumatic outcome of previous peace processes.

Secondly, the position of the main foreign parties adds a degree of uncertainty to the immediate future of the Colombian conflict. In this regard, the influence which China can exert over Hugo Chávez will be very important, particularly if China can persuade him that it would be best for his regime to take a pragmatic position based on the «soft power» doctrine.

The strategic alliances of Caracas with Moscow and Tehran could act in the opposite direction to the foreign policy being applied in Latin America by China. The main difficulty with the pragmatic approach we have described is the military component of the Venezuelan government's relations with Iran and Russia. A range of sources have noted that defence cooperation is being extended and consolidated, with the sale of weapons and military equipment being one of the most important aspects. If the construction of joint bases with the Iranian army on Venezuelan territory is confirmed, there would be a serious risk to security in South America. The weapons sent by the Kremlin and the Ahmadinejad regime will help to strengthen government militias in the event of the outbreak of civil armed conflict. In such an event, Iran and Russia will both strongly support Chávez and his supporters, increasing tension with Colombia if the FARC are also seen to be involved. An alliance with Venezuela is very tempting for these two countries. On the one hand, it would act as a counterweight in a region very close to the United States, and right next to the border with one of the White House's traditional partners on the continent.

Of course, Venezuela's position depends to a large extent on what happens with the health of its Bolivarian leader. A number of scenarios would be possible if he were forced to relinquish power and retire from public life.

In the most worrying of these, an internal conflict would develop in Venezuela to fill the power vacuum left by Chávez. In such a situation, Colombian guerrillas might support those loyal to the Chávez regime. Colombia would then be faced with a serious increase in instability on its eastern frontier.

For its part, the United States might keep a low profile in its bilateral relations with Colombia. The USA's delicate economic situation, with significant cuts to its Defence budget, together with the intense debate on its recent interventions abroad and the contradictory signals emanating from these (its cooperation with the authorities in Bogotá being among the most controversial of these), make it unlikely that it will increase its presence in South America; At least it is unlikely in the terms put into effect by the Colombia Plan, or the signing up for the joint use of seven military bases.

The only factor which would be likely to reactivate a North American presence in Colombia would be a civil conflict in Venezuela, particularly if the Bogotá government became involved, or if Iran or Russia actively intervene to support the Chávez regime.

Finally, Juan Manuel Santos' administration will try to preserve the favourable situation for Colombia in the continent's geopolitics. To this end, it will need to balance a number of diverse factors, and this could turn out to be very complex, depending on how events develop.

Firstly, the government will seek to further extend its good bilateral relations with Brazil, Mexico, Chile and Argentina, and will try to get closer to the most pragmatic wing of the Bolivarian block. This would enable Colombia to reinforce its current position on the continent. In this regard, the possibilities of an open conflict with Ecuador or Venezuela would become ever more remote, whilst increasing participation in UNASUR and other aspects of regional integration processes would further reinforce its regional position. The security agreements recently signed with Brazil might serve as an effective guarantee to put a brake on any impulse for external aggression against Colombia.

Meanwhile, it must regain its effectiveness in the struggle against the guerrillas and criminal groups, by adapting the activities of the security forces to the new tactics being used by armed groups. Continuing with strikes against terrorist and criminal activity does not exclude the possibility of taking part in the imminent dialogue; this dialogue must not under any circumstances be allowed to strengthen the guerrillas and criminal gangs, whether in their organisational or financial structure or their operational capabilities.

■ CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

The main challenges facing the government are:

- Adapting military operations to the new guerrilla strategy, stopping feelings of uncertainty seizing the country as a result of the guerrilla offensive.
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- Reinforcement of intelligence work and increased troop mobility to make military action more effective.

Whilst the hypothetical peace process which some Colombian political and third sector groups are aiming to push remains undefined, there is a risk that the rebels will use the discussion period to rebuild their organic structure and territorial position, whilst also expanding their international financial networks.

It does not seem that the Santos government will risk a new failure in the peace negotiations. Meanwhile, the regrouping of paramilitaries has lit a warning light for 2012, even if their operational capacities are still limited.

Two political and social events will mark the transition over the next year.

Internally, local government elections are to be held in October. It is difficult to hold normal elections in the country when hundreds of candidates have been threatened by guerrillas and criminal groups, and this will be difficult to overcome in the country's current circumstances. However, this is a major opportunity for progress in the strengthening of the democratic institutions which are so important for economic and social prosperity.

Internationally, the factor which might generate the most instability is a potential power vacuum in Venezuela, which might lead to disputes or even civil conflict. Should this occur, there would be an increase in tension along the border, where the guerrillas would try to obtain some material or positional advantage. In this regard, the country will continue the increasing international projection set in progress by President Santos with his new system of alliances. The active participation of Colombia in joint South American projects will provide an institutional umbrella in the event of a new diplomatic crisis with its neighbours in the Bolivarian block.

■ CHRONOLOGY

Table 9.2. Timeline of Conflict

DATE	EVENT
1948-1953	Civil war following the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán and the ensuing massive riots. Armed groups of peasants are formed.
1964	First armed front of the ELN (National Liberation Army)
1966	Official constitution of the FARC-EP, the result of the union of peasant self-defence groups.
1982-1986	First peace talks, during the government of Belisario Betancourt.
1985	The M-19 take over the Palace of Justice
1986	Establishment of the Simón Bolívar Guerrilla Coordinating Board
1991	New Colombian Constitution approved
1997	Rise of the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia
1998 (3 de marzo)	The FARC claim their greatest military victory. An entire battalion of the Colombian army is annihilated.
1998-2002	Andrés Pastrana initiates a new peace process, the negotiations of San Vicente del Caguán. Détente zone created.
2000	The governments of Colombia and the United States sign the Colombia Plan
2002	Wave of FARC attacks brings an end to talks. Alvaro Uribe wins the elections. The army regains control of the détente zone.
2003	Approval of the Democratic Defence and Security Policy (DDS) Programme to demobilise the paramilitaries.
2004	Omega Campaign, a major army offensive to surround the guerrilla fighters in the south of the country.
2008	Raúl Reyes, leader of the FARC, killed by the Colombian army during a bombardment. Tensions mount with Ecuador and Venezuela. Ingrid Betancourt freed after being held six years in captivity by kidnapers.
2009	Agreement signed with the United States on the joint use of seven military bases. Further increase in tension with Ecuador and Venezuela, Colombia increasingly isolated

2010	Juan Manuel Santos, Minister of Defence under Álvaro Uribe, wins the elections. Jorge Briceño (a.k.a. Mono Jojoy), who had replaced Raúl Reyes at the head of the FARC, is killed. The Supreme Court and the government revoke the 2009 agreement on military bases.
2011	In August Rodrigo Rivera, Juan Manuel Santos' first Minister of Defence, is forced to quit.

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Chapter X

MEXICO AND DRUG TRAFFICKING

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SUMMARY

The population of Mexico (as in other countries) is currently suffering the problems caused by everything that surrounds the world of drugs: the consumption, production and trafficking of these substances. However, it does not seem that legalisation of drugs would be the solution to the problem.

Only an effort by each of the countries affected, together with international support, will be able to remove this social ill over the longer term, which has a particularly serious impact on security and threatens the peace.

In this titanic struggle, the most efficient weapon has of course been found to be the creation of a «drug-free culture», whilst at the same time increasing the welfare of the population.

Key words

Drugs, Mexico, drug trafficking, Security, international cooperation, culture.

■ INTRODUCTION

With the conclusions of determinist geopolitics (which produced so much literature at the time) having been overtaken by events, in the geographic area which interests us here we are currently faced with an avalanche of circumstances which have shattered many preconceived ideas, and which analysts should evaluate cautiously.

Firstly, does Central America really exist as a geopolitical entity, or is it just a group of countries which, for better or worse, are located between the United States and Colombia and Venezuela?

Mexico, for example, that since the arrival of the Spanish patent had exercised influence over the region, has recently tried to escape the «geopolitical» fate of the other Central American countries by somehow linking itself to the United States and the Canada.

Regarding the Spanish perspective, on 24th June 2011 the Spanish government approved its «Estrategia Española de Seguridad» (Spanish Security Strategy), which dedicates a chapter to its comprehensive vision of «Iberoamérica, destino común» («Iberoamerica: a shared destiny»). Amongst other things, this document states: «Iberoamerica represents not just an area, but also a shared destiny with Spain. It is of fundamental strategic importance for our country. It is an emerging region, with economic and political powers of the first order, which are playing an ever more important role on the regional and global stage». Later in the document it states: «The region has experienced very positive changes over the last decade, with a consolidation of democracy and economic growth. Some countries are still in a precarious position and need political support and economic aid to shore up their democracies and to correct social inequalities. However, they also face a number of important challenges to their security (such as institutional fragility, the power of criminal gangs, illegal immigration and people smuggling) which also affect Spain».

For this reason, we need to examine the point of view these countries have of these strategic and security issues so that we can understand at first hand the concerns of the other side of the Atlantic.

The «Nuestra Democracia» (Our Democracy) document issued by the Secretary General of the Organisation of American States, states: «An ever increasing problem (now number one on the public's list of concerns) is public security. The scale of the problem is apparent from the rising murder rate in the region, which was already high. Likewise, the increasing production of and international trade in drugs has created a new phenomenon which is affecting countries such as Colombia, Mexico and several other Central American

countries: drug-related violence. In short, the problem of violence is evidence of the weakness of Latin American states, many of which have demonstrated that they are not able to protect the most fundamental of human rights, the right to life».

The document later laments that: «Despite the spread of democracy enabling increased control over the repressive functions of the state, there are still violations of human rights which demand urgent action in the region. In the vast majority of cases, these violations are not the result of some repressive plan, but rather are a further manifestation of the weakness of the State apparatus in controlling its public law and order forces. On the one hand, there is evidence that State agents who have violated human rights enjoy a high degree of impunity, even in electoral democracies...»

On the other hand, what we call Central America is not well understood outside of the Caribbean, and the Caribbean, without the continental support provided by Central America, is just an archipelago, no matter how extensive and important its existence.

Today we are also still faced with the peculiar circumstances of Fidel Castro's Cuba, which provide this island with a geostrategic value, particularly for the United States, which exceeds any objective parameter.

This region of the American continent is also home to a third determining factor, the Panama Canal. In theory, this has been in the hands of Panama since 1999, and plays a vital role in global maritime freight transport, indeed the Canal is currently being widened.

The Central American and Caribbean region today is therefore focused in our opinion, and in the opinion of the United States and the European Union, on Cuba (and to a certain extent the Dominican Republic, given its sustained growth), the Panama Canal and Mexico.

The Isthmus stretches almost 3,000 km from the northern border of Guatemala with Mexico to the southern border of Panama with Colombia; it is marked by high altitudes and difficult terrain, covered by jungle and subject to volcanic activity. It has a tropical climate, and reaches from the Pacific in the west to the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean in the east. It covers a total area of approximately 522,800 km².

This region consists of the following countries:

Belize, which covers 23,000 km² and has a population of 322,100 (2009). Its GDP is US\$2.175 billion, with GDP per capita of US\$6,531 (World Bank

2009). This is a unique country in Central America: it is set in the Yucatan peninsula and became a British colony in 1862; it has been in constant disputes and conflicts with its neighbours about the limits of its frontiers. In 1981, the country decided to join the Commonwealth, as a result of which it is presided over by a Governor.

Costa Rica, which covers an area of 51,000 km² and has a population of 4,615,000 (2010), with the majority of the population being Creole with some mixed-race inhabitants. Its GDP is US\$52.685 billion, with GDP per capita of US\$11,397 (World Bank 2010). This is the most stable country in the region, although it has experienced some difficulties since its territory was used as a base for both Sandinista guerrillas and «contras» from Nicaragua, and guerrillas from El Salvador. Costa Rica's political life, and that of other countries in the area, has always been dependent on the activities of the US-owned United Fruit Company.

El Salvador, which has an area of 21,100 km² and a population of 5,744,113 (2011), most of whom are mixed race, with a small proportion on indigenous people. Its GDP is US\$11.145 billion, with GDP per capita of US\$7,646 (World Bank 2011). The Frente Farabundo Martí and «escuadras de la muerte» (death squads) paramilitary groups unleashed a vicious struggle in 1982, one example of which was the killing of seven Spanish Jesuit priests at the Centro-Americana University in 1989. In 1992, the Frente and the armed forces signed a truce, which has given the country a degree of stability.

Guatemala, which has an area of 108,900 km² and a population of 14,700,000 (2011), with a balanced share of indigenous and mixed race people. Its GDP is US\$73.022 billion, with GDP per capita of US\$4,964 (World Bank 2011). The country was locked in a full-scale civil war between paramilitary groups and guerrillas which lasted from the 1972 until 1996, causing tens of thousands of deaths, including many Catholic priests. In 1980, a group of peasants occupied the Spanish Embassy in protest at the conditions they were living in: 39 people died when the security forces stormed the building, including peasants and diplomatic personnel - only the Ambassador survived. However, there has been a degree of stability in the country in the early years of the 21st century.

Honduras, which has an area of 112,500 km² and a population of 8,144,000 (2011), with a majority of mixed race people, and a small proportion of indigenous people. Its GDP is US\$35.173 billion, with GDP per capita of US\$4,532 (World Bank 2011). This is the poorest county in the area, and it has always been involved in border disputes with its neighbours. Traditionally, power has been disputed between the Partido Liberal and the Partido Nacional, with their approaches determined by the role the Armed Forces should play in society. There has been a period of institutional calm since the 2009 crisis

Nicaragua, which has an area of 131,000 km² and a population of 5,743,000 (2009), with a majority of mixed race people, and a small proportion of native and indigenous people. Its GDP is US\$18.533 billion, with GDP per capita of US\$3,147 (World Bank 2011). When the dictator «Tachito» Somoza fled the country in 1979, the Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega came to power, which led to the start of a war between Somoza-loyalist guerrillas, supported by the United States from Honduras, the «contra» guerrillas, based in Costa Rica, and Nicaragua's armed forces. In 1990, Violeta Chamorro took power, leading to a period of some stability; in 2006, the Sandinista Daniel Ortega was reappointed President, following democratic elections.

Panama, which has an area of 78,100 km² and a population of 3,405,000 (2010), mixed race and mulatto in even proportions, as with indigenous and Creole peoples. Its GDP is US\$48.804 billion, with GDP per capita of US\$13,912 (World Bank 2010). In 1989, the United States invaded the country to overthrow General Noriega, the strongman dictator of Panama, and this has resulted in a period of relative peace. In 1999, Panama recovered jurisdiction over the Canal joining the Pacific and the Gulf of Mexico, which, under the presidency of Ricardo Martinelli, is currently being expanded.

This set of countries can be considered to be «developing» countries, with high poverty levels and high emigration flows, generally towards the United States. We should also remember that this region is also periodically hit by bad weather; in 1990 Hurricane Mitch flattened its precarious agriculture and livestock industries, in addition to causing many deaths.

Strangely, Belize is the only country which does not have a republican system, having adopted a parliamentary system along British lines, since it had been a British colony for some time.

As is to be expected in such a defined area, attempts to integrate these territories in some way were driven by their own peculiarities. If we ignore attempts to create hegemony (such as that of Mexico in the 19th century) we have to wait until 1951 for the formation of the Organisation of Central American States, which was created by the signature of the Treaty of San Salvador to include Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. In 1960 a Common Central American Market was created with the intention of creating a customs union; this was followed in 1993 by the creation of the Central American Integration System (SICA). Of course, these countries are part of the Organisation of American States (OAS), although Cuba is only a latent member.

The integration of these countries could perhaps be carried out more sensibly through sectoral agreements, for example SIEPAC (the Central American Electricity Interconnection System), which is expected to unite Mexico with Colombia in September along the Isthmus.

Furthermore, in the Caribbean, we have:

The Dominican Republic, with an area of 48,442 km² and a population of 10,090,000 (2009), the majority being mulattos, and black and white people in equal proportions. Its GDP is US\$93.095 billion, with GDP per capita of US\$9,257 (World Bank 2010). The Trujillo era of Dominican politics ended in 1961, and was replaced by the alternating presidents Bosch and Balaguer. Recently, the country has been going through something of a boom, driven in particular by tourism.

Cuba, with an area of 110,861 km² and a population of 11,242,621 (2009), with half being mixed race, and a large proportion of white people and a few black people. Its GDP is US\$110.600 billion, with GDP per capita of US\$9,700 (World Bank 2009). When Fidel Castro and his supporters took power in 1959, nobody could have imagined they would be able to survive so long whilst being shunned by the United States. However, they did not just survive: with the aid of the Soviet Union at some times and China at others, the country has managed to represent something of a political and social alternative for some people, both inside and outside the Caribbean. Even today, Fidel Castro and Cuba represent a kind of «counter-America» which has some unexpected followers. The model currently appears to be in decline, but this is more because of Castro's descent into old age than as an alternative model. We will have to wait to see the outcome of the Cuban Communist Party Congress in the spring. However, it should also be remembered that the United States' attitude towards Cuba has also changed.

■ BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

«From the mountains they come
on the way to El Paso
trucks and trailers groaning;
and how well they are disguised,
with apples on the outside,
and marihuana on the inside»

=====

«I know they might kill me one day
but I don't want to be poor,
the way they look at you and how they treat you,
everyone always looks after themselves,
they don't see your faults
if you've got money»

Translation of the «copla» song. Los narcocorridos (The Drug Runners)

When the people heard this «copla» and made it their own it was as if it had come from them: others started to sing it and then people began to live out the lyrics of the song.

This type of sociological phenomenon has always happened, in all parts of the world. In Spain in the past it happened with «coplas» about generous bandits and their impossible loves; Antonio Machado's «old and crafty, quarrelsome and sad» Spain, which is still somehow so current, and the various musical forms of today's urban tribes (rock, rap, hip-hop, reggaeton etc.).

Today in Mexico, the lyrics to some of the traditional «corrido» songs sung in the northern States deal with the world of drugs, drug trafficking, the people involved and everything which surrounds this social evil.

The corrido is an ancient tradition in Mexico as a sung story of Spanish origin in which a deeply emotional folk tale tells of unfortunate love, violent deaths and acts of generosity which border on the heroic. These romances are deeply rooted in the Mexican soul.

What is happening in Mexico to make such a traditional song form now deal with drugs?

I fear that this sociological phenomenon of drugs being incorporated into the vocabulary of the corrido has a very serious meaning: part of Mexico's society has accepted drug culture as part of its experience. And when drug culture is accepted as something common and acceptable, just another part of everyday life, then that part of society obviously has a problem.

«Poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States» (quotation attributed to the Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz)

Geopolitically, Mexico's territory of almost 2,000,000 Km² can be divided into three zones: the north, which is arid desert with barren mountains; the centre, which is home to the major cities; and the verdant south with the Yucatan peninsula (Figure 10.1)

The country has a population of 112,322,757 (2010), of which over 60% are mixed race with 30% indigenous people and the remainder being what we could call Caucasian, which is really Mexico's ruling class. Its GDP is US\$1,658,197 million, with GDP per capita of US\$15,113 (World Bank 2011).

Catholicism is the majority religion, but this is often lived in an indigenous way, in a similar style to other parts of America; anti-clericalism, which has an important political background, has diminished largely over recent times.

Figure 10.1. North and Central America



Mexico, having its own style in Central America, has managed to show the world a face of progress, non-religiousness, advanced social legislation and apparent respect for human rights, placing it at the cutting edge; however, there are many worrying internal issues, such as the lack of representation for the indigenous and mixed race populations.

The country derives substantial revenue from oil and gas, but has not achieved a stable and homogeneous development of civil society.

The birth rate, in excess of 20%, and poverty in the countryside represent the other side of the coin of its GDP per capita of US\$13,900 per year. In addition, Mexico's economic growth has slowed over recent years.

During the years when Mexico was part of the Spanish realm as the Vice-Regency of New Spain, a powerful «Creole» class developed which soon came into conflict with the few people from the Iberian peninsula (civil servants, soldiers and senior clergy) who were living there temporarily.

The early creation of the University of Mexico in 1553 and what became known as the «Galeón de Manila» (the galleon route across the Pacific) brought a wide range of cultural currents to Mexico; this, together with the Anglo-Saxon and French people who arrived across the Gulf of Mexico soon gave rise to demands for independence, and geopolitical aspirations for control beyond its frontiers and the old Aztec and Spanish empires. As a result, in 1821, Iturbide declared independence and had himself proclaimed Emperor.

As in other American countries, Mexican life was soon stricken with political, religious, social, economic and also ethnic problems

Meanwhile, European colonists arriving constantly in the United States were gradually occupying lands to the west of the Mississippi river, whilst hardly any emigrants were arriving in Mexico.

Midway through the century, it became inevitable that there would be a confrontation between the United States and Mexico as a result of European emigration to the West in the US and lack of political foresight of Mexico's President, General Antonio Santana. This war was won by the American colonists, and soon took on a racial nature: the Europeans to the north of the Rio Grande, and the indigenous and mixed race people to the south.

The French approach of Napoleon III, followed by the Spanish Court which surrounded Isabel II, made Maximilian of Habsburg the fictitious Emperor of Mexico in 1863. In this regard, it is very interesting to read the book «La Emperatriz del adiós», in which the author, Prince Michael of Greece, claims that the unfortunate Austrian Emperor, rather than being shot in Querétaro by Benito Juárez, ended up living in poverty in Cuernavaca, surrounded by mescal and young native women.

Obviously, the life of a country can offer unexpected facets, and Mexico, as it has demonstrated many times, has a number of peculiarities which set it apart in the Americas. In 1910, a revolution broke out in the country which mixed in unequal parts racial (confrontations between, Indians, mixed-race and white people), religious (Catholics, protestants, indigenous, masons), social, economic and cultural problems, all of which were in some unconscious way promoted by the pressure in the north of the border.

The Mexican revolution soon took on mythic and symbolic characteristics: its opposition to its neighbours, its non-religious basis (or perhaps its anti-Catholicism, which was subsequently fought by the «Cristeros»), agrarian revolutionary fervour, populism, anti-militarism, the mythologising of the peasant guerrilla, both Indian and mixed race, the creation of icons (against the white urban class) by the press and the photography, music and cinema of

the time (the most important being Doroteo Arango Arambula, better known as Pancho Villa, and the peasant leader Emiliano Zapata), gave way to an illusion of an advanced Mexico, which has built up the country's profile, for better and worse. This myth took on a special character for Spain, as a result of the aid which Mexico's president Lázaro Cárdenas gave to the Spanish Republic in 1936.

Today, Mexico is a Federal Republic consisting of 31 states and a federal district.

With only a few important exceptions, such as when Vicente Fox took power in 2000, or today when the country is governed by Felipe Calderón of the Acción Nacional Party, the country has since time immemorial been governed by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). This in itself says a lot about the nature of Mexico's democracy.

Today, Mexico is part of a free trade area with the United States and Canada: this was created by the Free Trade Treaty of 1994 (NAFTA) at the insistence of Mexico; given the imbalance among the three countries, Mexico has not managed to improve its balance of payments as a result of NAFTA, although the World Bank has recognised the benefits of the Treaty.

The revolutionary movements which from time to time stir up Mexican life no longer come from the mountains of the north, but rather from the jungles of the south, such as the «Zapatista» group which appeared in 1994, as a result of contagion from similar movements in Guatemala and El Salvador.

■ THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CONFLICT

«Mexico lindo y querido...» («Beautiful and beloved Mexico», a popular Mexican song popularised by Jorge Negrete)

The consumption of certain drugs has been present in the daily life of many peoples since time immemorial, to the extent that they form part of a certain type of «culture»: these include opium and its derivatives (morphine and heroin), alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, tea, coca, cannabis and its derivatives (hashish and marihuana), hallucinogenic mushrooms etc.

However, sometimes these substances exceed the boundaries of medical treatment, or what are known as social drugs exceed their customary use and are taken in order to alter normal behaviour in people, creating dependency and thus becoming an individual and collective problem for society.

Wars, which rupture everyday life and personal existence, are also entwined in the world of drugs. There are multiple examples of drug use in war throughout history: sometimes they have been used to increase the courage of soldiers, and at other times to kill the pain of injuries.

For our purposes, focusing on our geographic area and the period we are dealing with, we should remember the repeated mass battles which took place during the US Civil War (which astonished our field observer, Juan Prim): this was the first total war involving the full involvement of means of communication, naval warfare and the commitment of industry; and we should also remember the huge number of casualties caused by the war, which had serious consequences for the object of our study in this report. This period was the first time that it became normal to use morphine injections in military hospitals on a regular basis as an anaesthetic and painkiller; this led to a demand for opium, which reached the USA across the Mexican border.

Around 1920, when World War I had finished, the Mexican revolution was in its final throes and Russia had become the Soviet Union, and we were beginning to see the rise of totalitarian states in Europe; in the midst of all this upheaval, control of opium traffic to the USA across the Mexican border passed from Chinese hands to Mexican hands. (Chinese workers had been in the Caribbean since the 19th century, when they were taken there by the Spanish, who preferred them to black slaves and indigenous peoples because of their greater productivity in the Cuban sugar cane industry. The number of Chinese people arriving in the region increased enormously with the laying of railroad tracks and the construction of the Panama Canal).

As a result, the arid mountains of Sonora, Sinaloa, Chihuahua and Guerrero (the Golden Triangle) began to produce opium on a large scale; this led the Mexican government to implement prohibition measures at the behest of the US authorities. Subsequently, opium production in these states was overtaken by marihuana cultivation.

The demand for drugs was further boosted by another conflict, World War II. This increased demand for purposes other than medical applications, including the use of some form of drugs by combatants and by the victims of bombardments in urban areas far from the theatre of operations to calm their fears.

When drug use began to develop into a «counter-culture» and to come out of the shadows to become part of everyday life, the problem became political. By this time, World War II had led to the Cold War, with the Western Bloc and the Soviet Union and China only doing things which increased international tensions to their own benefit; the problems of the third world became more widely known; religions became bureaucratic and lost touch with everyday life, failing

to offer any alternative explanation, and the Vietnam War destabilised North American society as a whole. At this time non-conformist young people in the 1960s rebelled, with demand for strong drugs and hallucinogens increasing as an alternative and as a protest, and even as a fashion statement.

Against this background, the United States, the most advanced and richest society at the time, became the largest drug consumer in the world, whilst jeans, rock and roll and Coca Cola were beginning to undermine the foundations of Stalinist communism.

Repressive legislation, which offered no alternatives for desperate young people, unconsciously contributed to their marginalisation, creating the social perception that another world was possible. At that time, those who did not belong to the «system» created an alternative; and when «official» society faces an economic crisis for which there is no obvious solution, we find ourselves trapped in a tunnel with no light at the end of it.

■ THE ROLE OF FOREIGN ACTORS

It is more than 3,000 km from Tijuana in the west on the Pacific coast to Matamoros in the east in the Gulf of Mexico.

On the US side, Mexico is bordered from west to east by the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas; on the Mexican side, the states along the border from west to east are Baja California (Tijuana), Sonora (Los Nogales), Chihuahua (Juárez), Coahuila (Piedras Negras), Nuevo León (Laredo) and Tamaulipas (Rio Bravo).

But this border («La Frontera») is more than just a border. To the north there is an economy which appears to be fully developed; with an enviable level of technological education; military might which no other country can match; clear political, social and cultural leadership with management positions gradually opening up to people from a non-European background; a «rich» country which surprisingly, or perhaps because it is rich, has become the largest drug user in the world, and all so close to Mexico.

Meanwhile, to the south of La Frontera there is what apparently appears to be an underdeveloped, multiracial and unstructured society, with limited training and resources which superstitiously practices a number of religions.

However, nothing could be further from reality when you know the region. To the north of the border live dark-skinned North Americans with a standard of living which is nothing like that of people living on the East Coast and in Cali-

fornia, with little social cohesion and a level of development which is not much higher than that to the south... but on side is th US and on the other is Mexico.

Drug trafficking started out as the work of petty criminals; however, in response to pressure from the authorities and the increasing volume of business, many years ago it developed into the business of well organised gangs with military levels of armaments, including aircraft; this business received a notable boost in the 1990s when the US authorities managed to staunch the activities of Colombian traffickers through the Caribbean, who then formed alliances with the Mexicans who controlled La Frontera, converting coca into a powder which was easier to transport.

«Organised Criminal Groups» are defined in the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime, which was held in Palermo 2000, as being: «... a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established in accordance with this Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit».

The suppression of drug trafficking is made more difficult by the contacts that these groups of traffickers (or cartels, as they are known) have with some members of the Mexican security forces, civil servants and politicians. It has been stated, and duly demonstrated through the methods they use, that, for example, the group known as the «Zetas» include ex-members of Mexico's anti-drug forces, who were trained in the United States, but now receive much higher remuneration; the same is true of some in the Guatemalan military known as «kaibiles» who, having trained in Israel, now work for the drug dealers.

The problem posed by such mercenaries who, after having left the Armed Forces which trained them, are not able to find a new role in their countries is not unique to any particular country; however, it has been made more acute by the current global economic crisis.

In parallel with this, a successful drug dealer who shows off his status starts to be admired by some; this is particularly the case if, as frequently occurs, they decide to support their local communities; all this contributes to creating the myth of the anti-hero, someone who has escaped from poverty and is not afraid of death.

However, the real trade in drugs, as recognised by Mexico's Secretary of State for Health in the «Situación de Salud en Mexico» (Health Situation in Mexico) report, does not take place on La Frontera: the business deals are done in big cities. For example, a modest trafficker might live in Ciudad Juárez on La Frontera and use unusual procedures to get the drug to the «other side»: these

might include tunnels or buildings or properties which straddle the border. In 2009 there were more murders in this city than in Afghanistan; however, this is also partly due to this city having become the crossing point for emigration to the United States.

Drug trafficking becomes apparent in what is known as «the last mile», close to the distributor in US urban areas. La Frontera is the unfortunate scene for the consequences of drug trafficking.

The sad effects of the conflicts between rival drug gangs take place further into the country, around the production areas, from where they make the «jump» to the USA.

However, the United States cannot be blamed for having become the largest drug consumer in the world because of its higher standard of living and large population; Mexico is also a drug consumer. According to Mexico's National Addiction Survey produced by its Secretary of State for Health, there are currently 4 million people who use drugs in the country. There has been a significant increase in cocaine use since the 1980s, although in the last decade the consumption of designer substances began to replace cocaine, as they are more easily available. In addition, the Ramón de la Fuente Muñiz National Psychiatry Institute's «Student Drug Use Survey» reports that drug use increased by 2.6% between 2003 and 2007.

The problem of drug trafficking has become more difficult to detect recently as (given the increasing difficulties caused by Mexican and US security forces in the north) trade has begun over the border with Guatemala in amphetamines and other chemically produced drugs which are based on substances used in Mexico's pharmaceutical industry. As a result, Mexico has developed into the largest producer of marihuana in the Americas today; the largest supplier of amphetamines to the United States; and one of the largest producers of heroin.

And if the situation surrounding the drugs trade was not complicated enough, the very real war unleashed between different cartels has brought into question the effectiveness of the Mexican Army and Security Forces (Federal Police, Municipal Police, State Police and the Security Secretariat) and the political will to bring to an end to, or at least control, drug trafficking. Instead of taking advantage of gang rivalry in order to finish them off, the Mexican government has stood by with its hands tied as the number of murders, kidnappings and other violations of rights have increased, not only in La Frontera, but also elsewhere in the country. On Friday, 8th July 2011, as I am writing these words, 21 customers have been victims of a revenge killing at a disco in Monterrey, a major business city, where 828 people died as victims of organised crime in 2010.

■ CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

«... si muero lejos de ti» («if I die far from you» continues the popular Mexican song immortalised by Jorge Negrete)

In April 2011, the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton released the «35th United States Congress Annual Human Rights Report» which is prepared by her department. In the section discussing Mexico, the report states that its Army and Security Forces are reluctant to provide data on the results of their actions in the fight against drug trafficking, and on allegations against them relating to killings, illegal detentions, disappearances, torture and corruption. The judicial establishment also receives criticism in this US report, particularly with regard to the transparency of legal proceedings, human rights guarantees and delays in holding trials, which have resulted in the number of people awaiting trial far exceeding the prison population.

Furthermore, the Report finds that in 2010 there were 15,273 deaths in Mexico related to drug trafficking. It is worth noting that since Mexico's then President Felipe Calderón launched a «war» on drug trafficking in 2006, there have been almost 40,000 drug-related deaths in Mexico.

Faced with the war among the drug cartels, many private security companies have emerged, some unauthorised, which now number some 8,000. In addition to these, there are also vigilante groups consisting of local people.

Finally, this tragic scenario along La Frontera also includes the kidnapping and murder of Mexicans and people from other Central American countries who wish to emigrate to the United States, and who are conned by the groups which control this traffic in human beings; Mexico's National Human Rights Commission estimates that 20,000 people were kidnapped in 2010 alone. There are, according to President Felipe Calderón, over 3,000 arsenals along the length of La Frontera.

This spine-tingling figure, together with a feeling among some that the fight against drug trafficking has failed, has led some to justify a campaign in favour of legalising drugs. For example, the President of the Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (LEAP) organisation, which includes ex-police officers, ex-judges and ex-prison officers from US prisons, stated on the 40th anniversary of the start of the struggle against drugs (which was launched by President Richard Nixon in 1971 in his message to Congress and is led by the DEA (the US Drug Enforcement Agency)) that over one trillion dollars have been invested in this struggle, and it has resulted in the imprisonment of over 2 million people, mostly Latinos and Afro-Americans, without there seeming to be any solution in sight.

However, legalisation of drugs is a measure which no country appears to be willing to adopt without other considerations. In Europe, only Holland permits the consumption of marihuana, and then only under certain conditions. Nobody wants to take the political, social and cultural responsibility for such a momentous decision. What would the likely result be? Would it be possible to reverse such legislation, if it did not produce the desired results? Who would be willing to be the first to sign such a law? Would such a country fall fully into the power of the drug traffickers? There are many questions for which we have no answer, at the moment at least.

On 22nd and 23rd June 2011, more than 10 countries met in Guatemala City as part of the International Conference in Support of the Central American Security Strategy; this was attended by the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton to deal once again with the issue of drug trafficking, and was also attended by Spain's Foreign Minister.

Those present at the Conference believed that they could sense a major change in the vision of those present regarding drug trafficking.

Curiously, until very recently, the drug producing countries were receiving economic aid and security advice from the United States. They are now blaming the United States for drug trafficking, as it is now the largest consumer of drugs, with an estimated 20 million users, and demanding that they «pay» for the problems created by drug trafficking.

Felipe Calderón, the President of Mexico, noted that if drug consumption was worth US\$35 billion in the United States, this enormous amount should be «returned» to producer countries in order to contribute to ending drug trafficking and the violence of the Cartels. Meanwhile, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (which held the International Day Against Drug Abuse on 24th June), the US government has declared that the drug business in general amounts to some US\$65 billion in the country, although in private it recognises that the actual figure is much higher

However, this Conference did not just criticise the United States (which consumes 83% of the drugs produced in the Americas) but also Spain, the largest importer in Europe, which, according to the Conference, accounts for the remaining 17%.

Those attending the Conference, particularly the Central American representatives, recognised that they were not in a position to fight drug trafficking, whether in political terms or in terms of the preparation of their armed forces and security forces.

In turn, Hillary Clinton had no difficulty in demanding that Central American countries should implement a fair and universal tax system, particularly as none of these have a standardised indirect tax regime (income tax, for example), a reliable company registry, tax census or legal safeguards. Hillary Clinton's complaints were not the first time they had been aired, particularly if we believe the account, as revealed by the «Wikileaks papers», that these reproaches of the Mexican and other governments and their armed forces and security forces have been going on for some time.

The President of Colombia, J.M. Santos, added a sad closing note to the Conference when, in the context of money laundering from drug trafficking, he stated: «The capacity of organised crime goes much further than we can imagine. I assure you, and pardon me for being so frank, that here in this meeting there are people who are in the pay of drug traffickers and who are reporting back to them what is happening in real time».

Is the fight against drug trafficking failing? In the light of the sparse results achieved by programmes such as the 2008 «Mérida Initiative» between Mexico and the United States, under which the US agreed to provide Mexico with economic and security aid and helicopters and planes, etc. up to a value of US\$1.5 billion, of which over US\$400 million has already been delivered, we have no way of answering the question.

A report by the UN's Global Commission on Drugs Policy in June 2011 found that the war against drug trafficking «has failed, with devastating consequences for individuals and societies around the world».

Prior to this, UN Security Council Resolution 1373 of 2001 called upon all states, among other things to: «Find ways of intensifying and accelerating the exchange of information... Cooperate, particularly through bilateral and multilateral arrangements and agreements... Become parties to international conventions and protocols... Take appropriate measures in conformity with the relevant provisions of national and international law...»

One intermediate solution offered is the possibility to «help» to cure addictions, rather than pursuing users as criminals. Richard Nixon requested US\$100 million to end the use of marihuana by hippies and heroin by Vietnam veterans; likewise Barack Obama will not achieve anything with the US\$15.5 billion budgeted for this struggle.

■ Could Mexico Survive Without its Income from Drug Trafficking?

In the event that the Mexican and US governments won their war on drugs, or if some hypothetical future legislation stopped this traffic (it is obvious that

prohibition just makes the product more expensive), resulting in Mexican society losing this form of revenue in one form or other, what consequences would this have for the unstable Mexican economy?

In 2009, Mexico's economy performed as follows: income from remittances from abroad: US\$21.181 billion; income from tourism: US\$11.275 billion; revenue from oil sales: US\$30.882 billion; income from foreign investment: US\$11.417 billion. Meanwhile, the US «Stratfor» think-tank («Strategic Forecasting Inc.»), headed by George Friedman, an advisor to President Obama, has calculated that, with 2010 data, drug trafficking in Mexico is worth US\$40-50 billion a year; Mexico's National Criminal Sciences Institute (Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Penales) has offered similar figures. From this we can see that the disappearance of drug trafficking would have unpredictable consequences, as described in the book by the same author, «The Next Decade».

Meanwhile, the media have recently been reporting the appearance of a number of independent initiatives by members of the public, which have arisen spontaneously from people who are fed up with violence, corruption, the apparent impossibility of resolving the problem and the difficulties of the Mexican government in getting the country out of the mess it is in; these people have decided to take to the streets and use social networks to generate a reaction from society as a whole.

These include «Mujeres de Ciudad Juárez» («Women of Ciudad Juárez»), the «Pacto Ciudadano por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad» («The Citizen's Pact for Peace with Justice and Dignity») in Ciudad Juárez, the «Blog del narco» («The drug traffickers' blog»), «No más sangre» («No more blood» by the Mexican writer with Polish roots, Elena Poniatovska), «Red de Derechos de la Infancia» («The Childhood Rights Network»), «Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad» («The Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity» created by the poet Javier Sicilia, whose son was killed by drug traffickers) etc.

It is to be hoped that these initiatives by members of the public, which have arisen in other countries for different reasons, will achieve their objectives, and will not be ended by the violence of some or hidden by the corruption of others.

We can therefore conclude as follows: the fight against drugs by the state security apparatus is not effective if it does not also tackle the financial flows resulting from the traffic (money laundering, for example); the replacement of drug production with other crops which promote the welfare of farmers (the destruction of drug plantations is not sufficient); and, finally, the production of cultural goods which encourage consumers from the drug «counter-culture» to forget that world and avoid becoming marginalised: in other words, exchanging drugs for welfare and culture.

■ CHRONOLOGY

Table 10.1. Timeline of Conflict

DATE	EVENTS
1846-1848	War between Mexico and the United States
1861-1865	American Civil War
1910-1920	Mexican Revolution
1939-1945	World War II
1964-1975	Vietnam War
2000	Annual Report of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. Palermo, December
2001	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373. 28th Sept.
2008	Mérida Initiative between Mexico and the United States against drug traffic. December
2011	35th Annual Report to the United States Congress on the state of human rights around the world. April
2011	Global Commission on Drug Policy. UN. June
2011	Conclusions of the International Central America Security Strategy Conference, Guatemala. June
2011	Report on Human Rights in Mexico. Mexico July

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Chapter XI

SOUTHEAST ASIA: NATIONALISM AND INSURGENCY IN THAILAND AND THE PHILIPPINES

Author: María del Mar Hidalgo García

SUMMARY

The conflicts in the Southeast Asia region have local characteristics, marked by separatist movements and historical political instability. Of these, it is the issues affecting the Philippines and Thailand which will be addressed in most depth in this chapter. Regionally, we describe two current sources of tension which could change in the future as a result of the influence of jihadist terrorism in Indonesia and territorial disputes in the South China Sea, which has extensive natural resources.

Key words

Southeast Asia, MILF, NPA, ASEAN, Abu Sayyaf, NPD, MNLF

■ INTRODUCTION

The Southeast Asia region consists of the following countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia (see Figure 11.1).

This zone covers a set of diverse states, where the common denominators are political instability; the ethnic, religious and cultural variety of the population; the presence of separatist groups; and the legacy of colonial regimes and wars from the last century. The region is also marked by rapid economic and demographic growth, and the influence of major powers, such as China and India. (See Figure 11.2)

The conflicts in the countries in this region are internal in nature, with the exception of the border dispute between Thailand and Cambodia. These conflicts are local and, with the exception of the Communist guerrillas in the Philippines, relate to separatist claims by populations whose identities are not reflected in the country's central power structure, as a result of ethnic, cultural and religious differences. Furthermore, the support offered by ASEAN⁽¹⁾ means that it should be possible for them to be resolved without recourse to increased international involvement.

Over recent months, there has been an upsurge in violence in Myanmar from ethnic groups demanding independence for their territories from the government. In Indonesia, there have been demonstrations by the indigenous people of Papua calling for a referendum on independence. There have also been confrontations which, according to the local police, have caused 38 deaths and could be related to the insurgent groups operating in the area.

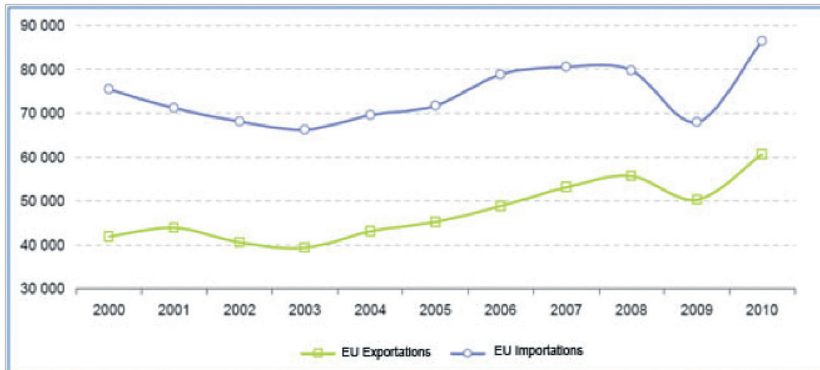
However, the areas of greatest risk in the Southeast Asia region are the Philippines, Indonesia and, in particular, Thailand. The Philippines is home to communist guerrillas opposing the government and fighting against rural underdevelopment and land exploitation, whilst the action of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has its geographic focus in the Sulu archipelago and Mindanao, and is seeking an end to socio-economic inequalities in the area. The main issues affecting Thailand are political instability, independence movements in the south and border disputes with Cambodia over an area of just 4.6 square kilometres.

⁽¹⁾ The ASEAN forum (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) was created in 1967 and consists of Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. ASEAN is a cooperation forum, which mostly deals with security and economic issues. In 2015, ASEAN plans to establish an «Economic Union» among its member countries, on similar lines to the European version.

Figure 11.1. Map of Southeast Asia



Figure 11.2. Changes in Imports and Exports between the EU and ASEAN (€ millions). Source: Eurostat



■ BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

■ The Philippines (see Table 11.1)

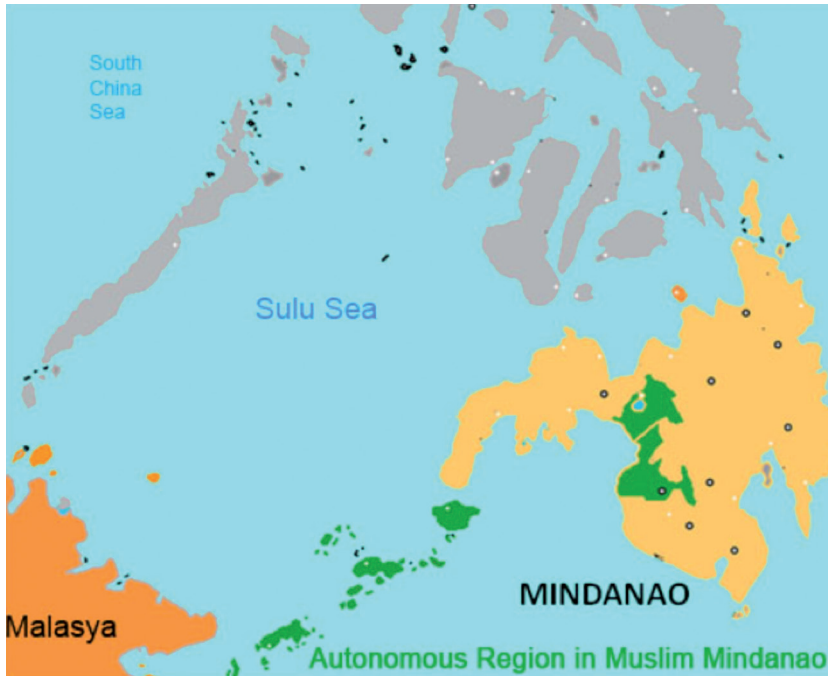
There are two clearly differentiated components to the main source of conflict in this predominantly Catholic country. One of these is political, with the armed New People’s Army (NPA) being the main player, demanding political, economic and social reforms from the central government. The other is secessionist, with armed Muslim groups such as MILF in the north and centre of

the Mindanao region and the Abu Sayyaf group, which is related to al-Qaeda, which is seeking to establish an independent Islamic state in the south of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago (Figure 11.3).

Table 11.1

Main Socio-economic Facts and Figures. Source: CIA Factbook			
Indicator	Thailand	The Philippines	Indonesia
Population growth rate	0.57 %	1.903%	1.069%
Population	66.720.153	101.833.938	245.013.043
Literacy rate	92.6%	92.6%	13.33
GDP (2010)	US\$580.3 billion	US\$353.2 billion	US\$1.03 trillion
Real GDP Growth Rate (2010)	7.6%	7.3%	6.1%
GDP per capita (2010)	8.7 billion	3.5 billion	4.2 billion
Rate of growth in industrial output	14.5% (ranked 9th)	12.1 % (ranked 12th)	4.3% (ranked 98th)
Exports	US\$191 billion	US\$50.72 billion	US\$158.2 billion
Exports: destination	US: 10.9% China: 10.6% Japan: 10.3 Hong Kong: 6.2 % Australia: 5.6 % Malaysia: 5%	US: 17.6 % Japan: 16.2% The Netherlands: 9.8 % Hong Kong: 8.6 % China: 7.7% Germany: 6.5 % Singapore: 6.2% South Korea: 4.8 %	Japan: 16.3% China: 9.9% US: 9.1% Singapore: 8.7% South Korea: 8% India: 6.3% Malaysia: 5.9%
Imports	US\$156.9 billion	US\$59.9 billion	US\$125.1 billion
Imports: origin	Japan: 18.7 % China: 12.7% Malaysia: 6.4 % US: 6.3% United Arab Emirates: 5% Singapore: 4.3 % South Korea: 4.1 %	Japan: 12.5% US: 12% China: 8.8% Singapore: 8.7% South Korea: 7.9 % Taiwan: 7.1 % Thailand: 5.7 %	China: 15% Singapore: 15% Japan: 12.5% US: 6.9% Malaysia: 6.4% South Korea: 5.7% Thailand: 5.5%
Inward foreign direct investment	US\$117.9 billion	US\$24.5 billion	US\$85.5 billion
Military budget (% of GDP)	1.8 %	0.9 %	3%

Figure 11.3. Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao



• *The Activities of the NPA and Secessionist Movements in the South of Mindanao*

The NPA began its activities in 1969. It is the armed wing of the Communist Party, and aims to convert the Philippines into a Maoist state. It is part of the NDF (National Democratic Front), which acts as its negotiating and political arm. The government's negotiations with the NDF began in 1986 in Holland, where the exiled head of the group was based, resulting in a ceasefire being announced in 1987. In the 1990s, a number of agreements were reached, such as the Hague Joint Declaration signed in 1992, which established that in order to resolve the armed conflict it would be necessary to hold negotiations to achieve a «fair and lasting peace»; the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG)⁽²⁾, signed in 1995; and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law in the Philippines (CARHRIHL)⁽³⁾, which was subsequently amended in Oslo in 2004, although the latter was never signed by the country's President.

⁽²⁾ In English: «Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees between the Government of the Republic of Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NFPF)»

⁽³⁾ In English: «The Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law»

Following the 11th September 2001 terrorist attacks, the USA and the EU included the NPA on their list of terrorist groups, which created an obstacle to negotiations. The peace talks were as a result interrupted from 2004 until May 2008, when the Norwegian government facilitated an informal meeting between the two negotiating panels (representing the government and the NPD), which was adjudged to have been positive. In November that year, the two parties met again in Oslo, although this time no agreement was reached. In 2009, informal meetings continued in which both parties made clear their positions when they sat down to negotiate. On one side, to leave aside the requirement that the NPD be removed from the list of terrorist organisations, and on the other, the cessation of confrontations as a requirement for continuing negotiations. In 2010, with a new composition of the negotiating panel, the Aquino government tried to demonstrate its desire to reach an agreement before the end of its mandate.

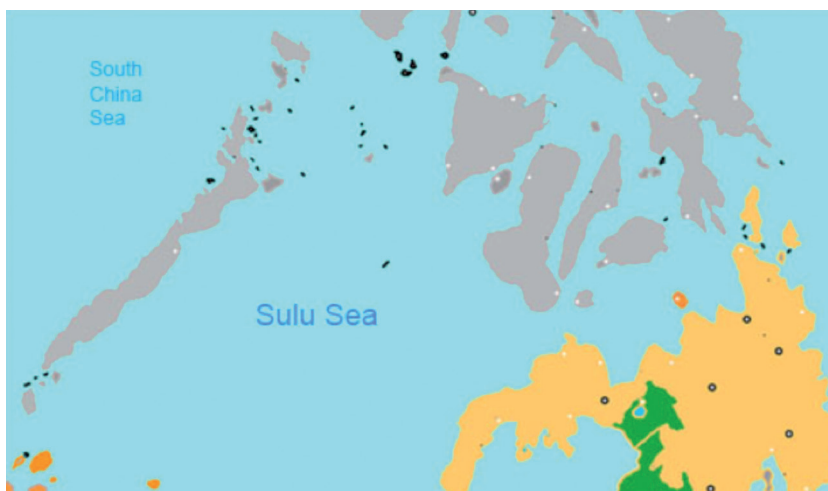
In 2010, a meeting between the leaders of both negotiating panels⁽⁴⁾ led to an improvement in relations, with the agreement of a ceasefire from 16th December 2010 to 3rd January 2011. Furthermore, some 30 prisoners accused of belonging to the NPA were released and a negotiating calendar for 2011 was established with the aim of reaching a lasting agreement over the coming years.

In addition to this conflict with the NPA, the Philippine government also has to deal with separatist claims from the Muslim population in the Mindanao region and the Sulu archipelago. In this case, the main actors are the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front) and the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group.

The armed conflict in Mindanao began in 1969 when a group calling itself the «Moro National Liberation Front» (MNLF) began to demand self-determination for an area in the south of Mindanao for what it called the «Moro people». Following internal disputes, in 1978 some members of this group split off and founded the MILF. From this point, the two groups continued their struggle in different ways. Whilst the MNLF reached an agreement with the government in 1996, in which a degree of autonomy was granted to an area of Mindanao which became known as the «Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao», the MILF never agreed with this solution, as it aspires to a greater degree of autonomy and the inclusion of more provinces in this area.

In 2001, the government began negotiations with the MILF, with Malaysia acting as the intermediary. It appeared that the conflict would end in 2008 as both parties were prepared to accept a territorial agreement; however, the Supreme Court suspended the signing of the agreement, leading to many violent

⁽⁴⁾ Alexander Padilla, on behalf of the Philippine government, and Luis Jalandoni on behalf of the NPD

Figure 11.4. Population Movement Caused by Conflicts in Mindanao

confrontations. In 2009, an international group ⁽⁵⁾ was created to support the negotiations. There has not been much change over recent years. The MNLF is demanding that the 1996 agreement be implemented in full, whilst the MILF is proposing the creation of a Bangsamoro state which maintains some relations with the government of the Philippines.

Overall the conflict has caused over 120,000 deaths and resulted in massive population movements towards the centre of the Mindanao region to avoid the fighting⁽⁶⁾ (see Figure 11.4).

Another party involved in secessionist movement is the armed Abu Sayyaf group, which began its campaigns in 1991 with the aim of creating an independent Islamic state in the Sulu archipelago and the south-western region of Mindanao. This is a radical Islamist group which is currently included on the list of terrorist organisations. It also has relations with al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah. Its methods are much more aggressive than those of the MILF, including decapitations, bomb attacks and kidnapping tourists.

■ Thailand (see Table 11.1)

- *Border Conflict with Cambodia, Political Instability and Insurgency in Pattani*

⁽⁵⁾ This group consists of Japan, the UK and Turkey, the Asia Foundation, the Centre for Humanitarian dialogue, Muhammadiyah and Conciliation Resources.

⁽⁶⁾ For more details, refer to: The search for durable solutions. Armed Conflict and Forced Displacement in Mindanao, Philippines available at: [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/E7AED9BB159CCB04C12578880027DCCE/\\$file/Durable+Solutions-Conflict+and+Displacement-Mindanao.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/E7AED9BB159CCB04C12578880027DCCE/$file/Durable+Solutions-Conflict+and+Displacement-Mindanao.pdf)

There are currently three sources of tension in Thailand: one is a territorial dispute on the border with Cambodia; another relates to separatism in the south; and the third results from the extreme polarisation of a population divided between two major parties, which has created an environment of political instability over recent years. None of these conflicts have any international implications. However, Cambodia has asked for support from the international community to resolve the conflict, although this has not gone beyond the jurisdiction of ASEAN, which, understandably, regards the conflict as having a strictly regional character.

The causes of the border conflict in the area around the Preah Vihear temple date back to 1904 when the French, who were then occupying Cambodia, and the kingdom of Siam (now Thailand) agreed their common border (see Figure 11.5). Under this division, both parties accepted that the border would be the line of the peaks of the Dangrek mountain range. Under this agreement, the temple was on Cambodian territory. Subsequently, Thailand asked the French to prepare a more detailed plan, in which the temple remained in Cambodia's territory. Nobody seemed to dispute this division until 1954 when France recognised the independence of Cambodia and Thailand took the opportunity to invade the territory around the temple and claim it as its own.

The conflict was submitted to the International Court at The Hague which agreed with Cambodia, thus confirming the validity of the maps signed at the beginning of the century. The temple would therefore be transferred to Cambodia with no shadow of doubt. What was less clear was the status of the territory which surrounded the temple and which Thailand claimed as its own. The final spark came in 2008 when the temple was declared a World Heritage site at the request of Cambodia. Thailand never agreed with this decision since, although the temple might be Cambodian, the 4.6 km² bordering it have never been assigned to either of the two countries.

The border conflict with Cambodia has largely served to promote nationalist interests in both countries, and to demonstrate the strength of the governing parties, both of which were being questioned internally. Over recent years, Thailand has been in a permanent state of instability as a result of its society being divided between the supporters of the two main political parties in the country. This extreme polarisation is a continuous source of tension within Thai society.

In 2006, a coup d'état deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra⁽⁷⁾, who had been democratically elected five years earlier. The populist policies he had

⁽⁷⁾ Thaksin is the richest man in Thailand. He is the owner of the country's leading telecommunications company (Shinawatra Computer Company). His mandate was not free of corruption, and he was accused of exploiting his position to benefit his family companies.

Figure 11.5 Sorce <http://omarhavana.wordpress.com>



pursued were not to the liking of the monarchy, the aristocracy or the army. Following the military coup⁽⁸⁾, the country was ruled by a military junta until 2007, when fresh elections were held. These elections were also won by Thaksin's party, although it was now led by Saman Sundaravej⁽⁹⁾. However, this mandate did not last long, since in late 2009 the Constitutional Court argued that there had been electoral fraud and that the party in power should relinquish its position. This decision resulted in the government passing to the Democratic Party led by Abhisit Vejjajiva, who was appointed prime minister after coming second in the elections which had been held.

In March 2009, Thaksin's supporters, mainly peasants wearing «red shirts», demonstrated against the new government, which they considered undemocratic and illegitimate. They demanded early elections and a reduction in the powers of the monarchy in order to transform it into a democratic monarchy. This movement is supported by two groups: the «United Front of Democracy against Dictatorship» (UDD)⁽¹⁰⁾ and the «Democratic Alliance against Dictatorship» (DAAD)⁽¹¹⁾. In 2010 there were demonstrations in the centre of Bangkok which lasted more than one month, resulting in the army becoming involved and 91 deaths among soldiers and demonstrators, and around 1800 other casualties.

⁽⁸⁾ There have been 18 coups in Thailand since the constitutional monarchy was established in 1932.

⁽⁹⁾ Thaksin is in exile in Dubai, from where he continues to control and finance his party.

⁽¹⁰⁾ In English: United Front of Democracy against Dictatorship

⁽¹¹⁾ In English: Democratic Alliance Against Dictatorship.

Thaksin's critics, on the other hand, chose the colour yellow, which is symbolically associated with the monarchy. They were supported by the royal family, the upper classes and the army. They are controlled by the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD).

The tensions between the army and the «red shirts» have continued unabated over the last two years, plunging the country into instability.

In May this year, Abhisit Vejjajiva announced that early elections would be held in July in order to bring the political instability to an end.

These elections were held on 3rd July 2011. The Puea Thai party led by Thaksin's sister Yingluck Shinawatra won with 265 seats, compared to the 159 won by Abhisit Vejjajiv's party, making her the first woman to govern Thailand.

In addition to the disputes with Cambodia and the instability inherent in Thailand, there are the incidents which occur on an almost daily basis in the south of the country, the origins of which date back to the start of the last century, when in 1902 the kingdom of Siam (now Thailand) and Great Britain, which exercised colonial power over Malaysia, signed an agreement in which part of the Sultanate of Pattani would be annexed to Thailand. This territory comprised the three current provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat (see figure 11.6). The people of these provinces, the majority of whom are Muslim⁽¹²⁾, have never felt integrated into Thailand with its Buddhist majority. The central authorities always sought to implement its national culture, religion and traditions in the area in order to achieve social integration; this was not to the liking of the people of these provinces, and resulted in the emergence of insurgent groups during the 1960s and 1970s. The conflict remained relatively stable over the next two decades, but the measures adopted by Thaksin Shinawatra to manage the conflict resulted in an escalation of violence in the area in 2004.

According to HRW (Human Rights Watch), 4,730 people have died since the conflict intensified in 2004, of whom 90% were civilians.

The insurgent groups have evolved in terms of both their organisation and their operations. In addition to the use of light weapons, they also now employ improvised explosive devices. From guerrillas they have developed into an organisation made up of secret cells, and they have moved from carefully planned strikes to indiscriminate attacks. What has not changed is the objective of proclaiming an independent state of Pattani reflecting its ethnic and religious identity.

⁽¹²⁾ According to HRW, 80% of the population of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat are Muslim. HRW further estimates that some 300,000 Buddhists have left the area.

Figure 11.6. Prepared inhouse based on United Nations Map no. 3853 Rev. 2



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The currently operational groups involved in incidents in the south of Thailand are:

BRN-K. Barisan Revolusi Nasional Koordinasi (a front coordinated by the National Revolution). This is an offshoot of the old BRN. At present it is the strongest and best coordinated of the groups. It proclaims a republic of Pattani.

GMIP (Gerakan Mujahidin Islam Pattani). The Movement of the Islamic Mujahideen of Pattani. Of all the groups, this is the only one alleged to have relations with Jemaah Islamiyah, which in turn has relations with al-Qaeda. It is also calling for the creation of an independent Pattani state.

New PULO. New Pattani United Liberation Organization. The new organization for the liberation of a united Pattani. This is the smallest of the groups operating in the south of Thailand.

Bersatu, which means «Union», is based in Malaysia and consists of exiles from the other groups. Its main task is to collect funds to finance the activities of the other groups.

Despite there being no formal nucleus organising these groups, their leaders meet occasionally to discuss the actions they are going to take in the region, and to coordinate larger scale actions.

■ THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CONFLICT

In early 2011, two further meetings were held between the NPD and the Philippine government at which both parties undertook to sign a series of agreements to carry out political, economic and social reforms and bring the confrontations to an end.

However, since then the government and the NPA have been swapping accusations, and the confrontations have continued, making it ever more difficult to achieve a peace agreement. In August, Jalandoni announced the definitive suspension of the peace process until the government had changed its stance. Padilla meanwhile sent a letter to Jalandoni in which he stated that there would be no formal talks by the Oslo panels in September 2011, as had been planned, and that this would continue for an indefinite period, until such time as the working committees could reach an agreement about social and economic reforms. He also stated that there would be no talks on issues related to JASIG (the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees), including the revision of the lists of people covered by it, and that nobody on the NPD negotiating panel would enjoy protection under this agreement until such time as the social and economic reforms had been negotiated. According to the spokesperson for the NPD negotiating panel, this stance destroys the approach to the negotiations followed to date, and it accused Padilla of having recently issued provocative statements to the press as «*an agent of extremely irresponsible psychological warfare*» rather than as «*a negotiator with a degree of dignity and political sense*». Furthermore, Jalandoni added that «*his stance justifies the armed revolutionary movement against the exploitation and oppression which the Philippine government are carrying out hidden behind the concepts of peace and development*».

With regards to the Mindanao region, a meeting was held in Malaysia in April 2011 between the MILF and Philippine government negotiating panels to discuss a draft presented by the former. The government even went so far as to show its willingness to amend some aspects of the Constitution in order to complete the peace process. There has also been increased coordination between the MILF and the MNLF, as both are making claims relating to the same zone. It would seem that Aquino is willing to comply with the electoral promise made last year to reach a peace agreement.

With regard to Thailand, since the confrontations around the Preah Vihear temple escalated, the tensions have resulted in tens of deaths in confrontations which have led to the use of heavy artillery. Five people were killed in February, and the population is fleeing in fear of the confrontations escalating further. This conflict is also having repercussions in both countries. On the one hand, opponents of Cambodian prime minister Hun Sen accuse him of exploiting this situation to strengthen his iron grip on the country. On the other, the detention of seven Thai activists in December 2010 by Cambodia's authorities provoked demonstrations in Thailand by the «yellow shirts» belonging to the PAD party, demanding that the government take stronger measures against its neighbour and expulsion of Cambodians from the frontier area. Cambodia has released three of the activists detained. However, it is still holding Veera Somkwamkid, the second in command of the PAD, and his assistant, Ratee Pipatanapaiboon, who they plan to put on trial on charges of spying.

On 18th July this year, the International Court of Justice approved a binding decision under which both countries were required to withdraw their troops immediately from the disputed area around the temple. According to this ruling, the situation is unstable and may worsen. Troops from both countries are currently withdrawing.

Meanwhile, despite her lack of political experience, the recently elected Thai president, Yingluck, is determined to end the instability in the country, boost the economy and fight corruption. She is governing in coalition with three other parties, which together hold 299 of the 500 parliamentary seats.

Despite being behind Abhisit Vejjajiva, the military has accepted the people's decision from the last elections. It remains to be seen whether this is really the case.

Incidents are happening on a daily basis in relation to the insurgency in provinces in the south of Thailand. Attacks are continuous and mostly aimed at the civilian population. The insurgents are also involved in extortion of farmers as a way of raising funds.

The objective of these groups proclaiming an independent Muslim state is to fight against everything related to the culture, traditions, religion and politics of the central government. This includes teachers, monks and central government civil servants. Infrastructure is also the target for violence, as in the case of schools which are burnt down and destroyed.

In July, the army announced the start of a military operation that would last until September in the mountainous region to search out insurgent camps.

■ THE ROLE OF FOREIGN ACTORS

Foreign participants have very little influence on the development of the conflicts in Thailand and the Philippines, which are internal in nature. The international community has remained on the sidelines, with only the UN calling for dialogue between the parties.

In the case of the Philippines, the external party involved, Norway, is acting as a facilitator of the negotiations between the NPA and the government, rather than being involved in the process itself. In the fight against Abu Sayyaf, the armed forces of the Philippines have the support of the USA in the joint fight against Islamist terrorism.

With respect to the conflict on the Thai border, Cambodia's prime minister has asked the UN Security Council to designate a third party to carry out the negotiations, in addition to a UN peacekeeping mission in the region to monitor the situation, as prerequisites for talks with Thailand. However, international involvement has only reached the level of ASEAN, which has pushed the two countries to reach an agreement and to accept the presence of Indonesian observers to monitor the peace process. Both countries also disagree over this proposal. Cambodia demands that they be present prior to the withdrawal of troops, whilst Thailand demands that Cambodian troops be withdrawn as a requirement for the presence of observers. Finally, the troops are being withdrawn under the supervision of the Indonesian observers.

However, the causes behind the armed action in the south of Thailand have basically ethnic roots, with Islam also being an important component. They have not expressed their opposition to all things «western» and they have not targeted tourist destinations used by westerners. This is therefore a markedly internal conflict. Even the alleged relationship between GIMP and Jemmah Islamiyah has not resulted in the internationalisation of the dispute. The groups act locally, and their actions are restricted to the south of Thailand.

■ CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

There seems little likelihood that the actions of the NPA in the Philippines will end in the short term. Twenty five years after the peace talks began, the government's negotiating panel has changed five times, whilst the members of the NPA panel have remained the same. According to the government, the NPA has less than 4000 troops, although the group itself claims that it has more than this and that its numbers are increasing. The NPA no longer seeks followers only in rural areas. Its target recruits now include educated young people from urban areas.

In the Mindanao region, the end of the conflict with the definitive setting up of an autonomous region requires greater coordination between the MNLF, the MILF and the central government. Geographically, both groups are making claims over the same territory; however, they are making different proposals for the nature of the autonomy of the zone.

One issue which might alter the peace process is the recent creation of a new group known as the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) led by Ameril Umbra Kato, an MILF commander. There is a clear separation between the two groups. Kato aims to follow his own path, arguing that the «Muslim cause» is aimed at the independence of the region, not just its autonomy. The MILF has distanced itself from any actions which might be taken by this new party, and hopes that in future it will accept the peace agreement which is reached. The MILF is currently led by Murad Ebrahim and has some 12,000 members. According to security officials, Kato has given refuge to members of Jemaah Islamiyah and Abu Sayyaf, and to Usman Basit, related to the attacks on the USA.

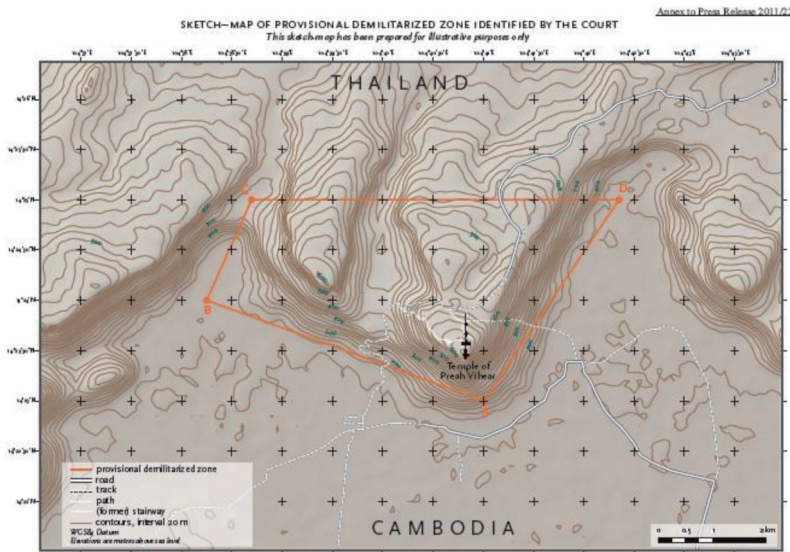
In April the MILF and Philippine government negotiating panels met in Malaysia to discuss a draft submitted by the former. The government has shown its willingness to amend some aspects of the Constitution in order to complete the peace process. It would seem that Aquino is willing to comply with the electoral promise made last year to reach a peace agreement.

With regards to Abu Sayyab, whilst everything seems to indicate that the group has been weakened by the death of its leader in 2006, police and army action and the death of Bin Laden, the possibility of a major attack in some part of the country cannot be discounted.

It is too soon to make predictions about the future of the government of Thaksin's sister in Thailand, given her limited political experience. Her opponents suspect that her policies will be guided by her brother from exile. One acid test of this will be authorisation for Thaksin himself to return to the country, even if only to attend a family event. His return might provoke the indignation of the «yellow shirts» who, backed to a great degree by the military, might provoke the replacement of Thailand's current prime minister. There are great hopes that this will not occur in a country which desperately craves stability.

Hopes for an end to the border dispute with Cambodia also rest on the new government. There will probably be a decrease in tension in the area around the Preah Vihear temple, although it will be difficult to reach an agreement on territorial limits, rather than just an agreement on freedom of access to the area for both countries.

Figure 11.7 Border map between Cambodia and Thailand



Source <http://cambodia.files.wordpress.com>

On 18th July 2011, the International Court of Justice ordered the immediate withdrawal of troops from both countries and established a «provisional demilitarised zone»⁽¹³⁾. This is a further step towards stability in the region, but we must remember that this demilitarisation does not guarantee that there will be no conflict between troops from Cambodia and Thailand (see Figure 11.7).

In mid-August, the prime minister announced a visit to Cambodia to deal with bilateral cooperation issues, strengthen ties and resolve the border conflict. Thailand is proposing bilateral negotiations, and it now seems that Cambodia is finally ready to accept this and to leave this dispute off the ASEAN agenda. It may be that the negotiations between the two countries will include a delimitation of the maritime areas belonging to each country in the Gulf of Thailand, which contain oil and gas reserves, or a joint exploitation agreement for these resources.

With regard to the end of the conflict in the south of Thailand, during her election campaign, Yingluck stated her desire to declare the Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces to be «special administrative zones», similar to the status enjoyed by Bangkok and Pattayya. Moreover, in a television interview, Thaksin recently asked for forgiveness for the aggressive policies implemented during his earlier mandate.

⁽¹³⁾ To read the decision: <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/151/16582.pdf>

Yingluck's party did not win any of the eleven seats in these three provinces⁽¹⁴⁾, demonstrating the mistrust of the prime minister's proposal in the area.

Whilst we are awaiting the establishment of the special administration zone, incidents are taking place almost daily.

However, it is unlikely that there will be an «Islamisation of the conflict» which might lead to international involvement. If the armed groups now started to justify the incidents on a purely religious basis, ignoring ethnic-nationality issues, they might lose the support of the population.

■ Other Regional Tensions in the Southeast Asia region

- *The Regional Dimension of Jihadist Terrorism in Southeast Asia*

Jihadist terrorism in the Southeast Asia area, which is mainly carried out by Jemaah Islamiyah, aims to form a caliphate encompassing Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Brunei.

Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) is a jihadist terrorist group with historic ties to al-Qaeda⁽¹⁵⁾. It has been included on the main lists of terrorist organisations. In Southeast Asia it is present in Indonesia and, to a far lesser extent, the Philippines. It is also known to have established cells in Malaysia and Singapore. We also know that it has logistical and operational support in the south of Thailand and in Cambodia.

Its attacks have mainly been aimed at western targets. These include those carried out in Bali in 2002 and 2005, which killed 230 people; the attack on the Marriott Hotel in 2003 and the Australian Embassy in 2004, both in Jakarta; and the explosion on the SuperFerry in the Philippines in 2004.

Of all the countries in Southeast Asia, Indonesia can most expect a degree of JI activity, as the organisation's primary demand is for the «Islamisation» of Indonesia⁽¹⁶⁾. Nevertheless, the counter-terrorism policy carried out by the government over recent years has been effective, resulting in the detention of numerous leaders and sympathisers. There are two remaining issues: one is the role played by prisons, which serve as breeding grounds for spreading radical Islamist ideas, enabling the cause to attract new supporters; the other is the spreading of the message using the internet.

⁽¹⁴⁾ <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/politics/247391/yingluck-pressed-on-zone-vow>

⁽¹⁵⁾ It has been claimed that JI is the Southeast Asia branch of al-Qaeda.

⁽¹⁶⁾ It should be remembered that this is the largest Muslim nation on Earth: 80% of its 240 million people are Muslim.

However, there are disagreements within the terrorist organisation about the line they should take, as many of its members believe that indiscriminate attacks are also attacks on Muslim interests.

There has been a change of targets in recent attacks carried out in Indonesia. They are no longer aimed at «western symbols», but instead are aimed at the country's moderate government through the security forces.

Another target for JI might be oil tankers in the Malacca Straits⁽¹⁷⁾, through which some 60,000 ships pass every year. If the straits were blocked, almost half of the global merchant fleet would have to seek alternative routes around the Indonesian archipelago.

- *Incidents in the South China Sea (see Figure 11.8)*

Apart from the internal armed conflicts in the region, tensions have been generated by recent events over the last couple of months related to the disputes over sovereignty of the Spratly⁽¹⁸⁾ and Paracel Islands in the South China Sea. Although these islands have always been the subject of sovereignty disputes, this became much more important in the 1980s when the extraordinary wealth of natural resources on the islands was discovered.

The Spratly archipelago is rich in fishing, oil and gas resources. China and Vietnam both claim sovereignty over the whole of the archipelago, whilst Malaysia and the Philippines claim part of it. For its part, Brunei has only taken possession of one of the reefs in the south.

The Paracel Islands are equidistant from China and Vietnam and are a source of friction between the two because of the natural resources in the area. They are currently administered by China. However, Vietnam is claiming sovereignty.

In 1982, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea established that an exclusive economic zone stretching 200 nautical miles from the continental shelf could be claimed. This is the reason for the increasing interest in claiming full or partial sovereignty of the islands.

Tensions between China and Vietnam, and between China and the Philippines, are becoming ever more frequent. This year these have resulted in a number of

⁽¹⁷⁾ The Malacca Straits are situated between Malaysia and the island of Sumatra. They are 805 km long, and only 2,7 km wide at the narrowest point. This is the shortest sea route between the Persian Gulf and Asian markets. Some 30% of global trade passes through the Straits, as does almost half of its oil. There was an increase in piracy in the region in the 1990s. However, since 2005 there has been a decrease in criminal activity as a result of joint patrols by Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand.

⁽¹⁸⁾ The Spratly Islands are in the South China Sea, between China and Vietnam. Although the land area is only around 5 km², the archipelago as whole, consisting of around 100 islets, covers an area of 400,000 km².

Figure 11.8



confrontations aimed at stopping development of the zone, such as for example the Chinese fishing boat which cut sounding cables being laid by a Vietnamese ship.

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The Philippines have also complained of sabotage of ships carrying out scientific research in the area and Chinese ships dumping construction material in areas close to the archipelago, which have led the Philippines government to submit a complaint to the UN. As a dissuasive measure, the Aquino government has announced that it will send a warship to monitor the area, as it considers the presence of Chinese ships to be a «serious violation of its territorial integrity». This defiant attitude from the Philippines has even gone so far that they have proposed renaming the area: under this, the «South China Sea» would be called the «Western Philippines Sea».

In addition, the Philippines is seeking support from the USA to resolve the conflict based on the existing Mutual Defence Treaty of 1951, in which they undertook to defend each other in the event of an attack in Philippine territory or in the Pacific region. Meanwhile, the USA considers that it also has an interest in these territorial disputes, as they could affect the security of the sea routes around the islands. For the moment, it has announced its intention to reinforce its presence in the area, particularly taking into account that Southeast Asia is rapidly becoming the global centre for maritime activity.

However, China is pursuing dialogue and cooperation as a way of resolving the conflict, arguing that China would never take measures that would threaten the security of the area. It also wants parties which are not directly involved (a clear allusion to the USA) to remain on the sidelines.

It seems that ASEAN is also, for the moment, committed to dialogue and negotiation with China. At the last multilateral meeting, held in Bali at the end of July and featuring China, the USA and Japan, it was agreed to implement the «Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea», which was signed in 2002, and which consists of a code of conduct without establishing specific measures. This also established a timetable for holding negotiations.

■ CHRONOLOGY

Table 11.2

TIMELINE OF THE PEACE PROCESS BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT AND THE NDFP	
DATE	EVENT
1969	Start of NPA (New People's Army) activity
1986	Start of Government negotiations with the NDFP (National Democratic Front of the Philippines), the NPA's political arm
1987	The NPA declares a ceasefire
1992	Joint declaration signed in the Hague between the Philippine government and the NDFP
1995	Signing of Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG)
2001	USA and the EU include the NPA on lists of terrorist organisations
2004-2008	Talks broken off
Mayo 2008	New meeting in Oslo
2009	Negotiations resume
2010	New negotiating panel appointed. Declaration of ceasefire from 16th December 2010 to 3rd January 2011. Timetable established for negotiations in 2011
2011	At the beginning of the year two meetings are held, but in August NDFP peace panel head Jalandoni announces the definitive end to the peace process and government peace panel chairman Padilla cancels the meeting that was scheduled for September.

Table 11.3

TIMELINE OF THE MINDANAO CONFLICT	
DATE	EVENT
1969	A group calling itself the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) starts campaigning for self-determination for part of the south of Mindanao, calling it Bangsamoro Land
1978	Split in the MNLF and creation of the MILF
1996	The MNLF reaches an agreement with the government, and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao comes into being on the western part of the island
1991	Creation of Abu Sayyaf

2001	Start of negotiations between the government and the MILF
2003	The MILF signs a ceasefire
2006	Death of Janjalani, leader of Abu Sayyaf
2008	The Supreme Court suspends the signing of the territorial agreement reached with the MILF, which leads to an escalation in violence
2009	International group set up to support the negotiating process
2010	The MILF expels rogue commander Kato, who was responsible for the violent events of 2008
2011	Talks continue between the government, the MILF and the MNLF. In August, Kato announces the creation of a new group called Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)

Table 11.4

TIMELINE OF THE BORDER CONFLICT BETWEEN THAILAND AND CAMBODIA	
DATE	EVENT
1904	Agreement signed on demarcation of the border between the French colonial power for Cambodia and the Kingdom of Siam (present-day Thailand).
1953	Independence of Cambodia
1962	Decision of the International Court of Justice. The Temple of Preah Vihear is Cambodian
2000	Thailand and Cambodia sign a memorandum of understanding to create a bilateral commission charged with demarcating the border.
2008	In July the UNESCO declares the temple a World Heritage Site. October sees the first clashes between soldiers of the two countries.
2010	In December 2010 seven Thai activists are detained by the Cambodian authorities.
2011	In July, the International Court of Justice in the Hague demands the immediate demilitarisation of the area. In August talks resume after a new Thai government has been formed.

Table 11.5

TIMELINE OF INTERNAL INSTABILITY IN THAILAND	
DATE	EVENT
2001	Thaksin Shinawatra elected prime minister
2006	Coup d'état deposes Thaksin. The country is governed by a military junta until December 2007

2007	Constitution approved. Elections held in December. The People's Power Party, under Samak Sundaravej, an ally of Thaksin Shinawatra, declares victory.
2008	On 2nd December, Thailand's Constitutional Tribunal declares that there has been electoral fraud. Thaksin leaves power. On 15th December Abhisit Vejjajiva of the Democrat party is appointed prime minister. Thaksin goes into exile in Dubai
2009	In March Thaksin's followers, wearing red shirts, hold demonstrations in protest against the allegedly illegitimate government of Abhisit Vejjajiva.
2010	Successive clashes between the «red shirts» occupying part of central Bangkok and the «yellow shirts» who support the ruling party. In May, the army clears the red shirts' camp, leading to more than 90 deaths and thousands of injuries.
2011	In May, Abhisit Vejjajiva announces that early elections will be held. On 3rd July elections are held. The Puea Thai party, led by Thaksin's sister Yingluck Shinawatra, emerges victorious.

Table 11.6

TIMELINE OF THE INSURGENCY IN THE SOUTH OF THAILAND	
DATE	EVENT
1909	Siam (present-day Thailand) annexes Pattani
1960-70	Emergence of insurgent groups
1968	Creation of the National Revolutionary Front (BRN) and the PULO (Pattani United Liberation Organisation)
1989	Creation of Bersatu (United Front for the Independence of Pattani)
1995	Creation of the GMIP (Muslim Mujahideen Movement of Pattani)
2004	January sees start of armed struggle by insurgent groups
2004-2011	Incidents occur almost daily. The number of fatalities during this period amounts to more than 4,800. In July 2011 the army announces the start of an operation in the mountainous region in search of insurgent camps.

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Chapter XII

KOREA: THE DREAM OF A REUNIFIED, NUCLEAR-FREE PENINSULA

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SUMMARY

The resurgence of China through unprecedented economic growth has transformed it into the third largest economic power in the world, behind the European Union and the United States, shifting the axis of the geostrategic panorama to north-east Asia. Within this new context, an intricate mesh of geopolitical relations is developing, creating a complex framework in which the great economic and military powers are simultaneously cooperating and competing. One of the main conflicts in this area is that in the Korean peninsula, featuring one country, North Korea, anchored to the survival of a hereditary autocratic regime, which, due to its economic poverty, bases its survival on military power and nuclear capabilities, amidst a background of constant challenges and confrontations.

Key words

Asia, China, United States, North Korea, South Korea, Korean Peninsula, Reunification, Nuclear, Proliferation, Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Global economic and political power, which in the 20th century was first concentrated in Europe and then the United States, is now gradually gravitating towards Asia, resulting in a reordering of geopolitics. Neither Europe nor Spain can stand apart from a region which is establishing itself as being decisive for the future, but in which there are numerous sources of tension, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and North Korea, together with other issues related to Chinese territorial claims⁽¹⁾.

■ INTRODUCTION

In today's world there is a mixture of classic risks and threats and others which are new and even as yet unknown. The complex nature of the challenges we face today creates an added difficulty when trying to ensure the level of security demanded by the public in the 21st century. In a future which will probably be less like the past than we can possibly imagine, our security context will continue to be defined by unexpected events.⁽²⁾

There can be no doubt that the resurgence of China, with its unprecedented economic growth, represents one of the fundamental factors in current strategic geopolitical thinking. There is one single focal point of geopolitical interest for this multipolar vision of the world in which comprehensive political action is imposed with a multilateralist dimension: north-east Asia. This re-emergence, together with that of other regional powers, establishes a better balance between the various actors searching for a position in the international strategic picture in accordance with its demographic, territorial and economic potential, and provides specific reference points for a Western world which is complacent about its privileged position.

We can look at north-east Asia geopolitically (see Table 12.1) from a number of diverse angles. However, in this chapter of the first geopolitical analysis of conflicts by the Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE - Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies), we will use the structure of the first Spanish Security Strategy (Estrategia Española de Seguridad - EES) in order to understand «this new multipolar world which is currently in transition» in which the «security challenges are ever more complex and dynamic, in a period of changing paradigms. However, this age of uncertainty is also a time of great opportunities, if together we can understand how to handle them. As an open and dynamic society, we [Spain] must confront such changes with confidence, responsibility and efficiency»⁽³⁾:

⁽¹⁾ Spanish Security Strategy. «Una responsabilidad de todos» (A responsibility for all). Chapter 2. The security of Spain in the world. Page 24. The Spanish Security Strategy can be downloaded at: http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/RecursosInteres/Nacional/Estrategia-EspanolaSeguridad_junio2011.pdf

⁽²⁾ Op. cit. Chapter 4. Threats, risks and responses. Page 34.

⁽³⁾ Op. cit. (220). Chapter 1. A necessary strategy. Page 8.

Table 12.1. Regional geopolitical indicators. Source: CIA. The World Factbook

	RUSSIA	CHINA	JAPAN	TAIWAN
Land area sq. km ²	17.098.242	9.596.961	377.915	35.980
GDP (2010 estimated)	\$2.22 trillion	\$10.09 trillion	\$4.31 trillion	\$821.8 billion
Agriculture	4%	38,1%	1,4%	1,4%
Industry	36,8%	27,8%	24,9%	31,1%
Services	59,1	34,1%	73,8%	67,5%
Income per capita (2010 est.)	15.900\$	7.600\$	34.000\$	35.700\$
Growth rate (2010 est.)	4%	10,3%	3,9%	10,8%
Population: July 2011 estimated	138,739,892	1,336,718,015	126,475,664	23,071,779
Population growth	-0,47%	0.493%	-0.278%	0,193%
Infant mortality per thousand	16,04 p.m.	7.03 p.m.	2,78 p.m.	7 p.m.
Life expectancy	66,29	74.68	82,25	78,32
0-14:	15,2%	17,6%	13,1%	15,6%
15-64:	71,8%	73,6%	64%	73,4%
Over 65:	13%	8,9%	22,9%	10,9%
Military spending as % of GDP	3,9% (2005)	4,3% (2006)	0,8% (2006)	2,2% (2009)

■ Scope⁽⁴⁾

The three classic theatres are dominated by the shock between land and sea represented by the border between the western view of the world, exemplified by Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, and new models of emerging security, with a regulated transition in the east of Russia, China and the vast, scarcely populated, regions of Mongolia, the least densely populated country in the world.

In this region, there is also the widest social gap in a world which would like to see and understand itself as a new global village. A 4 kilometre wide demilitarised zone imposed by the United Nations following the armistice in the Korean War, signed on 17th July 1953, and stretching over 1,500 kilometres, divides the two Koreas; there is a tense stand-off along this frontier dividing a historic nation now subject to excessive social differences (see Table 12.2).

⁽⁴⁾ Op. cit. (220). Chapter 4. Threats, risks and responses. Page 34. «There are six specific theatres or environments. Together with the classic land, sea and air theatres, which in the past were the source of most risks and threats, there are now others such as space, information and, particularly, cyberspace, which are becoming of the utmost importance.»

Table 12.2. Comparison between the two Koreas. Source: CIA. The World Factbook

	NORTHKOREA	SOUTH KOREA
Land area	120,538 sq. km ²	99,720 sq. km ²
GDP	\$40 billion (2009 estimated)	\$40 billion (2009 estimated)
Structure of GDP	Agriculture: 20,7%	2,6%
	Industry: 47,8%	39,3%
	Services: 31,5 % (2010 estimated)	58,2% (2010 estimated)
Income per capita	1.800 \$ (2009 estimated)	30.000 \$ (2010 estimated)
Growth rate	-0.9% (2009 estimated)	6.1% (2010 estimated)
Population	24.457.492 (July 2011 estimated)	48.754.657 (July 2011 estimated)
Population growth	0.538% (2011 estimated)	0.23% (2011 estimated)
Infant mortality per thousand	27.11	4.16
Life expectancy	68,89	79,05
Age composition	0-14: 22,4%	15,7%
	15-64: 68,6%	72,9%
	Over 65: 9,1%	11,4%
Military spending	n/a	2.7% of GDP (2006)

In the remaining theatres, the complexities, contradictions and dynamics of the challenges and risks generate a scenario which is subject to great uncertainty. In this context, the virtual world is particularly important: the various actors in the region are concentrating their efforts on information and cyberspace in order to gain control and power. The risks and opportunities inherent in these new spaces are generating particular unease in authoritarian societies such as China and North Korea. On the one hand, efforts are needed to control these areas which are ever more populated and have ever greater power to bring people together, as demonstrated in the recent uprisings in Arab countries. On the other, there is increasing militarisation of what are termed shared global spaces⁽⁵⁾ to counter the hegemony of the United States in the area (although the

⁽⁵⁾ «Two concepts can be highlighted in relation to the operating environment: the term «hybrid» to indicate increasing complexity, and the «global commons» as domains or areas which no state controls, but which all states depend on. In this latter concept, there is particular emphasis on the risk for the USA of «anti-access» capabilities, which could impede the projection of its military power.» IEEE Analysis Document 01-2010. Viewed on 31st August 2011 at: http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/DIEEE_012010-QDR_2010_REPORT-FEB_10.pdf

country is not located in this area, it does have a significant presence in South Korea and Japan)⁽⁶⁾.

■ Risk Factors⁽⁷⁾

The vulnerability of this region to such risk factors is obvious. The imbalances, tensions and trends which mark these six indicators are particularly critical.

Globalisation establishes challenges of a diverse nature which, at the same time, offer a window of opportunity, but could develop into a source of instability due to the scarcity of regional security elements, confidence-building measures and the lack of a tradition of dialogue and transparency. Furthermore, we should remember that some historic wounds have still not healed and are playing a very important political and social role.

Demographic imbalances, together with poverty and inequality, are sources of tension which will have an impact which is unpredictable by nature. The ageing of the population in the most developed countries, the impact of megacities and the results of China's one child policy, with the loss of 60 million young people in the medium term, will generate internal migratory flows, the impact of which will depend on the degree of cooperation and integration in the region.

China is surprisingly and particularly threatened by climate change, and could suffer disproportionate impact, together with Mongolia, if global agreements are not reached. However, should such agreements be reached, they will have a significant cost in terms of growth rates. Furthermore, the technological field, on which China is placing particular emphasis⁽⁸⁾, will be particularly important for stability and security in the region.

Finally, the complex political, social, ethnic and religious reality is a cultural mosaic which could accentuate the radicalisation of loyalties and identity-building reactions. This mesh of realities, together with the dispersal of power

⁽⁶⁾ During his recent visit to China, the US Vice-President Joseph Biden declared: «I have said to the Chinese leaders and people that the USA is a power in the Asia-Pacific region and that it will remain as such»

⁽⁷⁾ Op. cit. (220). Chapter 3. Risk factors. Page 27. «In our societies there are today a number of global phenomena which favour the spread or transformation of the threats and risks we are facing and which increase our vulnerability. These phenomena condition the risks and threats but also, in many cases, provide the instruments we need to respond to them». These risk factors include: dysfunctions arising from globalisation; demographic imbalances; poverty and inequality; climate change; technological dangers; and radical and undemocratic ideologies.

⁽⁸⁾ An example of this interest can be found in the 2005-2020 science and technology development plan, which took two years to develop and which covers most Chinese intellectual centres and entities.

in a highly dynamic virtual environment, may give rise to situations of extreme tension.

■ **Risks and Threats⁽⁹⁾.**

There are a number of problems in terms of security and stability in the region, including natural disasters, such as the catastrophe that struck Japan and its Fukushima nuclear power station, the full consequences of which have yet to be analysed, but which resulted in a change of government and a decision to pursue a future without nuclear energy. There are also regional and separatist tensions which involve international terrorism. However, perhaps one of the areas where the threats most likely to result in confrontations are concentrated is in the adjoining seas, where disputes, claims and frequent incidents do not suggest that there are any easy or peaceful solutions. This is particularly the case when we consider the wealth of resources contained in these waters.

However, there can be no doubt that the most important source of tension is that generated by North Korea (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, DPRK). Whilst South Korea (the Republic of Korea, RK) represents one of the most important success stories in the progress and development of democratic values, its northern neighbour is one of the most anachronistic examples of an arrogant state with an ossified structure that is difficult to understand in a world in which it is hoped that human rights will form a basic cornerstone of international relations. Its nuclear weapons programme and its development of ballistic missiles, together with an internal situation which is difficult to study but which is subject to two key factors (the survival of the regime and the stagnation of the economy) present a critical situation. The dynastic succession of the Kim family regime, which is now preparing to transfer power to the third generation; the famines suffered from time to time by its population; the high level of corruption; and the development of organised crime to traffic in prohibited items; together with a defiant attitude towards proliferation, with an apparent lack of interest in the possible consequences, represent a threat not only to stability in the region, but also to global peace and security.

■ **BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT**

As forewarned in 2004 by the UN High Level Group on threats, challenges and change, the «erosion of the non-proliferation regime» is the most serious threat to international peace and security.

⁽⁹⁾ Op. cit. (220) Armed conflicts, terrorism, organised crime, economic and financial insecurity, energy vulnerability, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cyber threats, uncontrolled migration, emergencies and catastrophes, and critical infrastructure, supplies and services.

The absence of certain countries from the 1968 Nuclear Weapons Non-Proliferation Treaty results in regional instability, and could bring global security into question. This is the case for example with India and Pakistan, both of which have nuclear weapons and are not subject to checks by the IAEA; Israel, with its ambiguous nuclear status; and North Korea, which left the NPT following nuclear and ballistic missile tests.

As demonstrated at the 2010 Examination Conference, two of the major challenges for the international community are ensuring compliance with the broad-based agreement between nuclear and non-nuclear countries on which the NPT treaty is founded, and guaranteeing the sovereign right to nuclear energy without this increasing the risk of proliferation⁽¹⁰⁾.

The current situation in the Korean peninsula dates back to the end of the Second World War. Its division between the two winning blocs was aggravated by war between the two Koreas, which was initiated by the North in an attempt at national unification as part of the internationalist and patriotic vision of Kim Il-sung, the country's so-called «eternal president». From the declaration of the armistice which brought a false ending to the conflict, these two concepts of society have been in confrontation, with no end in sight at present.

It was during the war against Japanese occupation in Manchuria when Kim Il-sung changed his name for that of one of the guerrilla leaders and had his baptism of fire, establishing links with the Kapsan guerrilla group which would play a fundamental role in supporting and controlling the regime. He returned to Korea in 1945, having left in 1919 aged seven. His rapid rise and control over the party was due to the emblematic legacy he received from his father and grandfather who had fought against the invasion of the peninsula by the imperialist colonial powers of the time, Japan and the United States. He led the country for 46 years (from the establishment of the DPRK in 1948 until his death in 1994 aged 82), enabling him to consolidate a system for transmitting power from father to son, something unprecedented in Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

As was bound to be the case, the two societies have developed in radically different ways. North Korea has become ever more focused inwards on itself, based on the «Juche» ideology developed by Kim Il-sung. This features a substantial autocratic component and promotes strategic autonomy and popular resistance in order to progressively reduce the influence of its powerful northern neighbours, particularly China and Russia, its former mentor. This has brought it into radical conflict with its eternal enemy (the United States) and, as a result, with its allies in the area. Meanwhile, South Korea has de-

⁽¹⁰⁾ Op. cit. Chapter 4. Threats, risks and responses. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Page 63.

veloped dramatically into the tenth largest economy in the world, with GDP per head similar to that in leading Western democracies⁽¹¹⁾.

The divergence in this development perhaps accounts for a political stance characterised by randomness and apparent lack of calculation, which puts its own people into impossible situations as it does its neighbours, who see their own security increasingly threatened. There is only one objective to its politics: the survival of the regime, which obliges its elite to keep the country in a state of almost permanent confrontation.

For example, the origins of North Korea's nuclear programme could be considered to have started with a natural development that lay within international rules. This programme was mainly supported by the former Soviet Union and, to a lesser extent, China, and included North Korean scientists who were trained in Japan. Following this model, it joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1974 and signed the NPT as a party state in 1984.

However, then came the fall of the Berlin Wall and China's new political approach marked by Deng Xiaoping's «one State, two Systems». This was when doubts first started to emerge about the peaceful nature of North Korea's nuclear programme, which were confirmed when it carried out its first underground nuclear test in 2006 and by statements by its leaders about the status it sought as a nuclear power. From that moment on, such declarations (which were for propaganda and nationalistic purposes) have been repeated regularly. The evidence of its nuclear programme and its ballistic missile tests (see Figure 12.1) resulted in two UN Security Council Resolutions being approved

Figure 12.1. Range of North Korean missiles. Source: 2010 ROK Defence White Paper



imposing significant economic sanctions. Its renunciation of the NPT on 10th January 2003 confirmed the need to keep dialogue channels open, both bilaterally with the USA and South Korea and in the Six-Party Talks (the two Koreas, Japan, Russia, China and the USA).

A further important characteristic of the conflict is the dynastic nature of the North Korean regime. The inherited nature of the country's leadership, whilst it gives some stability to the regime, generates periods of great tension during consolidation of the leadership and the generation of the prestige required to maintain the regime's authority. Whilst Kim Il-sung consolidated his position during two key periods (the Soviet occupation of 1945-1948 and the Korean War of 1950 to 1953), the main pillar of support for his oldest son Kim Jong-il is the development of the nuclear programme. The takeover by the third generation (Kim Chong-un) is against the background of increasingly serious conventional conflicts, in what appears to be a search for recognition as a nuclear power outside the NPT.

The accession of Kim Jong-il, with the old dictator present at the fall of the Soviet empire, was forged when Moscow established diplomatic relations with South Korea (1990). This was followed two years later by diplomatic relations being established with China; this was interpreted as abandonment of strategic support for North Korea and, as a result, there was a need to obtain independent strategic defence based on nuclear autonomy.

Kim Jong-il was appointed president of the National Defence Commission in April 1993, at the same time as the PRNK announced its withdrawal from the NPT. In 1998, coinciding with him assuming the party leadership, and at the same time as his father was declared the country's eternal president, the country carried out its first attempt to launch a satellite, which hid the testing of a long-range ballistic missile. This test was described by the country's internal propaganda as a historic miracle, whilst the economic stagnation and terrible poverty of 1997 and 1998 were based on an imperialist conspiracy to isolate and suffocate the country, which had to be resisted through internal strengthening against external enemies. In these circumstances, Kim Jong-il established the top political priority as being the consolidation of the military structure as a fundamental element for survival⁽¹²⁾.

■ THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CONFLICT

«Despite the sanctions imposed by the international community and its economic difficulties, North Korea has put its greatest efforts into building a strong and prosperous nation by 2012. The fact that North Korea is the fourth-largest conventional military power in the world and has developed

⁽¹²⁾ Songun (Military First)

weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, represents a serious threat to peace on the Korean peninsula⁽¹³⁾.»

The uncertainty of the current situation is demonstrated by the ostensible deterioration in the regional geopolitical scenario in which provocative acts have taken place. This is a situation in which faulty calculations could unleash responses which would result in an escalation of tension and inflame the conflict until it develops into a crisis.

As a result of Kim Jong-il's physical problems (2008), which resulted in him disappearing from public life for several months suffering from what seems to have been a heart attack, North Korea unreservedly demanded its right to the status of a nuclear power and its right to possess nuclear weapons outside the NPT. It announced plans to experiment with enriched uranium and to improve its plutonium production programme, as well as the success of its second nuclear test (2009); this resulted in a second UN Security Council Resolution (Resolution 1874 of 12th June), with support from China.

However, the most serious events took place in 2010 with ongoing confrontations between the two Koreas (see Fig. 12.2), such as the sinking in March of the 1,200 tonne corvette Cheonan and the artillery duel over Yeompyeong island in November.

The sinking of the South Korean ship by a North Korean torpedo, as demonstrated by evidence presented by the government of South Korea, in waters

Figura 12.2 Source www.ieee.es



⁽¹³⁾ 2010 Defence White Paper. Ministry of National Defence Republic of Korea. Section 3. North Korea situation and military threat Page 24.

close to the disputed limit of territorial waters resulted in the death of 46 crew members. The UN Security Council condemned the attack, but did not name North Korea as being responsible, due, this time, to opposition from China. The declaration by the President of the UN Security Council demonstrated the concern about the results of the investigation by the group of civil and military experts led by South Korea, which categorically affirmed that North Korea was responsible for the attack.

As a result of this incident, relations between North and South plunged to their worst point in many years, with South Korea's President Lee Myung-bak describing North Korea as its «main enemy». Against this background, trade between the two Koreas fell by over 30%. In July that year, President Obama announced that new economic sanctions would be imposed upon North Korea; this caused an immediate reaction from the North Korean foreign minister, who announced that his country would reinforce its nuclear deterrent capacity to that of the most advanced states.

However, this did not stop the armies of the North and South exchanging artillery fire over the island of Yeonpyeong (close to the territorial limit imposed during the armistice) on 23rd November 2010 in one of the most serious confrontations in decades. During these exchanges, North Korean batteries fired in excess of 175 shells which hit its neighbouring country, killing two South Korean soldiers and two civilians, with more than 15 other casualties; there is no information on the damage suffered by the North. The North Korean authorities claimed that the South had started the artillery duel, whilst the South stated that its units had been carrying out artillery exercises with live fire, but that it had not at any time fired into North Korean territory.

These serious events immediately resulted in a delay in the intention to transfer operational force control (OPCON) in the event of war from US forces to South Korean forces from 2012, as previously planned, to 2015; and an increase in multinational armies in the area. In addition, this created a state of nervousness among units in the zone which has resulted in unplanned actions, such as the machine gunning of a passenger plane by a South Korean unit, and a further artillery reaction to what North Korean authorities state were noises from a construction project in the area.

At the same time as these events were unfolding, North Korea reaffirmed its status as a nuclear power outside the NPT, openly declaring the development or uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing programmes.

One of the key elements in terms of internal politics which explains this situation of regional confrontation and international provocation is the appointment in September of Kim Chong-un, the youngest child of the North Korean leader, as a four-star general, together with his aunt, Kim Kyong-hui, the wife of Jang Seong-taek, who is considered to be the number 2 in the country and

the real power in the shadows for the continuation and survival of the regime in the event of the sudden death or incapacity of Kim Jong-il. This appointment, which was accepted by the military leadership and ratified by an extraordinary convention of the workers' party in the capital to celebrate the 62nd anniversary of the founding of the nation, which had the largest number of participants since 1980, is regarded as a reaffirmation of Kim Jong-il's control over the military and the party apparatus.

The US and South Korean intelligence services are convinced that Kim Jong-il orchestrated the serious events of 2010 in order to ensure the succession of his youngest son, Kim Jong-un. From this moment, the number of times that father and son have appeared together in public at military and business centres has multiplied in an attempt to promote the public image of the successor and to prepare a young man, believed to be less than 30 years old and with little capacity to take over power in the short term.

■ THE ROLE OF FOREIGN ACTORS

«The two major proliferation challenges faced by the international community are in Asia. North Korea uses its nuclear programme as a form of international blackmail to ensure the survival of its political regime and to achieve international aid for its impoverished population. However, the problem is not solely confined to the Korean peninsula, as the North Koreans have found that nuclear technology for military purposes is a highly profitable product for exporting to other country, thus enabling proliferation in other regions.⁽¹⁴⁾»

The currently suspended Six-Party Talks involve the main actors and economic powers on the international scene: even though the European Union is noticeable by its absence, it can be considered to be represented by the USA, as it fully supports the US policy on proliferation.

The participation of Russia and Japan provides two radically different situations and points of view. The former, as a major nuclear power and the initiator of the North Korean nuclear programme, can play a key role as a potential third channel for resolving technical issues involved in the conflict, as it can ensure that Pyongyang is continuing its nuclear programme for peaceful use; however, despite its veto on the Security Council, it does not appear to be in a position to guarantee the security and continuity of the North Korean regime. In this regard, its policy appears to be clearly in line with that followed by international bodies such as the United Nations and the International Energy Authority (IAEA). For its part, Japan, as a denuclearised country, feels threa-

⁽¹⁴⁾ Cuaderno de Estrategia n° 143. «The rise of Asia: strategic implications». Chapter V. «Nuclear proliferation in Asia», Miguel Ángel Ballesteros Martín, page 200.

tened by the nuclear approaches of its neighbours, thus reinforcing its feelings of insecurity, particularly following the latest North Korean ballistic missile tests, which landed in the Sea of Japan. This situation reinforces the need for a defensive presence and guarantees from the USA in the region.

Meanwhile, the emergence of China, whilst it facilitates increased exchanges of all types (economic, cultural, scientific, etc.) among all the countries in the region, presents some disturbing geostrategic implications for the inevitable clash of competing interests, before the region can create the systems and confidence-building measures required to develop peaceful competition.

Like the rest of the international community, the United States, which is technically still at war with North Korea as no peace treaty has ever been signed, has praised the restraint and responsibility of South Korea's response to the latest serious events in the zone; however, there can be no doubt that the escalation of tension and nervousness at present is causing undesirable reactions, although for the moment these have had no strategic consequences. Its involvement in the scenario is the only guarantee that proliferation will not spread like wildfire in the zone⁽¹⁵⁾.

For North Korea, the USA is the fundamental element on which the survival of its regime is based, being its natural enemy, both ideologically and militarily. Both of these issues have come together in a line of action which aims to achieve a formal resolution, through bilateral negotiations, of a peace process which grants it the formal status of a leading military power and a security commitment⁽¹⁶⁾ for the continuation of the regime which, according to the Pyongyang authorities, will ensure its economic development. The USA has rejected this possibility, although it still holds regular bilateral exchanges, formally defined as talks, in order to keep communication channels open.

These relations have been dominated by the nuclear dimension. The effect of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombs on the Japanese army has had a decisive influence on the strategic thinking of leaders in the region. The collapse of their resistance in the Korean peninsula enabled Soviet troops to quickly take control of the north of the country, denying Kim Il-sung the possibility of being involved in the liberation of his country at the head of the 100th Brigade of the Red Army, instead landing by boat weeks later without having taken part in the liberation.

Subsequently, during the Korean War, Kim Il-sung's knowledge of details of President Truman's plans to use nuclear weapons had a considerable impact

⁽¹⁵⁾ South Korea and Japan have the capacity to produce nuclear weapons. In Japan, the fate of the fourth reactor at Fukushima continues to be an unknown. Following the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from its territory and from ships which patrol the zone in 1991, as a result of the latest events, two thirds of South Korea's population are in favour of it having its own nuclear deterrent.

⁽¹⁶⁾ The regime's insecurity was increased by the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

on the country's sense of vulnerability to an attack by the USA. From this moment, efforts to avoid proliferation in the zone have failed to achieve their objective, with China becoming a nuclear power in 1964, India and Pakistan in 1998, and North Korea carrying out tests in 2006 and 2009. However, the case of North Korea has particular characteristics that have put the NPT and efforts to achieve a denuclearised peninsula in accordance with its Article Seven in a difficult position.

There have always been suspicions about the dual use of nuclear technology by North Korea. Doubts about use of the NPT, and in particular its Article Four⁽¹⁷⁾, as a shield to hide its nuclear weapons programme had always existed, until the programme was reported in 2003. The efforts of various US governments and the IAEA have not been sufficient to stop North Korea from becoming the fourth state outside the NPT to have nuclear weapons. Furthermore, this case raises a new consideration which affects the validity and continuation of the treaty: for the first time, a state has withdrawn from the treaty in accordance with its Article Ten⁽¹⁸⁾, having carried out its first nuclear test. This situation was widely denounced by the international community, but this demonstrates the weakness of the treaty due to the inability of nuclear powers to propose a timetable for complying with its Article Six⁽¹⁹⁾. With its attitude, North Korea has opened a new route which can be used by any state to achieve the status of a nuclear power: Iran is the most obvious example of this.

Against this background, we must consider the complex situation of China, which its own people regard as «one State, two Systems»: communist on the continent, and capitalist in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao; and three countries, developed, developing and underdeveloped. This unitary vision of the State and its territorial integrity and the continuity of the model on which it is based, makes the Politburo increasingly concerned about the development of its regions, which are home to ethnic groups which could develop separatist tendencies or social movements which could bring the political system into question, reflecting the uprisings in the Arab world. In this regard, Taiwan with

⁽¹⁷⁾ Article Four of the NPT states that nothing in the Treaty can affect the inalienable right of party States to develop peaceful nuclear energy programmes, with no type of discrimination. Moreover, it establishes that the Parties should help and facilitate exchange, particularly in the least developed areas of the world.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Article Ten of the NPT permits Party States to withdraw from the Treaty, exercising their sovereign right in response to extraordinary circumstances which put the highest interests of the country at risk.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Of the five nuclear powers within the NPT, the British, Chinese and Americans appear most in favour of establishing an effective disarmament timetable, whilst the French and, in particular, the Russians, are the clearest in opposing this. In the case of Russia, its disadvantage in conventional weapons would mean it losing its current status as a power on the international scene.

its policy of three No's (no unification, no independence and no use of force) together with the disputes in its seas, play a key role in its strategic vision for the nationalistic confirmation of its Han ethnic majority⁽²⁰⁾.

This approach, in which growth and social cohesion are the basic pillars supporting a policy requiring a stable environment, means that China needs to constantly readjust its position with regard to North Korea. Firstly, it is seeking to avoid the collapse of a country with which it shares a border stretching almost 1,500 kilometres, which might result in mass migration. Furthermore, maintaining the status quo keeps Pyongyang as a buffer which stops Chinese territory from coming into direct contact with a country with a western outlook. In order to achieve this, Beijing needs a degree of control over the situation, within this monitored instability, to favour its policy of continuous growth, enabling it to progressively achieve a position of hegemony in the region.

In this way, we can understand the support of the Chinese authorities for the succession process begun by Kim Jong-il, with a substantial increase in the number of visits by senior Chinese officials to North Korea over recent years, and three recent visits by the North Korean leader to China, in May and August 2010 and May 2011. In this context of support, we can also understand the photo from October last year of Kim Jong-Il and Kim Jong-Un with a senior Chinese dignitary at what is considered to have been the international presentation of the heir to the leadership. However, at the same time, China is continuing to support international efforts to control the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; this is demonstrated by the joint declaration published during President Hu Jintao's visit to Washington from 18th to 21st January, which featured a clear, although nuanced, allusion to the North Korean uranium enrichment programme⁽²¹⁾.

⁽²⁰⁾ http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasPublicaciones/Internacional/Resena_Info-me_2011._China_Seguridad_y_Defensa.pdf

⁽²¹⁾ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/01/19/us-china-joint-statement> The United States and China agree on the critical importance of maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, as is demonstrated by the Joint Declaration of 19th September 2005 and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. Both parties have expressed their concern about the tensions in the Peninsula caused by recent events. The two parties have highlighted their efforts to continue cooperating closely on questions relating to the Peninsula. The United States and China have highlighted the importance of improving North-South relations, and agreed that a sincere and constructive dialogue between the two Koreas is an essential step. They agree on the crucial importance of denuclearisation of the Peninsula in order to maintain peace and stability in north-east Asia, and have reiterated the need for specific and effective measures to achieve the objective of denuclearisation and the full application of other commitments undertaken in the Joint Declaration of the Six-Party Talks of 19th September 2005. In this context, the United States and China have expressed their concern about North Korea's uranium enrichment programme. Both parties are opposed to activities which are incompatible with the 2005 joint declaration and international commitments. The two parties have requested that the necessary measures be taken to permit the rapid restart of the Six-Party Talks to deal with this and other relevant issues.

However, this situation, which is not without some internal debate, has to maintain a delicate balance to avoid a dangerous escalation and accommodate a lack of strategic calculation by the North Korean authorities, with careful and balanced international diplomacy, particularly within the scope of the United Nations Security Council, based on the three traditional focal points of Chinese politics: the basic principle of not interfering in the internal affairs of other countries; the practice of long-term strategic patience to avoid destabilisation of the region and an undesirable escalation of tension which would put significant trade flows in the region at risk; and pursuing its territorial claims in the region clearly and purposefully from a position of strength, supported by the national pride of the population. An undesired effect of this policy is that it obliges the North Korean authorities to base their own survival on their strategic nuclear independence, to enable them to enter into negotiations with their natural enemy from a position of autonomy.

In this context, the United Nations plays an important role which also enables the European Union (which is not represented in the Six-Party Talks) to maintain an active presence in the conflict. In its 1993 Resolution 825, the Security Council reflected North Korea's intention to withdraw from the NPT and the concerns of the IAEA about the lack of cooperation by the North Korean authorities, noting the importance of the role of the IAEA in achieving the objective of denuclearisation of the Peninsula and its role in monitoring the NPT.

However, on 10th February 2005 the North Korean Foreign Minister publicly declared for the first time that the country possessed nuclear weapons and that it was withdrawing from the Six-Party Talks. These declarations and the subsequent launch of up to seven long-range «Taepodong 2» ballistic missiles in July of the following year led the Security Council to unanimously approve Resolution 1695, stating its great concern about the situation.

In October that year, after North Korea's central news agency announced the success of its first nuclear test, the Security Council approved Resolution 1718, in which it prohibited the transfer of sensitive material and authorised inspections of any material that might represent a transfer of technology which could be used for weapons of mass destruction.

In April 2009, following the launch of what the North Korean authorities officially presented as a rocket for launching a space satellite, the Security Council approved a declaration by its president⁽²²⁾ condemning the launch. This declaration angered the North Korean Authorities which ordered all IAEA personnel and the US delegation monitoring its nuclear programme to leave. Also in 2009, following the announcement and detection of its second nuclear test, which was much more powerful than the first, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1874 under which it imposed harsher sanctions, whilst remaining

⁽²²⁾ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/301/03/PDF/N0930103.pdf?OpenElement>

within the terms of Article 41 of Chapter VII of its Charter, which prohibits the use of force. Following this new Resolution, which was swiftly rejected by the North Korean authorities, Pyongyang announced the start of a uranium enrichment programme and the reprocessing of plutonium for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. At the same time, it reaffirmed its status as a nuclear power outside the NPT, at the same level as India and Pakistan, and proclaimed its desire to return to the Six-Party Talks, both through bilateral talks with South Korea and with the USA, and through the recent visits of Kim Jong-Il to Beijing and Siberia, when he met Presidents Hu Jintao and Medvedev.

Spain, like the European Union, considers the combination of proliferation and terrorism to be the most dangerous and potentially devastating, though not the most probable, combination in the current strategic scenario. The European Union, in development of its Security Strategy, has defined its approach to combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; this guidance document is being incorporated into national legislation by all Member States. It also supported the development of North Korea's civil nuclear programme through cooperation between EURATOM and KEDO⁽²³⁾, to replace Soviet-built graphite reactors with light-water reactors supplied by the USA, which have fewer possibilities for dual use in the construction of nuclear weapons.

Spain mentions North Korea three times in its Spanish Security Strategy, demonstrating its concerns about this issue. In this regard, we can consider the importance of Spain's position in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism⁽²⁴⁾. In addition, the Asia 2008-2012 Plan refers to the Korean Peninsula, highlighting that South Korea is the country in eastern Asia with the greatest interest in learning Spanish; the Spanish Security Strategy considers that this boosts our profile in the international environment as the language is spoken by 450 million people, being in second place as the language of international communication. In the medium term, it supports the creation of a free trade agreement with the European Union. It is also worth noting the cooperation agreement signed by the two defence industries in 1992 which is the fourth oldest, following the agreements signed by South Korea with Malaysia, the USA, Thailand and France.

Relations with North Korea are conditioned by the nature of its regime, the development of the Six-Party Talks and its position of keeping a certain political distance from the European Union, compared with other actors involved in the Peninsula. Our most important contribution is through cooperation in the development and scrupulous monitoring of United Nations Security Council Resolutions. In this regard, we should highlight the interception of the North

⁽²³⁾ The European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO)

⁽²⁴⁾ <http://www.ieee.es/documentos/areas-tematicas/organizaciones-internacionales/2011/detalle/DIEEEI26-2011.html>

Korean ship «So San» with a load of 15 Scud missiles by Spanish navy units in the Indian Ocean in December 2002.

■ CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

«If the Korean Peninsula were to be unified, at that moment the United States, China and Russia would have to find a formula to neutralise it militarily and to convert it into a bridge connecting the three strategic domains⁽²⁵⁾.»

There is no doubt that north-east Asia will be the focus of international geostrategic attention. China is the only power challenging the current status quo dominated by the concept of Western democracy as set out by Francis Fukuyama in «The end of history»; China is doing this through a dual system that represents an evolution of its communist ideology and which could take us back to the system of aristocratic government in Ancient Greece, as proposed by Plato but with «Orwellian» connotations, and an economic model which suggests a macro-Colbertism. However, as with all autocratic social systems, it is faced with a struggle for survival which is mainly based on its ongoing economic success.

It is in this context that an intricate mesh of geopolitical relations is developing, creating a complex framework in which the great economic and military powers are simultaneously cooperating and competing (see table 12.1), and which the 2010 South Korean Defence White Paper introduces in its second section as «the security panorama in north-east Asia», describing it as follows:

«Exchange and cooperation have increased in north-east Asia. However, potential causes of conflict (such as North Korea's nuclear weapons, relations between China and Taiwan and historic disputes over territory and territorial waters) still persist to this day, forcing the nations involved to compete with each other and to increase their military capabilities, which could destabilise the region.»

⁽²⁵⁾ Bernard Cohen, Saul. «Geopolitics. The geography of international relations». 22nd edition. Pag. 284.

The three strategic domains described in this book are:

Eastern Asia, dominated by China and including North Korea, separating the region geopolitically from Indochina which includes Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

The continental Eurasian environment, dominated by Russia, which has suffered a geopolitical revolution with the ending of the Warsaw Pact following the collapse of the Soviet Union. At present, the periphery of this area is the zone of convergence for the three strategic domains and the south Asia region. This zone stretches like the inside of a half moon from the Baltic, through Eastern Europe and the Black Sea, Central Asia, Mongolia and the Korean Peninsula. The maritime environment, dominated by the United States, the strategy of which has been to create a geopolitical region within the margins of the Asia-Pacific region, consisting of South Korea and Taiwan, as part of its domain in order to contain China and protect Japan.

Against this background, as we stated in the introduction, the Spanish Security Strategy describes the coexistence of classic risks with threats of a complex and unknown nature, and highlights the conflict in the Korean Peninsula where one country, North Korea, is focused on the survival of a hereditary autocratic regime which, due to its economic poverty, is basing its survival on military power with nuclear capabilities, amidst a dynamic of constant challenges and confrontations.

However, this would represent no more than a footnote to history with certain humanitarian implications, if it were not for two fundamental facts:

- Firstly, the active and interested presence in the conflict of the two poles of power which have constituted the structure of global security over seven decades (Russia and the United States), together with the new pole of power (China), is acting as a magnet for the other emerging powers and is creating a future which is both unknown and complex
- Secondly, North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons and its uranium enrichment programme, which is of crucial importance due to the strategic independence it confers on the country and the possibilities of proliferation, as demonstrated by the visit of the spokesman of the Iranian parliament to Pyongyang. This situation, in a context which international diplomacy classifies as being of particular concern, means that we can define the current state of the conflict as being a risk with unimaginable consequences.

Furthermore, for the actors and elements which make up the conflict, two of the main mechanisms in the current international security framework are being brought into question by the dilemmas posed by these developments. The United Nations Security Council is faced with a situation in which three of the five powers with a veto have interests (often conflicting) in the strategies employed to ensure a dominant position in the region. In addition, the NPT, a key part of the global system to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, has seen the weakness of several of its chapters exposed (particularly articles four and six), and the different sensitivities in the role which the actors involved in implementation should play, particularly with regard to the IAEA.

There are too many questions involved to venture a forecast of the future outlook for a conflict which dates back to the unconditional surrender of Japan at the end of the Second World War on 15th August 1945; which was the scene of an international war lasting three years, and which is technically still going on due to the lack of a peace agreement; which has so far resulted in over 2,500 confrontations between the parties; and which, in its most dangerous aspect (the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction) is currently stalled. What would appear to be true is that the «strategic patience» which has dominated the relations of the powers involved in the conflict, the eco-

conomic interests involved, international trade and the global financial situation would not be benefited by any escalation in the conflict which would destabilise the internal and external situation of the region. However, this situation may change due to the volatility of markets, and the fact that a number of key political events will coincide in 2012, including: general and presidential elections in South Korea; presidential elections in the USA, Russia and Taiwan; the celebration in North Korea of the 100th birthday of its «eternal president» Kim Il-sung, a year which is considered to be vital for the country's economy to take off; and, finally, the renewal of the upper echelons of the Chinese Communist Party.

We should not forget that the final outcome desired by the main actors involved in the conflict is a denuclearised and reunified peninsula, despite the associated economic cost⁽²⁶⁾ and the ideological differences. This is a situation which is certain to bring the two giants of the geopolitical scenario in the middle of this century into confrontation over control of the bridge connecting the three strategic environments.

⁽²⁶⁾ The Korean case is worse than that of German reunification, as South Korea is only twice the size of North Korea, whilst West Germany was four times the size of East Germany. In addition, the economic inequality is much greater between the Koreas, although the majority of young Koreans do not doubt that the peninsula will be united in the future.

■ CHRONOLOGY

TIMELINE OF THE CONFLICT	
DATE	EVENT
1945-1948	Soviet occupation of North Korea
1945	Kim Il Sung returns to Korea
1948	Foundation of North Korea (DPRK)
1950-1953	Korean War
1974	North Korea joins the IAEA
1984	North Korea signs the NPT as a state party to the treaty
1990	Moscow establishes diplomatic relations with South Korea
1993	Kim Jong Il named Chairman of the National Defence Commission
	United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 825
1994	Death of Kim Il Sung, aged 82
1998	First attempt to test a long-range ballistic missile
2003	North Korea withdraws from the NPT
	Six-Party Talks started
2006	Long-range ballistic missile tests UNSC Resolution 1695
	First nuclear test. UNSC Resolution 1718
2009	Second nuclear test. UNSC Resolution 1874
	Kim Chong Un designated as his father's successor.
	Pyongyang announces uranium enrichment programme and withdraws from the Six-Party Talks
2010	Sinking of the South Korean corvette Cheonan
	Kim Chong Un appointed four-star general
	Exchange of artillery over the island of Yeompyeong
2011	Joint US-China declaration of concern following Hu Jintao's visit to Washington
	Kim Jong Il holds talks with Hu Jintao and Medvedev. North Korea declares its intention of returning to the Six-Party Talks.

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