THE LERNAEAN HYDRA OF TERRORISM

Yiannos Charalambides[*]

Introduction

Who said that the end of the Cold War would bring stability and peace in the Global System? This idea – expressed by Francis Fukuyama [1] - was an illusion. Twenty five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, which paved the way to the decline of the Soviet Union, the regional and global system still suffers from conventional and other types of wars, such as cyber-wars. The new tremendous threat of ISIS forced the international community to be alarmed and fight once again against terrorism, which seems to be like a Lernaean Hydra. When the Greek mythical hero Hercules cut off one of its heads by his sword in an attempt to slay it, two others grew back instead.

The decapitation of Osama Bin Laden did not signal the end of Al Qaeda and terrorist acts [2]. On the contrary, ISIS took the sceptre of terrorism from Al Qaeda and became an extremely brutal war machine, sowing panic and calamity. With this article we examine the phenomenon of ISIS in relation to national interests and power games existing in the Middle East and particularly the role of Turkey, a state which plans to rise as a regional power. Furthermore, we analyze how national interests can build relations and coalitions, even among hostile nations in order to fight against a new common threat.

In this rationale, there are some other issues of critical importance on which our attention should be focused. These are the way that ISIS is sponsored and furthermore the significance of technology in the international relations. Technology - as factor of strength – should be seen through the lens of cyberwar [3; 4, pp. 36-41] and how this kind of war coexists with the conventional warfare [5, pp. 138-139]. Therefore, in analyzing the ISIS phenomenon, the essential questions to answer are the following: what are the political consequences resulting from ISIS terrorist ac-

[*]Doctor of International Relations and European Studies, President of the Ledra College.

tions? Is Hans Morgenthau's concept that national interests define international relations [5, pp 4-15] still correct or not? Can hostile countries establish coalitions and if the answer is positive, under what circumstances?

ISIS phenomenon and national interests

The civil war in Iraq and its consequences are much more complicated than the crisis in Egypt and Syria. ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) is a Sunni terrorist organisation killing in cold blood Muslim and Christian populations under the pretext of establishing a regional Caliphate comprising of Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Cyprus and an area in southern Turkey that includes Hatay [6]. In July 2014 ISIS brutally marched towards Bagdad, the seat of the democratically elected government of Iraq [7; 8]. This evolution generated unpredictable political games between the USA, Iran, Russia and Iraq. The Americans flirted with the Shia Iranian state in order to halt the Sunni ISIS seizing the power in Iraq. The Iranians and the Russians sent military support along with the Americans who dispatched military experts in an effort to help Bagdad practically and morally [9; 10]. Yet, on August 24, 2014, the US Air Forces struck targets of ISIS in Syria [11]. On September 21, 2014 the US along with five Arab countries continued the bombing campaign against ISIS by striking targets in Syria and Iraq [12]. The operations were focused on the strikes of headquarters, refineries and other gas and oil resources thanks to which ISIS became a self-financed organisation by selling oil in the black market. The International Alliance should follow and put in practice the classical strategic recipe of striking critical infrastructures. At the same time, the model of Libya was adopted. The engagement of Arab-Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates in the bombing campaign on ISIS was used by the USA to send the message that the vast majority of the Arab and Muslim world joint their forces with the Western countries and fight on ISIS [13]. This war is not a conflict between Christians and Muslims, but it is a war conducted by the international community against a "network of death" as President Obama stated from the floor of the UN General Assembly on September 24, 2014 [14]. Iran questioned the air bombing campaign from the legal point of view. According to CNN, *"Iran lashed out at the air campaign…. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said there was no legal basis for the strikes without U.N. authorization or an invitation from the Syrian government"*[15].

The US answer was based on two levels. The first focused on diplomacy and political games that states play behind the scenes. The other level was centred on the legal field. As the US Deputy National Security Adviser Tony Blinken stated to CNN: *"a number of countries, including Iran, were told the United States would be taking action. We obviously didn't say exactly when or where. We wanted to make sure that nobody got in our way"* [15]. Iran stood next to the US in supporting the Shia government of Iraq, but when the time came for taking action and fighting hand in hand with US, Iran stepped back. It kept distances and it is obvious that Iran drew its own red line regarding cooperation with the US. Undertaking military actions along with the US would be seen by the faithful Iranian people as a betrayal, putting in question the ideology of the "revolution". On the other hand, to support a Shia government is a duty for the Iranians. Therefore, the Iranian government let the US do the "dirty job".

As to the legal aspect regarding the bombing campaign against Syria and Iraq, the US made their case by evoking article 51 of the UN Charter. In a letter sent, the US provided the argument that it took action when a country, namely Syria or Iraq, is unwilling or unable to handle a threat by itself. Pursuant to the letter: *"The Syrian regime has shown that it cannot and will not confront these safe havens effectively itself".* As Samantha Power - the US ambassador to the UN - wrote in the letter obtained by CNN: "*Accordingly, the United States has initiated necessary and proportionate military actions in Syria"* [15]. As President Obama stated from the floor of the UN General Assembly, the only language that ISIS understands is *"the language of force"* [16].

Turkish policy and dilemmas

It is an irony that, whilst in September 2013 the US Forces threatened to attack Assad's regime, less than one year later, they bombed targets of ISIS in Syria for their own reasons. However, by definition, such strikes were in favour of Assad's regime. This is a classical case study to explain how convergent national interests of rival and opponent states can force them to cooperate unwillingly; and/or to tolerate each other. It is evident how difficult is the establishment of a democratic political system based on the western model of governance. ISIS, like other Islamist organizations, fights for establishment of a regional and/or a global Caliphate in line with Sharia Law

and the concept of "living space" [4, pp. 73-74]. Turkey is a Sunni state with a government drawing its political legitimacy from the religious faith of ordinary Sunni people. Thus, it would be a risky game to turn its arms on the Sunnis of Iraq. However, it cannot sit out the game. A partial solution was given through the US political option and particularly with its initial refusal to carry out air strikes against the Jihadist militants of ISIS. This refusal was pointed out by President Obama who stated that the US was weighing the possibility of air strikes on selected targets in Iraq [17]. The Turkish government seized the opportunity to be in line with the American policy. This US policy refused to get involved into military intervention and pushed the Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to step down and thus a new government to be formed. This "National Rescue Government" was approved by the Iraqi lawmakers and comprises all the religious clans and political powers of the country [18; 19; 20]. The rationale of this policy was to effectively face the ISIS threat. However, when the Kurdish population was trapped by the militants of ISIS and was under a risk of massacre, on August 7, 2014 the US Forces conducted air strikes on selected targets [21]. The Kurdish autonomous region in the Northern Iraq claims for independence and the US does not openly oppose such development, as EXXON/MOBIL – a US-based company– has already invested in the exploitation of gas and oil resources in the region [22]. At this point it should be emphasized that Turkey agreed about the construction of a pipeline which will cross its territory [23]. In this regard, it would not be a surprise to see Turkey tolerating an independent Kurdish state and getting involved into a trade off with the aim of taking returns in the framework of a likely solution on the Cyprus issue. About a month later, in September 2014, Turkey decided to join the Forces (International Alliance) which fought on ISIS. However, Ankara was accused of not sending troops to support the Kurdish militants which defended the strategic city of Kobani in Syria [24]. It was obvious that the Turkish government did not intend to help its Kurdish enemy. The Turks watched the fierce battle in Kobani from distance and they were accused of abetting ISIS. At this point two relevant facts should be underlined:

1. The Turkish Minister of European Affairs, Volkan Bozkir, maintained before the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament that his country proposed to its Allies to get together into Kobani, but no answer had been given by NATO and the US [25].

2. As soon as the Turkish Grand National Assembly made the decision to join the International Alliance which fought against ISIS, a crisis erupted in the Cyprus EEZ forcing the European Council to include - within its conclusions issued on October 24, 2014 - the self-evident: the EU recognised the sovereign rights of the Republic of Cyprus and also maintained that Turkey should abide by the content of the statement circulated by the EU on September 21, 2005 stating among other things that Ankara should recognise the Republic of Cyprus [26, p. 15].

It is also true that in October 2014, the Turkish government adopted a more flexible position by allowing the Kurds fighting in Kobani to receive external support through the Turkish territory. But, at the same time, the Turkish policy became much more aggressive on Cyprus. The Turkish government sent the seismographic vessel "Barbaros" to conduct research in the Cyprus EEZ and thus put in question the sovereign rights of Cyprus in its own EEZ [27].

The model of Gaza Strip

Under these circumstances, the Turkish return to the political trade off - that we have already referred to - focuses on the Cyprus Exclusive Economic Zone and a pipeline connecting Cyprus with Turkish coasts. This is a political game in line with the Turkish strategic goal to become an indisputable regional power and an energy hub. On the other hand, what is the price that Turkey will pay? From this political aspect a permanent threat is posed and Turkey is doomed to face it. This threat is the possibility of establishment of a Kurdish state on the Turkish doorstep, which seems to be like a stiletto on its back. There is another view on this issue. It might be a good opportunity for Turkey to gather the interspersed Kurdish populations within a tiny and weak state, which would be an easy target for the Turkish war machine. Despite the fact that the two cases are not directly analogous, such a scenario is similar to the model that Israel has implemented when it accepted the existence of a Palestinian Authority in Gaza Strip. Certainly, a spiral of dilemmas emerges and increases the Turkish concerns. Therefore, another scenario exists based on the concept of the "Kurdish unredeemed homeland" [28]. Such a "Kurdish unredeemed homeland policy" comprises Turkish territories and some others which

are under the Syrian and Iranian sovereignty. From a strategic point of view, establishment of a Kurdish State and the scenario of the "unredeemed homeland" will be in favour of the US foreign policy in the sense that Washington could manage energy issues and its national ambitions through the fuelling of the Kurdish threat. But, the main question is what the US plans to do in the region. So far the American strategy has been proved ineffective and not reliable, causing damages to the US global image and credibility, whilst its national interests are not served in the best possible way.

Cyber – Guerrilla War

The strikes conducted by the US Air Forces on August 7, 2014 against the jihadists of ISIS constituted an effort of active support to the Kurdish population under siege. Humanitarian aid was not the only reason that the US struck ISIS military positions. The American national interests were at stake and the US did not want to let the jihadists threaten oil resources since the US intends to see the Kurdish fighters doing the "dirty job" and thus causing damages to ISIS rebels. There is another reason that the US and the British took military action: if ISIS took over the Dam of Mosul, which means the control of the water, the Iraqi state would find itself in a very difficult situation. Water is a critical strategic resource that has similar, even equal significance with oil and gas resources. In case if ISIS dominated the water dam in Mosul, it could also manage critical and strategic infrastructures which are pertinent to the water and electricity supply. Therefore, we underline that the motive for both the US and Britain, is based on their national interests and critical strategic resources such as water, gas and oil, which are inherent in the functioning of a state. The main objective of ISIS was to paralyse the Iraqi state and thereby impose its own illegal Caliphate as the only entity controlling the territory of northern Iraq and regions of Syria. ISIS has an additional advantage: it is a self-sustaining organisation, since it controls at least four oil fields in Mosul and some others in Kirkuk. Thus, by selling crude oil in black markets, ISIS makes a profit of about 1 to 2 million dollars per day [29]. In August 2014 the estimates were that these oil fields would fetch ISIS about 750 thousands to 1 million dollars per day [30]. With this amount ISIS could finance its own military operations in Iraq, Syria and beyond. How did ISIS succeed to supply oil from the occupied regions to the outer world?

Firstly, it controlled the routes and secondly it sold the crude oil for reduced prices. While in the markets the price of the crude oil was about 100 dollars per barrel, ISIS sold for prices between 26 to 50 dollars per barrel. As Luay al-Khatteeb underlines:

"However, there are enough rich assets in the midlands and the north part of Iraq that ISIS could reach out to, a potential capacity that could ramp up to a million barrels a day -- from its current 30,000 barrels a day -- should they seize control the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and its surrounding districts. If they succeed in controlling those assets, cash inflow could stretch their empire of terrorism beyond imagination. But so far, ISIS oil trading has remained local with buyers in Jordan, Turkey, Syria and Iran via middlemen network and truck owners" [30].

Those countries, such as Jordan, Turkey, Syria and Iran [31; 30], which bought oil from ISIS for cheaper prices and therefore sponsored its terrorist actions, were targets of the Anonymous – hacktivists. This is a cyber-war against ISIS codenamed "Operation NO2ISIS". The Anonymous scheduled to launch a distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attack with the aim of paralysing the governmental websites and computing systems. This is the first level and the softest type of cyber-war. Other higher levels can be used if the hackers decide to escalate the cyber-war, using sophisticated malwares. As Jordan Schachtel reports: *"According to the [Anonymous] source: we plan on sending a straightforward message to Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and all other countries that evidently supply ISIS for their own gain. In the next few days we will begin defacing the government websites of these countries so that they understand this message clearly"*[32].

ISIS had been already engaged in a cyberwar by utilizing social media. The experts are still divided about the skills of ISIS in the cyber-warfare. It is certain that during the first hacking attack launched by Anonymous, ISIS responded and defaced the Anonymous Twitter account, @anonmessage [32]. There are experts, who maintain that this kind of hacking attack is similar to the techniques used by the Syrian Electronic Army (SEA). However, there are others who reject this assessment. What we do not know yet, is the level that the ISIS capabilities could reach. So far, ISIS exploits social media in order to win the psychological war, calling through internet the Muslim peoples to rise up and fight against the unfaithful Western countries and particularly the US. What is worth to be stressed is that Palestinian ISIS developed and programed an Android app, so that ISIS had the opportunity to deliver and spread

Twitter messages through its supporters' accounts [32]. ISIS draws on cyberspace and technology to transmit pictures with cruel and bloody atrocities, massive massacres of innocent people, executions and decapitations. Its aim is to cause "shock and awe" following the model used by jihadists in Bosnia Herzegovina and afterwards by Al-Qaeda. In this respect, Ran Levs maintains: *"Iraqi government decided to block the access to the different social media sites. Moreover they even blocked network traffic completely in some areas. To overcome this block ISIS members used anonymity methods and programs. These are basic technical skills that can also be used as a starting point for other network operations."*[33]

The US could not stand the temptation of responding to ISIS cyber-attacks. Therefore, it launched a digital blitz on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube targeting the accounts of ISIS friends through which it pursues to control and win the information and propaganda war, causing damage to the US. According to Nicolas Revisea, senior US State Department official US strategy is a kind of cyber guerrilla campaign:

"It is not a panacea – he said- it is not a silver bullet. People exaggerate, people think this is worthless or they think it a magic thing that will make the extremists surrender. It is neither one of those. It is slow, steady, daily engagement pushing back on a daily basis. It is a war of thousands of skirmishes, but no big battles. America likes big battles but it is not -- it is like guerrilla warfare"[34].

ISIS strategic plan and Turkish dilemma

ISIS strategic plan focuses on the foundation of an Islamic State. As already explained, such Caliphate comprises territories belonging to other neighbouring states. Turkey is one of these countries. The implementation of this scenario could void the efforts about the proclamation of a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq and furthermore, the Turkish territorial integrity might be at stake. Thus, there is a combination of ethical, political, economic and strategic reasons for the American military intervention using air strikes. On the other hand, the more the US are involved into the conflict, the more ISIS seizes the opportunity to legitimise its brutal actions in the name of Allah and under the pretext of defending the Muslim peoples from the "powers of evil" and the unfaithful Western countries who aim to plunder the Muslims' natural sources and wealth [4, pp. 66-67].

On August 15, 2014 the EU made a decision to send weapons, ammunition and military support to the Kurds of Northern Iraq. The decision did not provide for the EU itself to militarily support the Kurdish fighters, but only allowed its member states to get military involved on their own. As for Turkey, it does not wish ISIS become stronger, because a part of the Turkish territory is included within the establishment of a new Caliphate that ISIS fights for. Although ISIS is a Sunni Organisation, its strategic objectives may threaten the Turkish territorial integrity. In this rationale, Ankara may tolerate the Kurds so that "clean up" the region from the rebels of ISIS. This development is in favour of Turkish national interests, as ISIS threat would be prevented. Thus, the new challenge for Turkey is the way in which the threats arising around the country should be managed. Turkey might be forced by geopolitical developments to face a dilemma, whether or not it should give the green light to the Kurds in order to establish a state in Northern Iraq. Turkish rationale relies on the strategic concept of preventing ISIS to threaten Turkish territory in the context of founding a Sunni Caliphate. The question for Turkey is which of the two is the more dangerous scenario with respect to its national interests and strategic goals? Are the rebels of ISIS more dangerous threat or the Kurds? What is certain is that, they both claim Turkish territories. The Turkish decisions will be made on the basis of the geopolitical evolutions, strategic goals and the nature of the threats that Turkey faces.

Conclusions

ISIS terrorist actions have destabilised the regional system and have established new ad hoc coalitions to fight against terrorism. From this analysis concrete conclusions can be drawn regarding the role of ISIS and that of other key players such as the great and regional powers, including Turkey. In this regard we underline the following:

1. ISIS strategic plan is to establish a regional and then a global Caliphate functioning on the basis of Sharia. This is a conflict, between the Western and Muslim globalisations, which goes beyond national interests. In fact ISIS declared a Jihad, a holy war [4, pp. 75-79]. On the other hand, the Western countries do not follow ISIS war concept and they argue that the war on ISIS is a war on terror in which Arab and Muslim countries join their forces.

2. A destabilising situation prevailed in the regional system, which resulted in complicated alliances. These coalitions are composed of the US and Russia, including other countries. Even Iran is ready to support the efforts of the International Alliance but it prefers to keep distance. It is a matter of interests. Iran swings between its national security, which implies supporting the war against ISIS on the one hand, and the legitimacy of the Iranian theocratic political system based on the struggle against the Western imperialism, on the other. To defend their national interests and constrain the brutal and bloody march of ISIS, the US and Russia, as well as other countries, set their differences aside and tolerated each other in order to reach a common goal. This political concept illustrates that the need to confront a common threat creates a fertile ground and delivers a good reason for establishment of an ad hoc coalition (International Alliance) on the basis of convergent interests.

3. Turkey seized the opportunity to increase its geopolitical and geostrategic position in order to consolidate itself as an indisputable regional power. To achieve this end, Turkey got involved into a trade-off procedure particularly with the US, seeking for returns on the Cyprus issue. The key point is that Turkey plans to share the Cyprus gas resources with the Cypriots, in order to be not only a transit energy country but also a producer state. Simultaneously, the main problem that Turkey faces is the Kurdish issue and the new impetus, which might be generated regarding the establishment of an independent Kurdish state mainly comprising Turkish, Iraqi and Syrian territories. This development might be a nightmare for Turkey unless the Gaza Strip model turns into a life-jacket and save the day for Turkey. The evolution of this scenario focuses on the view that Kurdish people could be concentrated within a certain piece of land and be also under the Turkish control. In this regard, Turkey will not only have the opportunity of surveillance over the Kurdish Autonomous region or even a weak independent state, but also to punish it, if Ankara deems that its national interests and particularly its security and territorial integrity are at stake. Certainly, one may allege that this is not the end of a conflict, but the beginning of its new phase.

4. Technology constitutes in fact one of the main factors of power. Cyberspace and its techniques and weapons (viruses and other malwares) play their own

role in the conflict between ISIS and the International Alliance. Therefore, cyberwar is consolidated as a modern version of conflict, coexisting with the conventional means and strategic plans of war.

Taking into consideration the analysis mentioned above, we observe following: i) black market, resulting from a conflict, affects oil prices. In the case of ISIS, the quantity of the oil fields that ISIS controls is not enough to dramatically affect oil prices. It seems to be difficult for ISIS to conquer most of the oil fields situated in the Southern Iraq [32]; ii) oil and gas resources may become strategic weapons or "Achilles' heel". From one point of view, oil constitutes a strategic weapon for ISIS. With the profit made by selling crude oil, ISIS renders itself a self-sustaining organization. From another point of view, oil is an "Achilles' heel" as the US and other Western countries got angry with ISIS and conducted collective air strikes to save the day. If we think rationally, the profit and benefit is much higher than the cost. Without controlling oil resources, ISIS could not have money and the ability to promote and serve its interests and furthermore to realise its strategic goals.

ISIS came to show that terrorism is a phenomenon of our international system and coexists throughout the years with the aim of finding recipes and formulas to hold global system in stability and peace. In the past there were many examples of organisations which have been considered as terrorists, such as "Red Brigades"(Italy), IRA (Irish Republic Army), PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) and now PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê - Kurdistan Workers' Party). Their goal, ideology, identity and the way they act are not the same. Some of them stopped being labelled as terrorist organisations because they were able to convince others that the goal they fought for is good. Yasser Arafat started out as terrorist in his efforts for national integration of the Palestinian people, but he passed away as President of the Palestinian Autonomous Region. As already mentioned, Al Qaeda lost his leader and the organisation seemed to be decapitated. However, ISIS took the sceptre. The panic and peril of terrorism compel states to join their forces in order to prevent both symmetrical and asymmetrical threats [4, pp. 58-59]. National interests still define international relations and this reality is reflected in ad hoc coalitions. Such coalitions are formed between the US, Russia and other countries as a result of ISIS terrorist actions. These ad hoc coalitions last as long as common

threats and foes exist. They are fragile, not concrete and therefore one cannot rely on such ad hoc coalitions. ISIS phenomenon is fuelled by religious fanaticism on the one hand and the faulty policy implemented by the US and other Western countries on the other. As for Turkey, it seizes the opportunity to rise as an indisputable regional power. However, at the same time, it faces severe dilemmas on how the problems generated by the Kurdish issue should be managed and what kind of solution should be given. Therefore, one may argue that ISIS and terrorism in general is a phenomenon inherent to the functioning of the international system and particularly its chaotic character swinging between conflicting and convergent national interests. Terrorism and ISIS is not a myth, but a reality in which the mythic monster Lernaean Hydra is incarnated. Therefore, what we need to find out is who the "Hercules" of the international system is.

November, 2014

References and Literature

1. *Francis Fukuyama*, The End of the World And The Last Man, Free Press, New York, 1992.
2. CNN, The death of Osama bin Laden Fast Facts, November 6, 2014, CNN Library, viewed 7 November 2014: http://edition.cnn.com/2013/09/09/world/death-of-osama-bin-laden-fast-facts/
3. *M. Pizzi*, Cyber-warfare greater threat to US than terrorism, say security experts/ Intelligence and defense officials warn of 'cyber Pearl Harbor', Aljazeera America, January 7, 2014, accessed 3 November 2014: http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/1/7/defense-leaders-saycyberwarfaregreatestthreattous.html
4. *Yiannos Charalambides*, The Third World War, Global Titans and Sworn Soldiers, ERPIC, 2013.
5. *Hans J. Morgenthau*, Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace, Brief Edition, Revised, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1985.
6. BBC News, Isis rebels declare 'Islamic state' in Iraq and Syria", 30 June 2014, accessed 25 October 2014: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28082962
7. *S.L. Spark, N. Robertson , and M. Tawfeeq*, Iraq crisis: ISIS advances on Baquba as U.S. moves firepower to region, CNN. June 18, 2014, accessed 3 October 2014.
   http://edition.cnn.com/2014/06/17/world/meast/iraq-crisis/
8. Al ArabiyaNews, , ISIS urges militants to march to Baghdad, 2014: accessed November 2, 2014. http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/2014/06/12/ISIS-militants-plan-to-march-on-Baghdad.html
9. *B.Starr and T. Cohen*, Obama says 'small number' of military advisers going to Iraq, CNN, June 20, 2014, accessed 2 October 2014: http://dition.cnn.com/2014/06/19/politics/us-iraq/
10. PRESSTV, 2014, Iran, Russia to join forces against terror in Iraq: Tehran, viewed 3 November 2014: http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2014/07/06/370157/iran-russia-agree-to-join-forces-in-iraq/

11. *J.Walters*, Expand US air strikes on Isis militants, senior Republicans urge, theguardian, August 24, 2014, accessed 23 October 2014: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/24/republicans-isis-militants-us-air-strikes

12. *J.Sciutto, M.Castillo and H.Yan*, U.S. airstrikes hit ISIS inside Syria for first time, CNN, September 23, 2014, accessed 22 October 2014: http://edition.cnn.com/2014/09/22/world/meast/u-s-airstrikes-isis-syria/

13. *J.Mullen*, U.S.-led airstrikes on ISIS in Syria: Who's in, who's not, CNN, October 2, 2014, accessed 1 November 2014: http://edition.cnn.com/2014/09/23/world/meast/syria-airstrikes-countries-involved/

14. BBC News, Islamic State Crisis: Obama targets 'network of death', September 24, 2014, accessed 24 October 2014: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29351672

15. *J.C. Carter, E. Labott and J Sciutto*, 'The Turk' is dead: Al Qaeda-linked terror group says leader died in Syria airstrikes, CNN, September 24, 2014, viewed 4 November 2014: http://edition.cnn.com/2014/09/23/world/meast/isis-airstrikes/

16. CNN, TRANSCRIPTS, President Obama at United Nations; Revenge Killing?; New U.S. Terror Alert After Airstrikes, September 24, 2014, accessed 3 November 2014: http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1409/24/cg.01.html

17. The Guardian, Iraq crisis: Baghdad requests US air strikes against Sunni militants – live, 18 June, 2014, accessed 1 November 2014: http://www.theguardian.com/world/middle-east-live

18. *J.Karadsheh*, Iraqi lawmakers approve new government; al-Maliki becomes VP, CNN, September 9, 2014, accessed 23 October 2014: http://edition.cnn.com/2014/09/08/world/meast/iraq-government/

19. *M.Chulov and S.Ackerman*, How Nouri al-Maliki fell out of favour with the US, The Guardian, June 19, 2014, accessed 12 October 2014: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/19/how-nouri-al-maliki-fell-out-favour-with-us-iraq

20. *R.Saliman and M.Georgy*, Iraq's Maliki finally steps aside, paving way for new government, Reuters, August 14, 2014, accessed 5 November 2014. http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/14/us-iraq-security-usa-military-idUSKBN0GD1KS20140814

21. *S.Li and D.Bennetee*, Pentagon Confirms U.S. Airstrikes in Iraq, The Wire, August 7, 2014, accessed 14 September 2014. http://www.thewire.com/global/2014/08/pentagon-denies-reports-of-us-bombing-in-iraq/375769/

22. *S.Pfeifer*, Exxon signs Kurd exploration contracts, Financial Times, November 10, 2011, accessed 8 November 2014. http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/4e44f860-0bda-11e1-9861-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3IRN9d0gu

23. ALMONITOR, Turkey, ExxonMobil Going Ahead With Gas Project in Iraqi Kurdistan, May 20, 2013, accessed 8 November 2014: http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/business/2013/05/turkey-and-exxon-explore-oil-in-iraqi-kurdistan.html#

24. *L.Doucet*, Islamic State crisis: Turkish PM rejects Kobani criticism, BBC, October 28, 2014, accessed 8 November 2014: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29799646

25. *A.Unal*, Minister explains Turkey's EU strategy, informs European Parliament on Kobani crisis, Daily Sabah, October 16, 2014, accessed 1 November 2014. http://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2014/10/16/minister-explains-turkeys-eu-strategy-informs-european-parliament-on-kobani-crisis

26. European Council (23 and 24 October 2014), EUCO 169/14 CO EUR 13, CONCL 5, October 24, 2014, accessed 3 November 2014. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/145397.pdf

27. *M.Langfan*, Turkish Warship in Cyprus Zone Sends Tensions Soaring: Turkey is sending a seismographic vessel to explore areas in the Cypriot Exclusive Economic Zone, Arutz Sheva, October 7, 2014, accessed 12 October 2014: http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/185928#.VF2SfDSsUbc

28. *S.Kaleyi*, The Kurdish Conflict: Aspirations for Statehood within the Spirals of International Relations in the 21st Century, Kurdish Aspect, Kurdish Views, June 9, 2010, accessed 3 November 2014. http://www.kurdishaspect.com/doc060910SK.html

29. *P.Crompton*, Sales of black market oil surge in Middle East, Al Arabiya, July 29, 2014, accessed 29 October 2014: http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/analysis/2014/07/29/-Rogue-oil-sales-of-illicit-cut-price-crude-in-Mideast-surge.html

30. *L.Al-Khatteeb*, How Iraq's black market in oil funds ISIS, CNN, August 22, 2014, accessed 6 November 2014. http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/18/business/al-khatteeb-isis-oil-iraq/

31. The Wrongologist, Turkey's Role in ISIS Oil Smuggling, Geopolitics Power and Political Economy, 26 September, 2014, accessed 23 October 2014: http://wrongologist.com/2014/09/turkeys-role-in-isis-oil-smuggling/

32. *J.Schachtel*, Hacktivist Group Anonymous Plans Cyber Warfare against countries that supports ISIS, Preitbart, July 1, 2014, accessed 20 August 2014. http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Peace/2014/07/01/Anonymous-Hacktivist-Group-Plans-Cyber-Warfare-Against-Countries-That-Support-ISIS

33. *J.Levs*, Which Mideast power brokers support Hamas?, CNN, August 6, 2014, accessed 6 August 2014: http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/06/world/meast/mideast-hamas-support/

34. *N.Revisea*, The US Has Launched A Social Media Offensive Against ISIS, Business Insider – Military and Defence, August 31, 2014, accessed 4 September 2014.
http://www.businessinsider.com/afp-us-cyber-warriors-battling-islamic-state-on-twitter-2014-8