

XXIII. The Geopolitical Presentation of the Cyprus Issue in the Present Conjuncture

[Published first in: *China Institute for International Strategic Studies-Defence Analysis Institute/IAA Conference Proceedings* 6 (2005), 35-40]

Geopolitical Analysis: The geostrategic actors in the area

The actors in the geostrategic complex of the Southeastern Mediterranean are the following:

1. The **Israel-Palestine bipole** with the influence it exerts towards the Arab world and the United States, as well as the respective influences it absorbs from them.

2. **Turkey**, which wants to transform itself into an international centre of Submetropolitan power projection of the Washington - London bipole, as well as of the international security system that is being shaped in NATO.

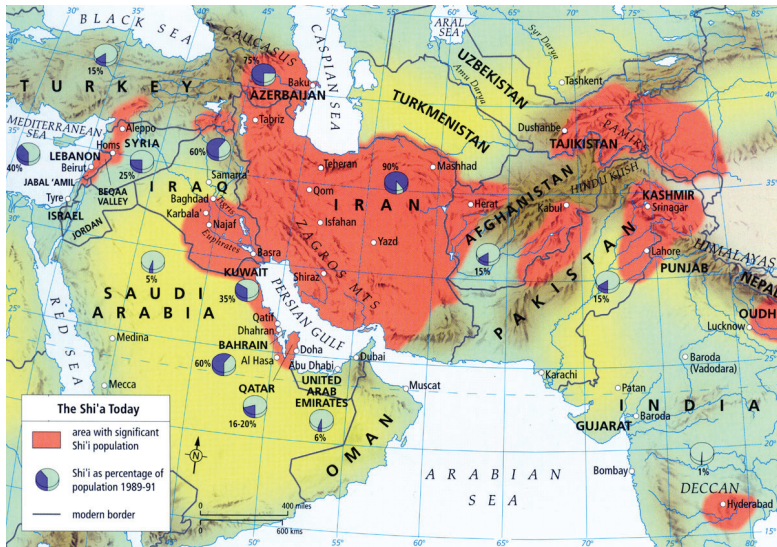
3. **Syria**, which now faces a serious eventuality of reversal of the till recently powerful Baathist government, presenting a complete shift of the domestic position towards a Western-friendly and an American-friendly government. Furthermore, Damascus has already accepted the loss of its suzerainty on the Lebanon, as it is gradually forced to withdraw its troops and its Secret Services from the Lebanon territories according to decision 1559 of the UN. This withdrawal of approximately 15,000 soldiers and of an almost equal number of Syrians working in Lebanese territories and their return to Syria, counting in the respective economic damages and losses, will create a huge problem for the Baathist government in Damascus, which will produce powerful destabilizing tendencies.

4. **Iraq**, where a powerful government of Shiites and Kurds is being shaped, still in the absence of Sunnis, who are either way 15% of the population and have very few seats in the new temporary Confederation Parliament that was formed. The new Parliament has 275 members from which 180 among the 185 present on the 28th of April, voted for the new Iraqi government of Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari. The new government has 31 ministers, of which 7 are women, while 5 ministries remain empty, among which are the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Oil, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Electric Energy and the Ministry of Human Rights. The Shiite and the Kurdish elements constitute the catalysts for all developments in the region that will not leave Cyprus unaffected.

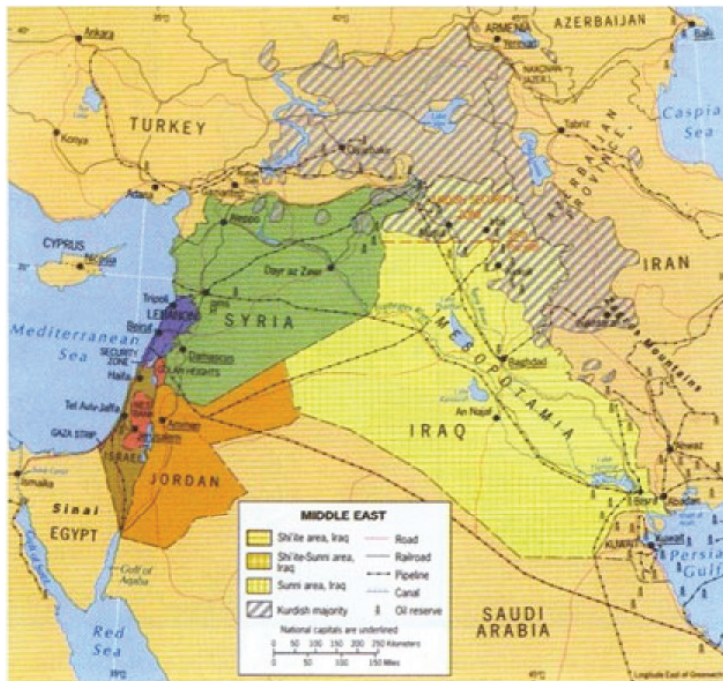
5. **Iran**, where the Shiite element is part of the government and as much as the United States does not want to accept it, this significantly affects the Shiites in Iraq. Consequently, to a large degree the stability of the new Iranian government, a matter of great interest to the United States and to the United Kingdom, is mostly related to their invisible agreements with Iran and its government. An important token of the above fact is that despite the intense protests of the United States against Iran's nuclear project, the former has not proceeded to a "hot regulation"¹ with Teheran but has linked themselves to the European threes and the Atomic Energy Committee, who try to solve this issue through the diplomatic way. Furthermore, after the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, the Lebanese **Hezbollah** will control approximately 42% of the population and it is quite natural that any friction in the relations between the US and Teheran or between Paris and Teheran will also appear in the form of terrorist and destabilizing acts on Lebanese territories with the support of Teheran.

6. There is the emergence of the issue concerning the creation of an **Autonomous Kurdish Federal state** in Northern Iraq, which presents a severe source of irritation for Ankara. The latter is afraid that it will witness the start of a Kurdish liberating movement chain reaction, which will begin its action starting in this autonomous Iraqi state and will proceed towards the Kurdish populations of Syria, ending up in Turkish territories, maybe even with the support of Teheran, which never had especially good relations with Ankara.

1. According to the term used by H. Kissinger.



Map 1: Shiite population in Asia
 Source: <http://www.jonathantan.org/>



Map 2: Kurdish and Shiite populations in the Middle East
 Source: Perry-Castañeda Library

7. **Turkey**, wanting to become a full member of the EU, has to uphold the *acquis communautaire* and cede political and cultural freedoms to the Kurdish element on its territories. This constitutes a severe problem for Turkey as it is linked with its aforementioned fears concerning the creation of a big Kurdistan. Thus it is natural that the United States must find a way to ease its worries, as they have to maintain its trust for as long as they are in the phase of completing their suzerainty in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as for as long as they are promoting their regime changes in Syria through the “Revolt of the Cedars” in Lebanon. This trust is gained (to whichever degree) by pressuring the Greek side concerning the issues of Cyprus, the Aegean and Thrace.



Map 3: Kurdish areas of Northern Iraq

Source: Perry-Castañeda Library

8. **Cyprus** constitutes an unsinkable aircraft carrier in the cove of **Cilicia Bay** (Turkey), right across the exits of **Laodicea** and **Tartous** (Syria) pipelines, and has full control of access to Israel by air and sea, thus being a critical factor in Israel's national security. Furthermore, it fully controls the exit of the **Suez Canal**, through which approximately 30% of international crude oil reserves is transported to Western markets. Furthermore, taking into consideration the British interest in the "sovereign British bases" of Dekeleia and Akrotirio in Cyprus, which control all these areas, it is particularly difficult to imagine Cyprus' smooth transition to a sovereign and independent state that will define its fortune and the fortune of its citizens without any external interventions. The Anan Plan recently rejected by 76% of the Cypriot people (both communities: Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot) proves that external interventions cannot easily be accepted due to the fact that they are now obvious as well as repulsive.



Map 4: British bases in Cyprus

Source: CIA World Factbook

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dx.html>

Concerning the present situation we must bear into mind the following:

A) No external mediation can replace the interested parties in a recommencement of talks for a jointly accepted solution in the Cyprus Issue.

B) The Turkish occupation troops must withdraw from the Island shortly and certainly before the implementation of the new solution.

C) The last wave of Turkish settlers must return to Turkish territories, where it originally came from.

D) The complete demilitarization of the Island and its accession to NATO, as the unique reliable figure of regional and international security. This means that Ankara can no longer promote claims of “insecurity” for the Turkish population of the Island. Furthermore it means that the “Sovereign British Bases” have no place in Cyprus.

E) In order for all this to be achieved, the government of Athens **must not pressure in any way the legitimate Government of the Republic of Cyprus of Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos** and it must allow as it has already done in the case or the April 4th Referendum, the Cypriot people to express freely and without bias its opinion. The line of action adopted by Mr. **Karamanlis** and Mr. **Molyviatis** in this case must be continued. On the other hand, the talks with the legitimate Cypriot government of the now European Republic of Cyprus for its accession to NATO must begin. This will constitute the most important key-point of the century-old Cyprus Issue.