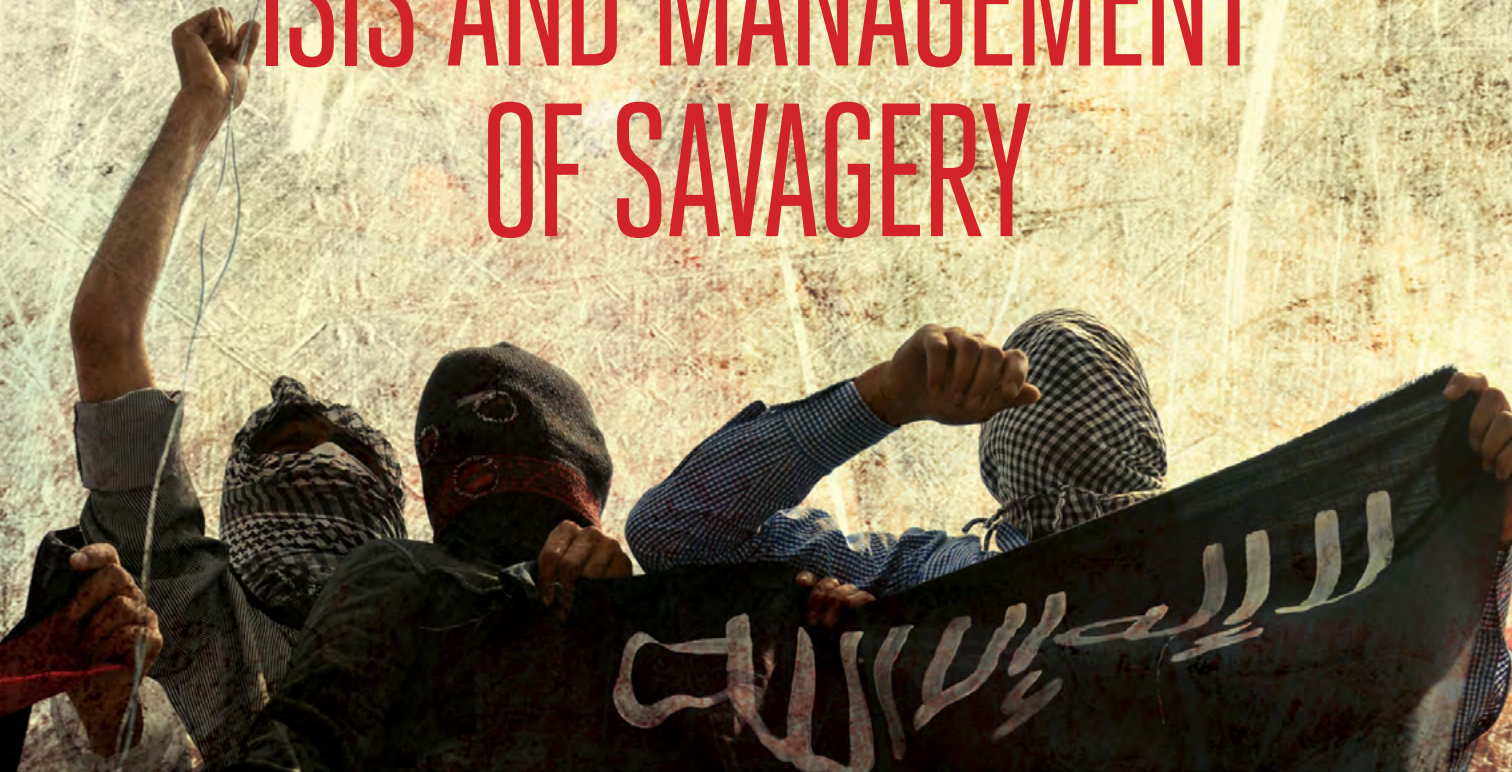


# ISIS AND MANAGEMENT OF SAVAGERY



The author explains what the origin of the current tactics of the Islamic of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) may be. Management of “savagery”, as analyzed in this article, is a very clear description of the strategy used by the Islamic State in their military campaign to extend “caliphate” in the Middle East.

By **Omar Locatelli**

KEY WORDS: ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ AND SYRIA (ISIS) / SHIA / SUNNI / UNO / OIL / UNITED STATES

## NEED OF A CATALYST<sup>1</sup>

The siege and expulsion of Yazidis minority in the Shingal Mount (in the north of Iraq) and the decapitation of the US journalist James Foley showed the world a new and extensive threat. This cruel action has been the best propaganda of the most recent emergence of the Sunni group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) at international level.

The fact that they present themselves as a State rather than as an armed group and the atrocities they commit have

allowed to catch the attention of the region and the world as well as of religion. The burning of the Jordanian pilot, Moath al- Kassabeth, was a turning point that united Muslims and non- Muslims and marked the need for joint action to, at least, reduce the power<sup>2</sup> showed until that moment.

1. Friedler, Egon, Strategy for Chaos, 2004.

2. Cordesman, Anthony, The need for an adequacy of resources. Available at [http://csis.org/files/publication/141024\\_Imploding\\_US\\_Strategy\\_in\\_Islamic\\_State\\_War.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/141024_Imploding_US_Strategy_in_Islamic_State_War.pdf).

The international community started to know the intentions of ISIS as from September 2014 when in the Syrian newspaper Daily Star, a review of the book titled “Management of Savagery” appeared. The author, Abu Bakr Naji, describes the strategy of the ISIS military campaign for the formation of an old wilayah<sup>3</sup>.

In his development, he mentions three stages for the achievement of a strategy for chaos:

- ) Humiliation of the enemy by means of a small- scale guerrilla
- ) Spread of savagery to separate regions to be attacked, from guerrilla to large- scale terrorism
- ) Administration of savagery, establishing a combatant society with self- defense objectives

These actions would be aimed at the creation of a settlement under control of the movement, from which a rudimentary state would be established. Moreover, he establishes the need for a political- social program that deepens military and administrative actions with great economic capacity of different origins and permanent flow. In spite of the mentioned structure for their operation, the author describes that fight does not have a political, economic or social characteristic, but it is a fight “for Allah and against the unfaithful”.

Upon the advance of this cruel reality, the first question is: can an international coalition find the necessary catalyst for such a threat without knowing yet whether the solution must come from politics, economics or religion?

#### ORIGINAL CONFESSIONS<sup>4</sup>

Islam, which means submission to God through Monotheism and renouncing worship, started with the birth of its prophet Mahoma (Abul Kasim ibn Add-Allah) in the year 570.

His mother, Aminah, while pregnant, heard some angelical voices that told her that his son would be born with light. His father, Abdullah Ibn ‘Abd Al- Muttalib, died before his child was born. His mother died when he was six years old. As an orphan, he was left to be looked after by his grandfather, leader of the clan Hashim, who left him to his uncle Abu Tayed when he died.

Until he was 25 years old, he was supported by Khadija, a rich widow for whom he worked as a commercial agent and to whom he later got married. He had the habit to spend one meditation month in the Hira mount and used to feed the poor when he received Allah’s revelation.

In the year 610, he received the first visit of Angel Gabriel and during this visit, he discovered himself following his instructions and saying verses as if he were sleeping which he then gathered in writing in his sacred book: the Quran (understood as reading or recitation). He was scared by the experience until a Christian calmed him by saying that he would be the “prophet of his people”. His

### *Islam means submission to God through Monotheism and renouncing worship*

relatives and friends believed him and followed Allah’s instructions.

In the year 613, when he started his preaching to the Mecca, he attacked the validity of the group of worshipped gods and he confronted hostility of fellow citizens. A year later, he sought protection in Ethiopia and then in Yatrib oasis (today, Medina, which means “the city”), where he promoted a constitution that called for tolerance to the Jewish and this caused differences as they declared themselves unable to worship the Muslim God.

In 623, he fled from the Mecca causing the Hijrah (Hegira) and ordered fasting for 24 hours to honor this escape<sup>5</sup>.

On June 8, 632, Mahoma died because of intestines problems and left ten wives and two concubines, who had given him 24 daughters and one son who died as a child. His successor, the Caliph (Guardian of Faith) had to be elected within the family.

His mentor and father in law, Abu Bakr, a generous and merciful man who took care of the orphans and of freeing slaves, succeeded him but he only survived for two years. His son- in- law, Ali ibn Talib, husband of his youngest daughter Fatima, was not considered for succession.

Two years later, in 634, Omar succeeded him, he was the founder of Umayyad dynasty, relative of Mahoma, who organized the community or Ummah and highlighted the role of the Arabs. Moreover, he took Islam to Palestina, Persia and the north of Africa. He appointed Damascus as the capital.

In 638, he conquered Jerusalem protecting the Holy Sepulcher and changing its name to El- Quds (Holy) turning it into the third holy city, after the Mecca and Medina. Omar died in 644 in the hands of a Palestine slave in Medina and was succeeded by Uthman, member of the Umayyad dynasty.

Uthman was elected by the members of the Quraysh tribe, which Mahoma belonged to, causing unrest in the sons of the prophet’s fellows and his third wife, Aisha.

With his virtuous spirit, he gathered intellectual men to make an updated version of Quran: 114 chapters or suras in prose with rhyme, with 6666 verses. Also, the oral tradition –Sunna- appeared as an interpretation of written norms.

3. Part of a caliphate equivalent to a province of a state- nation.

4. Rogan, Eugene, *The Arabs: a History*, Basic Books, USA, 2011.

5. This is considered the first year of the Muslim calendar.





Uthman died in 656, as a victim of a riot and, consequently, Ali proclaimed himself as leader in opposition to Aisha, Mahoma's third wife.

On December 4 of the same year, the Battle of the Camel took place. During this battle, 30000 soldiers ruled by Aisha who occupied Basora (nowadays, Iraq), fought against Ali who, with 20000 followers camped in Rabbaza, near Khuraiba.

Ali, in light of the land domain and the capacity of enemy command ordered to cut Aisha's camel's legs to reduce their capacity to conduct the battle. As a result of this battle, Ali lost only 1000 men, while Aisha, only half of his forces.

In spite of his victory, Ali was murdered in 661, in the Mosque of Kufa (Mesopotamia) by Muawiya's followers who became caliph and returned the capital to Damascus extending the empire from Morocco, in the Atlantic, to the Oxus valley and made Umayyad to rule again until 750.

The first four caliphs are considered "Well- guided Caliphs" due to evolution they made in their faith.

On October 10, 680, the Karbala battle was fought, because Husayn, Ali's son and Mahoma's grandson, intended to be caliph because of the right of succession after his elder brother Hasan abdicated when their father died.

This is how Shiat Ali began (Ali's party) and their followers were known as Shia. Their origin would later be remembered as a main figure in the Taziyas or Shia passion, turning Karbala into an official pilgrimage site. For this confession, the two first caliphs prepared a coup to frustrate Ali's aspirations.

On the contrary, there was a group that followed a calmer and more submissive tradition, based on Sunna's customs: the

Sunni. They realized that the era of caliphs had ended and that it was impossible to unify Muslims. The Mathlumiya<sup>6</sup> had started.

### HIERARCHICAL RECOGNITION

The main hierarchical recognition of Islam is the Caliph, successor of the prophet and, therefore, guardian of faith. He is the political and spiritual leader, equivalent to the Pope within Christianity. As comparison, Adan, after David and Salomon, were considered as caliphs of God on Earth<sup>7</sup>. Hierarchical title may also be recognized as Malik that means king or monarch, as it happens today in Bahrein, Jordan, Morocco and Saudi Arabia.

Every Caliph needs someone to implement their decisions and to collaborate with the government. Therefore, Visir hierarchy appeared. They exercise conduction in a similar way as a prime minister does today. They are the natural assistants of the Caliph.

As it happens in the different forms of government, they also recognize the one who exercises power in fact in the name of the Caliph: the Sultan. They are under the Caliph, but in many cases, they are replaced by the former. This is found in Oman and Brunei.

The territory governed by the Caliph is called caliphate and its territorial divisions (equivalent to provinces)

6. Speech that proclaimed the historical injustice mutually caused by the Sunni and the Shia, in which each confession blames the other one for being the cause of their exclusion and differences in the core of Islam.

7. Stourton, Edward, "Why is the idea of caliphate coming once and again?" BBC, October 27, 2015.



***Can an international coalition find the necessary catalyst for such a threat without knowing yet whether the solution must come from politics, economics or religion?***

are called wilayah<sup>8</sup>, understood as an administrative subdivision of some Muslim countries. Government is conducted by the Emir. Within a caliphate, this word refers to each of the states almost sovereign.

There are wilayahs in many countries, such as Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, Oman and Western Sahara (nowadays under Morocco rule). The best example of the union of position and territory of a sovereign state is the United Arab Emirates.

Under Emir, and almost as a local leader, there is the Sheikh, a local religious and/or political leader. This is the equivalent to the old wise man in a society that respects their lineage to the patriarchal authority of the clan and that remains loyal to him rather than the government. In general, he is a person respected because of his age or knowledge.

Same as the Sheikh, there is the Sharif who has almost the same social recognition as the Sheikh but no privileges. He may also be called Sayyid.

Once again, caliphs lead Muslim hierarchies and it is the position which almost any leader has tried to achieve.

#### **ECCLESIASTICAL HIERARCHIES**

The maximum ecclesiastical hierarchies are called Mufti by Islam. Within the Sunni confession, he is considered as a legal specialist speaker of the Muslim Law (Sharia). He is the messenger of religious legal orders (fetwas or fatwa) that solve interpretation problems of Sunna. In general, it is called Gran Mufti.

8. Normally translated as province and sometimes as government. The word comes from Arab w-l and "to govern": unvali (wali), "governor", governs a wilayah, "what is governed".

9. Fiqh means "deep knowledge, it determines how the Muslim relate to God and their fellows respecting Quran and Sunna. This is, in legal terms, the discipline of Islam jurisprudence that studies Sharia (Islam legal rules).

10. Cordesman, Anthony, "Syria and the Least Bad Option: Dealing with Governance, Economics and the Human Dimension", Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), February 24, 2014 and Bhalla, Reva, "The Geopolitics of the Syrian Civil War", Geopolitical Weekly, Stratford, January 21, 2014. See also: Locatelli, Omar, "Small wars lead to big wars", Visión Conjunta N°9,

Joint Forces Staff College, 2013.

11. Branch of Shia Islam, followers of the twelve imams of Ahlul Bait, descendants from the prophet Mahoma. His jurisprudence school in Islam was the one founded by the sixth imam, Yafar As- Sâdiq.

12. Religious Islamic combatant for the Jihad which is the holy war of Islam.

13. Hubbard, Ben & Schmitt, Eric, "Military Skill and Terrorist Technique fuel success of ISIS", New York Times, August 27, 2014.

14. Muyaheedines: religious person who fights for the permanence of Muslim faith that makes Jihad. The difference with fedayines lies in the fact that these are not religious, but they still fight for the Jihad.

15. Stourton, Edward, op.cit.



*Western interests sought to support the Sunni rebels through Turkish and Jordan borders, while the Shia received religious and material support from Iran (through Iraq) and from the Lebanon, managed by Hezbollah.*

For the Shia confession, it is called Mullah, which implies the same but under a different name. In both cases, it is the person stated in Quran, in the hadith and Muslim jurisprudence or fiqh<sup>9</sup>. In more general terms, and always within Sunni Islam, it can refer to any person who is more into religious matters than the rest of the members of the community.

The use of the word Mullah (honor title equivalent to Ulema) is frequent, especially in Central Asia. Among the Shia, Mullah is a member of the clergy, whose leaders are the Ayatolás.

A Shia Mullah usually takes a cape and turban, which is black if he is the Sharif (descendant from Mahoma) and white if he is not.

The Mullah exercise power in Iran and exercised it in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime (such as in the case of Mullah Omar).

Last, the one who directs prayers within mosques is Imam, who for the Shia is also the political director of the religious community.

#### REGIONAL ORIGIN<sup>10</sup>

The crisis in Syria gave origin to several Sunni insurgent groups which, currently, keep fighting against the Alawite<sup>11</sup> government (aristocracy within the Shia).

In its origin, the Syrian president Bashar al- Assad tried to stop a young rebellion which led to general popular unrest in the same way his father did years ago sending military forces to repress.

Many members of the armed forces rejected said action and quit to form the Free Syrian Army, which opposed to carrying out said actions against their own people.

As the ones who left, many civilians of Sunni confession started to form groups of combatants to fight against the government but without subordinating to a centralized military conduction. Among the main insurgent groups, there was the Al- Nusra (which means Support of the Front for Victory of the People of Syria) in Aleppo, under the order of Hossam Abu Mohammed al Golani who initially had between 6000 and 8000 soldiers.

The Syrian conflict, at the beginning of 2012, started to be an ideal space for the meeting of Sunni jihadists<sup>12</sup> of all regions to oppose the Alawite government.

In turn, Western interests sought to support the Sunni rebels through Turkish and Jordan borders, while the Shia received religious and material support from Iran (through Iraq) and from the Lebanon, managed by Hezbollah.

The front Al- Nusra, around 2012, attacked the Syrian Ministry of Defense, its main advisor (president's brother in law) and the president's brother, Nader, military man in charge of the 4<sup>th</sup> armored Division.

On July 19, the Mother of all Battles in Aleppo –main economic city in Syria- started, where Al- Nusra clearly showed his power taking the city and expelling government troops. The insurgent started to domain the north of Syria.

A year later, an insurgent group called the Islamic Front (ISIL) with the intention to fight against Al- Nusra for domain in the north of Syria. Its leader, Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al- Badri al- Samarrai, from Iraq, born in Samarra in 1971, started to be known as Abu Bakr al Baghdadi. There is also the continuation of Al Qaeda in Syria causing an epistolary dispute with the leader of Al Nusra which had to be solved by the leader of Al Qaeda, Ayman al Zawahri.

On June 10, 2013, the TV channel Al- Jazeera revealed a letter from Al- Zawahri, in which he urged the leaders of Al Qaeda in Iraq and Al- Nusra in Syria to stop any oral or formal attack among them.

The question of preponderance was presented.

#### EVOLUTION OF RELATIONS<sup>13</sup>

The ISIS leader, Al- Baghdadi, started his actions relating to Ahmud Fadil al Khalayilah, known as Al- Zaraqawi, a famous Jordan extremist in the 80's. Both of them present themselves, between 1989 and 1992, as Afghan Mujahideen<sup>14</sup>, and then founded in Afghanistan the Arab group Jund al- Sham (Syrian Army).

With the appearance of the United States, they fled, after the September 11, 2001 attack, to Iraq to create the Sunni group Islamic State of Iraq related to Al- Qaeda.

After the death of Al- Zaraqawi in 2006, Al- Baghdadi becomes the leader and starts to represent Al- Qaeda in Syria.

In August 2013, the group started to be called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or, under its Arab acronym, DAESH and then proclaimed, on July 5, 2014, caliph of the Islamic State in the Mosul Mosque after seizing the city.

ISIS adopts a uniform and black flags as a deliberate attempt to remember the black tunic that the 8<sup>th</sup> century court Abbasid wore, in the golden age of Islam<sup>15</sup>. Its members, apart from the Iraqi and Syrian Mujahideen, are foreign combatants, estimated to be 3000 citizens from Western countries, believed to be from different western countries, among which there is the United Kingdom (400 members), Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, France and Nordic countries.

Moreover, according to the report dated June 2014, from the United Nations Organization (UNO), prepared by the Soufan Group, ISIS is formed by members of at least 81 countries, including Australia, the United States, Canada, Ireland and Spain.

These combatants may be exceeded in number by dissatisfied volunteers from Arab minorities from Tunisia, Morocco and Saudi Arabia. Currently, they are estimated to be around 31000 combatants.

The command of the organization has been selected by Al- Baghdadi among the men he met when he was a prisoner of the United States in the detention center of Bucca (Iraq), a decade ago. He preferred the military men; this is why his leadership team includes many officers of the broken up Army of Saddam Hussein. It also has former officers from Iraq, such as Abu Muslim al- Turkmani, his tenant in Iraq, who once served for Hussein as Lieutenant Colonel and Adnan al- Sweidawi, a former Lieutenant Colonel who now directs the military council of the group.

It is currently organized with two tenants: Abu Muslim al- Turkmani in Iraq and Abu Ali al- Ambari in Syria, who is in charge of 12 governors. Apart from his personal council, Al Baghdadi has eight advisors: Finance, Leadership, Legal, Military, and Assistance to the Combatant, Security, Intelligence and Media.

The broad scope of combat forms allows to use terrorist tactics, war of guerrillas and Conventional War operations.

It is organized in teams of 8 and 10 men prepared for:

- › Night attacks with thermal sight
- › Ambush with improvised explosive designs
- › Combat on a building basis, on a block basis

After they started air attacks of the coalition, transport of the members by vehicles were reduced to columns of 2 or 3 vehicles with 8 to 10 men in total, with brief executive orders, and being the executor responsible for the manner to do it.

Combatants are the typical supporters, who have a win-win position that assures them that killing in the Jihad is a blessing and if they are tormented, they will go to heaven.

For this reason, they are fighters with a high level of adrenaline who can kill and be killed without any doubt becoming fundamentalists in their combat actions.

The typical operation is carried out by a armored unit of tanks or mobile unit of 8 to 12 combatants with 2 or 3 vehicles that receive orders by WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter or text messages on their mobile phones and if this is not possible,

### *The international community faces a new low intensity conflict of indefinite extension which may be considered the first Hybrid War.*

through their own radio net, they arrange meeting points.

After gathering in a meeting point, within two or three hours after the call, and after one hour and a half of discussion and logistical coordination, the operation is started.

Before the attack, there is propaganda to affect the morale of the enemies and civilians in the area. They attack the weakest point of the enemy, preferably after morning operations with light and heavy vehicles in the first stage of attacks, followed by infantry according to the magnitude and nature of the enemy opposition. The high combat pace is habitual for an ISIS combatant which, in general, is too much for those who fight against them.

Their leaders, also, increased their traditional military capacity with terrorist techniques prepared throughout years of fight against the US troops having, at the same time, local knowledge and contacts within the people.

With a radical ideology and tactics, such as kidnapping, decapitation and great execution, the group has showed their identity in the communities in which it is present.

Together with the emergence of ISIS, other groups have appeared with the intention to get the conduction of Al-Qaeda. This is the case of Khorasan, whose name refers to a geographical area mentioned in the first Muslim texts, located



16. "ISIS shows power in Libya: parade of tropas in Benghazi with an eye on Europe"; INFOBAE, February 19, 2015.

17. Aguirre, Mariano, "How is the Islamic State financed?" BBC World, August 25, 2014 and "Why has ISIS not shaken the price of oil?"; BBC, September 16, 2014.

18. Estimation by Theodore Karaski, from the INEGMAS center (Dubai) and Mills, Robin, The Myth of the Oil Crisis, Praeger Publishers, 2008.

in the east of Iran, which covers Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Their members are foreigners coming from Iran, Afghanistan and Yemen who have been fighting for two years in Syria and who are part of the logistical structure of Al- Qaeda from Afghanistan to the north of Syria.

Their intentions are to extend armed actions in Europe and, eventually, in the rest of the West. Among their leaders, we find Fadhli, from Kuwait born in 1981 who would initially be the communication link between Al- Zawahiri and the rebel Syrian group Jabhat al- Nusra. Their need to influence on the Syrian conflict, beyond their eventual interest to defeat the Shia- Alawites is the significant central position of Syrian territory with their borders with Turkey, Israel, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, giving Al- Qaeda some balance in the central part of the Middle East.

Another group with great influence in the North of Africa is Ansar al- Sharia (Sharia troops), originally called Jund al- Khilafah (Caliph troops) with a self- named Emir in Libya, Ali Al Qarqaa.

The decapitation of 21 Coptic Christians, of Egyptian nationality, formally made it enter a battle front that has Europe a few kilometers away and that, beyond consolidating their domain in the area, appeared with the purpose of bother vessels and oil ships “crossed” throughout the whole Mediterranean Sea<sup>16</sup>.

Moreover, it declares that it still has under its power around 35 Egyptian hostages and threats to decapitate them if Egypt continues its reprisal (bombing in the area of the violent execution).

Its young branch, called Young Council of Shura, has been in charge of propaganda under the ISIS format. Although all

decapitation of 21 Christians have caused fear around the world, from August 2014 until now, they have killed hundreds of persons including an Egyptian soldier -Muftah el Nazihi- who had publicly declared his loyalty to the government forces of Tripoli under the command of General Khalifa Haftar.

In February 2015, the young Libya Emirate became stronger also in Sirte, another oil city in the coast in the north of Africa seeking to control the most important populated centers of the country and trying to make its power be felt in Tripoli, where they attacked a luxury hotel in January 2015.

### **ECONOMIC SOURCES OF POWER<sup>17</sup>**

With territorial advance, ISIS has silently created an efficient management structure through Iraq people, most of whom are of middle age and control finance councils, local governments, military operations and enlistment.

According to the Secretary of Defense of the United States, Chuck Hagel, this is not a terrorist group, but a project of State with sophisticated weapons, a totalitarian ideology and huge financing which comes from external support and that takes resources to continue their attack and set the grounds for their caliphate.

The beginning of external monetary support started when oil monarchies of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the Emirates started to support the Sunni rebels who fought against the Syrian government Shia.

ISIS, as from their conquest in Iraqi territory, discovered oil as an endless source of money. As Iraq is the second biggest producer of oil in the world after Saudi Arabia, refineries became military targets. After the rapid conquest of the area of Mosul in the north of Iraq (seven fields and two refineries





*With a radical ideology and tactics, such as kidnapping, decapitation and great execution, the group has showed their identity in the communities in which it is present.*

in Shaar and Baiji), together with the ones conquered in Syria (six fields and two refineries in the area of Omar), their extraction are estimated between 30000 and 80000 barrels of oil per day.

As it is heavier than the oil in the sea in the North of Europe (Brent oil), this oil was originally one dollar more expensive. At the beginning of their conquest, it was two dollars more expensive and its price went from 98 to 108 dollars. Therefore, their daily earnings for sales in the black market were initially around two million dollars per day<sup>18</sup>. However, the Oil Exporting Countries Organization (OECO) has increased its production in order to reduce the costs so as to decrease earnings in the black market, being able to reduce the price of the barrel to less than 50 dollars.

An important piece of information referring to black gold is the attempt to control the limit of the Iraqi oil area (as the most important region is still under Kurdish control) with the intention to threat the control of the oil pipeline that supplies crude oil to Turkey and, therefore, the Euro zone<sup>19</sup>.

Another source of financing is the collection of funds coming from extortion to religious minorities, weapons smuggling, border and controlled routes toll fees, kidnapping money requests, sale of dismantled materials and of archeological pieces. As a last source of financing, we have found the sale of organs of killed hostages.

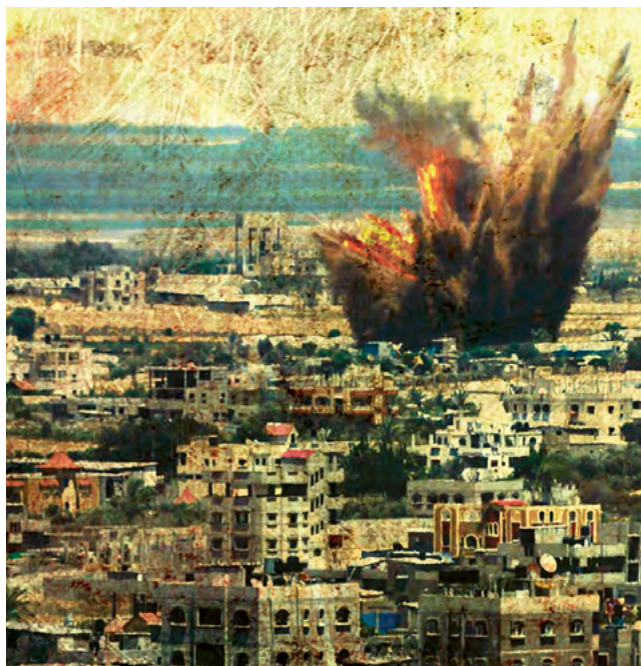
Moreover, in case this list is not sufficient, in each city that has been conquered, ISIS gets into central banks. This was the case when they took the city of Mosul, where they looted the central bank to get around 400 million dollars, which allows them to currently manage a figure of almost 2000 million dollars.

The need to consolidate their territorial expansion and recognition as a proto- state has led them to coin their own currency<sup>20</sup>. The new currency replaces the Iraqi dinar and the Syrian pound. Apart from the golden dinar, the silver one was also coined and became legal on November 13, 2014, both used at the beginning of Islam.

Their funds have given them a discretional power that is translated in the evolution of shares.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPAGANDA<sup>21</sup>**

Beyond their collection capacity, ISIS also shows a proper use



of all message contemporary means to recruit combatants, intimidate enemies and promote their caliphate.

If their fanaticism and decapitation seem to come from a century ago, the use of media is updated to this moment. Their printed and online production through their website SITE Intelligence Group<sup>22</sup> shows that their propaganda surprisingly has few calls for attacks against the West.

However, as from their initial video (decapitation of the American journalist James Foley, August 19, 2014), the following ones ended with a warning that any attack to ISIS would translate into blood spill<sup>23</sup>.

Moreover, all subsequent videos, with the same style, had made reference to the fact that each attempt to attack by any country against ISIS would be responded with the decapitation of one of their citizens. As an affirmation of their threats, they have showed the killing of hostages of countries that are members of the coalition, both from those who carry out armed actions (United States, United Kingdom, France and Syria) and those who support them (Japan).

Even more, the capture of a Jordanian pilot in December 2014 and burning to death have led to the rejection of Jordan and most Arab states causing a negative reaction to their attempt face the advance of a great coalition of new results.

The last picture of their bloody propaganda, when the ISIS African group showed the killing of 10 Coptic Christians in Libya, led to a special request by the Pope for the UNO to make a determined intervention to stop the bloody demonstration of a special way to spread a religious confession.

However, in spite of the fact that their initial image was



***Barack Obama announced the stages of the attack allied to ISIS, which consists in an air campaign to protect ethnic and religious minorities and diplomats and military men from the United States.***

built upon blood spill, their subsequent publications seem to try to show the bureaucratic insight of the State they intend to build. Their two annual reports are until now full of some Jihadist style accounting in which there is tracking of statistics of all their actions, from occupied cities and murders to control points and regretful apostate.

The impact of their reports causes an efficient call that allows them to receive almost 1000 daily requests from remote places in the world. Their main journalist achievements lie in the preparation of a as front attack against divisions and national borders in the Middle East showing that they have been planned by western powers after World War I.

In the journal in English language DABIQ, they point out, when referring to borders, that “these crossed partitions” and their modern Arab leaders were a strategy to “divide and rule”, aimed at preventing the unification of Muslims under one magnet that has the flag of truth”. This historical damage sentiment is an old issue of Al- Qaeda and of more modern Muslim groups.

However, the difference lies in the fact that when taking territory and heavy weapons, apart from the earnings provided by kidnapping, oil piracy, bank stealing and extortion, ISIS claims to have made a very important first step to correct what they consider an old evil in favor of the creation of a unified Islamic state that gathers the existing nations.

All of this varied propaganda production of ISIS promotes their main objective: to assure and extend the Islamic state. Experts say that this could change but, for now, we can distinguish it from Al- Qaeda, which had made attacks to the West their main priority.

### **THE RAPID SPREAD OF THE THREAT<sup>23</sup>**

After having assured border paths of Bukamal in Syria (and the

city) and of Qaim in Iraq (apart from municipal control), in June 2013, the main route that joins Aleppo (Syria) and Baghdad (Iraq) was taken. It continued its administrative strengthening when in October 2013, it declared that Raqqa (old capital of the caliphate in Syria) would be the capital, formalizing their administrative act by establishing a tax of up to 20 dollars every two months, saying that they charge half what Assad’s government charges and would give twice those benefits.

Once it could control the paths that connect the center of Syria and Iraq, it tried to do the same with northern paths (Yarubia and Rabia), controlled by the Kurdish who, since October, reinforced their control preventing it to be taken by ISIS. In spite of this, this group entered through the north trying to be stronger on the Tigris river basin in the north of Iraq as from the beginning of 2014 in direction to the city of Mosul.

Their attempt to advance on Erbil (former Arbela, from the times of Alexander the Great), capital of the Kurdish area, was stopped by the Kurdish pesh merga combatants who were considered by the United States evaluation teams as the only ones capable of making Sunni military men to move back if they were provided with aid.

In this same line of advance towards Mosul, ISIS dismantled four of the main divisions of the Iraqi army: in Tal Afar, in mid June, the second division (Brigades 6, 9, 10 and 11); near Mosul, between June 9 and 11, the third Division (Brigades 5, 7, 12 and 26); in Salah al- Din, on June 12, the fourth Division (Brigades 14, 15, 16 and 17); and in Al Ambar, from December 2013 to July 2014, the first Division (Brigades 1, 2, 3 and 4).

If we consider that each division has 10000 troops, ISIS dismantled more than 40000 troops in their advance towards Baghdad in less than one month.

In their decision to become stronger over Iraqi territory, ISIS came to the Sinjar mount displacing a yazidi Shia minority. This place marked, in August 2014, the first air action of the United States to supply the community that had to isolate itself in the mount before being prisoners of Sunni combatants.

The first important combats started on August 18, when Iraqi and Kurdish land troops fought against ISIS and released the biggest dam of Iraq in Mosul with the support of US aircrafts in an extension of limited objectives set by their president.

19. Branan, Kate, “Pentagon: oil no longer the ISIS’s main source of revenue”, Foreign Policy, February 3, 2015.

20. Ámbito Financiero, “Jihadist Caliphate: a virtual state: it already coins currency”, printed edition, November 13, 2014.

21. Shane, Scott & Hubbard, Ben, “ISIS Displaying a Deft Command of Varied Media”, New York Times, August 30, 2014.

22. Callimachi, Rukmini, ISIS video shows Jordanian pilot being burned to death, New York Times, printed edition, February 3, 2015.

23. Cordesman, Anthony, “The Campaign against the Islamic State: Key Issues and Demands for Action from the Administration and Congress”, Center for Strategic & International Studies, September 16, 2014.



***All of this varied propaganda production of ISIS promotes their main objective: to assure and extend the Islamic state.***

Authorization was part of the Second Directive (called “protection of Americans”) which justifies the intense air campaign aimed at breaking the fence of Yazidis stranded in Sinjar mount and at protecting US personnel, citizens and facilities in Iraq. Moreover, it authorized the deployment of 1100 troops to defend the embassy and airport in Baghdad and the consulate in Erbil, as well as the training of Kurdish troops and Iraq Security Forces (ISF)<sup>24</sup>.

As an important fact during the first days of September, 2014, Moscow requested during a special meeting of the UNO Human Rights Council the adoption of a resolution to condemn ISIS crimes stating a difference referred to their attitude towards Syrian rebels<sup>25</sup>.

Moreover, on September 5, Iraqi and Kurdish land troops with the support of United States aircraft recovered the control of Ameril, a city of Shia Turkish, after four months of ISIS blocking.

On the same day, during a meeting of countries members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Wales, they formed a coalition to destroy and defeat ISIS. The first signatory countries of the agreement were the United States,

Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Australia, Denmark, Poland, Canada and Turkey with the support of Arab countries.

During that meeting, it was established that said forces, called Spearhead, would have a battalion of 800 troops which could be deployed in two days. Then, they would have a brigade of between five and seven thousand troops to be deployed in seven days together with a greater state integrated in Great Britain, France and/or Poland. Their logistical support would gather in Romania and Poland, of which we can infer their use in regions outside the Middle East.

Moreover, NATO agreed to train Iraqi troops and give information about citizens recruited by ISIS. On September 7, with air support of the United States, Iraq Special Forces, allied tribes and local policemen, ISIS combatants sought to take control of their hydro electrical dam on the Euphrates River and the city of Barwana.

The importance of this action lies in the fact that, apart from assuring an obligatory step from Syria, as a main route for the supply of explosives and people, this is the recognition of a massacre of 24 people killed in the place by US marines in 2003.

Barack Obama, in his speech to the nation in 2014, before the September 11 anniversary, announced the stages of the attack allied to ISIS, which consists in an air campaign to protect ethnic and religious minorities and diplomats and military men from the United States.



Later, there would be a training campaign to train, advise or equip Iraq Armed Forces, Kurdish combatants and Sunni tribes. As a third stage, there would be a military campaign for final destruction to kill combatants within Syria (of at least 36 months) and, last, a humanitarian campaign to stabilize the region.

Difficulties in armed actions led 40 countries to become part of the coalition on September 15 in Paris, including ten Arab states: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.

### A THREAT COMMON TO EVERYONE<sup>26</sup>

The Arab League, concerned about the advance of a Sunni group with extreme Jihadist fanaticism, started to search, at least, a commitment solution that shows their interest in controlling rebel combatants.

On September 7, 2014, the ministers of Foreign Relations of the Arab League gathered to create an early warning system which organized the coalition of Arab forces (such as the NATO peacekeeping) to help Arab regimes in the fight against supporters of Muslim groups.

In spite of the clear intention to solve eventual rebel uprisings, the first question is the strength of Arab countries to establish a long lasting collective security system.

There is then the question whether this system will allow, in the long term, non-Arab countries in the region (Israel and Turkey) to be part of it. As to its eventual use in the region, the question is whether it will be possible to displace it to other countries, such as Libya, Somalia or Yemen. It is also necessary to know whether Syria could be added, as it is the current theater of operations for the Arab group against the Jihadist.

Last, the League must analyze the possibility for Russia to enter in order to analyze their use in case of eventual Muslim rebellion in their territory.

As from September 19, the coalition intensified their air attacks including many European countries and the support of the Arab Emirates, Qatar and Kuwait, as Eastern basis for the support of coalition aircraft instead of United States aircraft carriers of the Persian Gulf.

By the end of September, Tomahawk missiles started to be launched from American vessels located in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

At the beginning of October, the battle for the Kobane enclave, in the north of Syria, main border connection with Turkey where ISIS aimed at assuring the flow of material and human reinforcement and preventing the reinforcement of Kurdish troops, the only force that could resist ISIS attacks.

Kurdish troops, at the beginning of November, launched successful attacks against ISIS in three fronts in the north of Iraq: Rabia, in the Syrian border; Zummar, in the north of Mosul and in Daquq, in the south of the key oil point of Kirkuk.

*The Arab League, concerned about the advance of a Sunni group with extreme Jihadist fanaticism, started to search, at least, a commitment solution that shows their interest in controlling rebel combatants.*

Kurdish Mergapesh were resisting in Kobane, showing that ISIS was not invincible. The United States saw that air actions were not sufficient, when the president authorizes the deployment of 1500 troops in Iraq, as instructors, apart from requesting the Congress 5000 million dollars to support combats.

The original strategy of the coalition started to be revised by the Pentagon<sup>27</sup>. Apart from a panel of experts, the UN Secretary, Ban Ki-moon, was requested to require the Security Council to order all countries to control oil trucks entering and going out of the territory of the Jihadist and impose a global moratorium on the sale of antiques by both countries.

Combats made Baghdad and Kurdish minorities to agree on a resolution of old disputes regarding oil royalties in Kurdish territory. It is also known that several leaders of Shia Hezbollah from Lebanon train Iraqi Troops to stop the advance of ISIS in the surroundings of Baghdad, alleging to know the way of combat that was used.

In order to supervise the military effort of the coalition, the American Lieutenant General, James L. Terry was appointed. He supervises US forces in the Middle East and operated from that moment in a Kuwait base.

In second position, General Paul F. Funk II was appointed. He serves as subordinate in Baghdad to supervise advisors and trainers from the United States with Iraqi forces and then with the Kurdish in Erbil and possibly in Taji, 20 kilometers north of Baghdad.

The defeat in Kobane and the attempt to re-conquer Mosul by Kurdish troops show a territorial setback of ISIS.

Anyway, the capture of the Jordanian pilot (December 24, 2014) and burning to death showed an important event

24. Reuters, "US Prepares Military Options in Syria against Islamic State", August 25, 2014.

25. Naumkin, Vitaly, "Russia focuses on eliminating Middle East Terrorist Threat", AI Monitor, September 8, 2014.

26. Sanderson, Thomas, M. "The challenge of deterring ISIS", Global Forecast, 2015 CSIS, December, 2014.

27. Branen, Kate, "The fight against ISIS is forcing the Pentagon to rethink its plan for the future warfare", Foreign Policy, November 14, 2014.

**Omar Alberto Locatelli**

Colonel (R). He was Defense Attaché, Military, Naval and Aeronautical before the States of Israel and Cyprus, 2005/2006. Dean of Military Attachés during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lebanon War. Degree in Strategy and Organization with a specialization in Geopolitics from the Escuela Superior de Guerra del Ejército. He is also adhering member of the Instituto de Historia Militar from Argentina and researcher of the Argentine Ministry of Education.

Professor of Operational Strategy at the Escuela Superior de Guerra Conjunta and of Organizational matters at the Escuela Superior de Guerra del Ejército. Author of numerous publications, among which are Cyprus, the mission Hope. Sovereignty and Terrorism and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lebanon War- Causes and consequences and the Evolution of the Tactical targets in the war", The Asymmetric Warfare: A new war equation" (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> part). He has also written the book Chronicle of the Second Lebanon War: Survival of Hezbollah".

in combats. Arab states acknowledged that ISIS is also a common enemy.

**RESHAPING THE MIDDLE EAST<sup>28</sup>**

ISIS, at the time of writing this article (March 2015), is not only a problem for Sunni, Shia and Kurdish, but particularly for the West, to the extent that the president of the United States has requested the Congress to approve the use of troops (except in land actions) in any place affected by the Middle East and the north of Africa, apart from those places where interests and/or citizens of the country and their allies are affected<sup>29</sup>.

The international community faces a new low intensity conflict of indefinite extension which may be considered the first Hybrid War<sup>30</sup>.

In the initial analysis, to fight ISIS, it is necessary to consider combat in a host country (Iraq) of uncertain hospitality and that military actions must remain in the unstable Syria. At the same time, the new alliance must assure air power with aircraft, unmanned air vehicles and cruise missiles that allow them to carefully select the necessary targets, as countries intervening in the coalition avoid authorizing land operations of their troops<sup>31</sup>.

Moreover, they need to have the number of necessary land forces to cover huge areas in Iraq and continue actions in Syria with the danger of including non- Arab forces in the middle of a sector civil war.

It is necessary to consider that, although Iraqi land forces may have an important role to complement air power, for

tactical victory, it is necessary to achieve political union between Shia Arabs, Sunni, Kurdish and the rest of the minorities in Iraq and the government.

To do this, it is necessary to get Sunni Arab support in the areas under influence of ISIS, reduce gaps between Arabs and Kurdish, get the support of Arab neighbors and build stronger new relations with Turkey.

ISIS has become a substantial force in the northern and western area of Baghdad which threatens the Kurdish production of oil and the Iraqi government. Probably the need will lead for one of the solutions to be in the attitude to be adopted by Turkey, the main Muslim hegemonic country that may decisively contribute to defeat ISIS (set as a target by the coalition<sup>32</sup>).

However, their economic interests in Syria are contrary to those of the coalition; one aims at the defeat of Assad in opposition to the creation of a possible jihadist sanctuary with open borders to the Mediterranean and the world.

The coalition requires to keep a delicate balance between their relation with Iran, to keep their nuclear plan under control in exchange for the reduction of economic problems and relation with Saudi Arabia, main Sunni support of the Arab League.

Warning signs in the West are very clear. Stages mentioned in the book Management of Savagery begin to become true both in the Syrian- Iraqi territory and the north of Africa. The Syrian uprising starts to join the Libyan sunset. No military success will be sufficient if jihadism and violent Muslim extremism cannot be totally defeated, for which it is necessary to know both.

Old Holy places had to be released (although temporarily) by different Crusades. The last great Ottoman Muslim Empire could only be dismantled after a world war. It may be the time to rethink the agreement Skyes- Picot or we will have to remember the success of the coalition in the siege of Vienna on September 11, 1683.

Inshallah (May God want, in Arab language), a new Council of Clermont or the bravery Godfrey of Bouillon are not necessary to put an end to this new form of war in the name of God.

28. Friedman, George, "The Islamic State reshapes the Middle East", Geopolitical Weekly, November 25, 2014.

29. Peters, Jeremy W., "Obama to seek War Power Bill from Congress to fight ISIS", New York Times, February 10, 2015.

30. Bowers, Christopher, "How to identify emerging hybrid opponents", Military Review, January-February, 2014.

31. Baker, Peter, "Obama Sends Letter for an adequacy of resources". New York Times, February 11, 2015.

32. Cordesman, Anthony, The need for an adequacy of resources. Available at [http://csis.org/files/publication/141024\\_Imploing\\_US\\_Strategy28in\\_Islamic\\_State\\_War.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/141024_Imploing_US_Strategy28in_Islamic_State_War.pdf)