

SCREEN WATCH



GEOSTRATEGIC FORSIGHT
SECURITY MONITORING
COUNTER-TERRORISM
RESISTANCE TO EXTREMISM

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SUMMARY

- 02 **EDITORIAL** : The qatari puzzle : Tamim in the footsteps of Saddam Hussein?
- 02 **CONFIDENTIEL** : Sarkozy is lobbying for Qatar in French-speaking Africa
- 03 Al-Qaeda wants to revive « jihad » in Saudi Arabia
- 03 Hezbollah is compartmentalising its financial structures
- 03 Qatar is looking for authors for a book entitled "Emirates Papers"!
- 04 **CONJUNCTURES** : Africa, Terrorism, France, Iran, Turkey, Qatar, the secret side of the international news
- 10 **EXPERTISES** : When the Hamas betrays the Palestinians, by Martine Gozlan
- 11 Why Turkey plays with Russia versus the United States, by Christian Malard
- 12 Counter-terrorism: facing the "enemy from within", by Roland Jacquard
- 13 The Swiss Nicolas Blancho: a fake crank, a true pro-Qatar Islamist, by Ian Hamel
- 14 The challenges of water management in the Middle East, by Fabienne Durand
- 15 My meeting with Abdelrahman al-Nuaimi, Qatari terrorist money maker, by Georges Malbrunot
- 16 **INVESTIGATIONS** : Jihadist terrorist financing : new revelations on the "Qatar Connexion"
- 18 **DOCUMENTS** : Muslim Brotherhood and Jihadist extremism, the nefarious links
- 20 **PROFILES** : Hamza Bin Laden, the end of al-Qaeda's dynastic dream

EXCLUSIVE

CORRUPTION IN ALGERIA

Who are the 15 mysterious personalities who are grabbing the oil rent?

As a follow-up to our investigation into the corruption scandals of the Algerian oil company *Sonatrach*, in connection with the Bou-
teflika clan (*Screen Watch*, No. 2, June-July 2019), we have received a "special report" on a financial investigation into an offshore company registered in the British Virgin Islands, under the name of *Sonatrach Petroleum Corporation*, which would serve as a financial parachute allowing 15 personalities, whose identities are not revealed in this confidential document, to share a gigantic jackpot from the Algerian oil rent !

The report states that this offshore company is registered in the British Virgin Islands but does not employ any staff or carry out any on-site operations. It is represented by a local agent, called *Harneys Corporate Services Limited*, who provides it with an address and a mailbox, as is customary in tax havens.

The report reveals that this offshore arm of *Sonatrach* has four bank accounts. And quotes, for example, that in

December 2012, the first account, domiciled at HSBC, was credited with \$923 million; the second, at Barclays, was credited with \$1.32 million; the third, at VP Bank, was credited with \$549 thousand; the fourth, at Corebridge Bank Ltd, contained \$215 thousand.

The report states that the company also has three other accounts domiciled in Panama, which carry out frequently transactions with the four accounts mentioned above.

And in a section entitled "Additional Information", the report indicates that this offshore arm of the *Sonatrach* carries out transactions in favour of 15 Algerian personalities on offshore accounts held by these personalities in Panama, the Cayman Islands, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Lichtenstein.

The report states that "the list of countries (where the accounts in question are domiciled) is not exhaustive and cannot be". And concluded that "however we confirm that transactions towards Algerian leaders and businessmen have been performed"! ●

HIDDEN FINANCES OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

Lord Energy in the footsteps of Al Taqwa Bank?

Following our investigation entitled *Corruption in Algeria*: the Qatari Muslim Brotherhood channel (*Screen Watch*, No. 2, June-July 2019), we learn that the oil trading company *Lord Energy*, led by Nazim Nada, the son of the famous Muslim Brotherhood financier, Youssef Nada, is heading for bankruptcy.

A scenario that recalls the precedent of the *Al Taqwa Bank*, headed by Nada-father, which went

bankrupt following the revelation of its involvement in terrorist financing in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. In both cases, the purpose of bankruptcy is to prevent the extension of investigations from further revealing disclosures.

According to the Swiss press, *Lord Energy's* bankruptcy would cause financial damage to its banker, Credit Suisse, of the order of 25 million Swiss francs. *Al Taqwa*,

in his time, had left a \$75 million slate.

When contacted, Nazim Nada did not wish to answer our questions. In a statement to the Swiss newspaper *Le Temps*, he denied any ties with the Muslim Brothers and justified the presence on *Lord Energy's* board of directors of a majority of the Muslim Brothers' sons of leaders by the fact that it is "natural for children who grew up together in the same environment to end up becoming colleagues"! ●

The West Facing the Qatari Puzzle: Tamim in Saddam Hussein's Footsteps?

This Summer 2019 will have been the season of all extremes for Qatar.

It all began on June 20, with an investigation by the *Wall Street Journal* revealing that one of Al-Qaeda's most famous silversmiths, Khalifa Al-Subaiy, who was the financier of the "September 11 brain", continues to carry out his activities as a "patron of terror", protected from the high complicities he enjoys within the Qatari establishment.

Then the scandals broke out.

On July 22, the New York Times revealed a controversial telephone conversation between Qatar's ambassador to Mogadishu, Hassan Bin Hamza Bin Hashem, and the businessman close to the Qatar Emir, Khalifa Kayed Al-Muhannadi. In this exchange, the two men bragged about having sponsored a terrorist attack in May in Bossaso, Somalia.

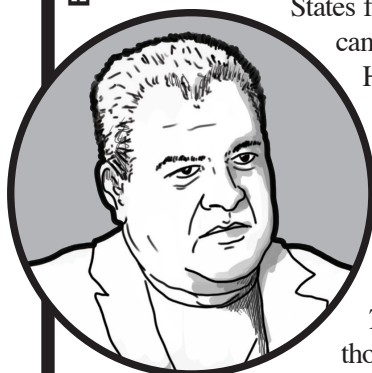
The next day (July 23) we learned that Fahad Bin Hamad Al-Tahni, one of the Prince of Qatar's brothers, is the subject of a federal complaint in the United States for having ordered assassination attempts against American citizens. Then, another brother of the Emir, Khalid Bin Hamad Al-Thani, was in the news: his name was mentioned in an investigation into the financing of radical medersas in Pakistan. Worse still, we learned that the Salafi Jihadist sympathies of this emir were an "open secret known to all the Western chancelleries"!

Then, on August 5, the resounding scandal of the *Al Rayan* Bank broke out in London. According to *The Times*, this Islamic bank is being used by the Qatar authorities to finance 15 terrorist organisations in Great Britain! The former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar,

Hamad Bin Jassim Al-Thani, was quick to sell off his luxurious properties in London and Paris (see page 16).

On the surface, the panic that has seized the former head of Qatari diplomacy is surprising. Especially since he is used to this type of scandals. In fact, Hamad Bin Jassim is rightly aware that there will be a before and after the *Al Rayan* affair. Indeed, following this scandal, Qatar finds itself on a slippery slope that some might compare to the one that saw former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein move from being the West's "best friend in the Middle East" to being an enemy to be shot down!

We are only at the early stages of this turnaround. But the comments of some British politicians, such as Conservative MP Zac Goldsmith, are unequivocal: "Qatar's dishonorable support for extremists in the Middle East is well known and well documented. If they also use their great wealth and global influence to facilitate extremism right here in the United Kingdom, then the government must act quickly and firmly [...] The fact that Qatar has invested heavily in the United Kingdom should not absolve or protect it"!



CONFIDENTIAL

NATO obsessed with cyber terrorism

NATO's Counter-Terrorism Centre is increasing the number of seminars devoted to the fight against cyber terrorism. According to an internal memo to the Secretary General, Atlanticist counter-terrorism experts expect major cyber-attacks over the next three years. That is why the Alliance wants to make this subject an absolute priority.

Acute financial crisis in al-Manar, the Hezbollah TV channel

Hezbollah reportedly complained recently in Tehran that its television channel *al-Manar* has not received Iranian funding for several months. Forced to draw on its own funds, the channel is going through an acute crisis that could lead it to make redundancies in the near future.

KUWAIT

Change in perspective in the succession order

According to a Western confidential note, quoting an Arab security source, the health of Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, designated in 2006 as Crown Prince, has deteriorated considerably.

According to the same source, Sheikh Nasser Bin Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the eldest son of the current Emir, who holds the post of Minister of Defence, is expected to inherit as the new Prince.

This change in the order of succession could occur in the very first months of 2020. The Ministry of Defence's portfolio could then revert to its current Secretary General, Sheikh Ahmad al-Mansour Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Al-Qaeda wants to revive "jihad" in Saudi Arabia

According to a Western confidential note, referring to recent electronic interceptions in the Afghan-Pakistani tribal areas, al-Qaeda's central leadership is seeking to revive the "jihad" in Arabia and is preparing to launch an appeal urging Saudi Arabians to revolt against the regime and urge its supporters to carry out jihadist operations in Saudi territory. This has not happened since AQAP (al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula) was driven out of the country in 2009 and took refuge in Yemen.

New appointment as head of the Pakistani ISI

Long considered a "factory of radical Islamism", the ISI (Inter Services Intelligence), the most important Pakistani intelligence agency, is headed by an officer known for his secular stances.

This is General Faiz Hameed, a prominent figure of the liberal *Muttahida Qaumi Movement* (United National Movement). In particular, he made himself famous by actively contributing to the dismissal by the Supreme Court of the Islamist Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, in July 2017.

To counter US sanctions, Hezbollah is compartmentalising its financial structures

Last June, Hezbollah initiated a process of in-depth restructuring of its financial networks to counter American sanctions. In the long term, all current financial managers will be replaced by a new generation of

executives who are less well known and therefore less easily identified by the anti-terrorist services. And new structures will be put in place, with the aim of further compartmentalising the party's finances.

In addition, according to a Western confidential note, in order to anticipate sanctions that could affect its usual financial circuits, Hezbollah recently carried out cash transfers from Lebanon to Latin America and West Africa.

Sarkozy is lobbying for Qatar in French-speaking Africa

Qatar's sovereign wealth fund has just created a new special investment fund for Africa. With a budget of \$5,000 million, this fund is mainly intended for investments in the hotel sector.

To this end, former French President Nicolas Sarkozy, appointed by the Qataris to the board of directors of the Accor hotel group, is lobbying intensively to facilitate Qatari investment in French-speaking Africa and more particularly in Ivory Coast.

LIBYA

Anti-Haftar militias get air defense systems

Several notes from Western intelligence services warn against the acquisition by Libyan anti-Haftar militias of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS). This poses serious threats to the Libyan Air Force. The notes point in particular to weapons that have recently arrived from Sudan.

Qatar is looking for authors for a book entitled "Emirates Papers"!

In response to the book "Qatar Papers" by Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot, the Qatari authorities quietly approached several researchers and investigators in Geneva, Paris and London, with a view to having them contribute to the drafting of a book against the United Arab Emirates, which could be entitled "Emirates Papers".

AFRICA

ISIS to attack the African Great Lakes region

ISIS is looking to expand its presence in the Great Lakes region. Taking advantage of the political and diplomatic disagreements that are tearing apart the countries of the region (Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia), Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's organisation is trying to strengthen its armed and financial networks on the ground.

Thus, in addition to the "usual" incursions of the Somali Shebabs, the region has been subjected since last spring to terrorist attacks by the ADF (Alliance of Democratic Forces), a Ugandan rebel movement active since the mid-1990s, which recently allegiance to ISIS.

An allegiance formalised by the Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's organisation, by claiming on behalf of Califat an attack led by ADF on 16 April last, on the border between Uganda and the DRC, which cost the lives of two Congolese soldiers.

Another source of concern is that Kenya recently arrested and handed over Walled Ahmed Zein, known to be one of the financiers of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, to the Americans. His visit to the region was intriguing, especially since he was, at the time of his arrest, in possession of large sums of money, including 150 thousand dollars that would be destined for ADF. ●

Russia assaults French-speaking Africa

Russia continues to strengthen its military and commercial presence in French-speaking Africa. According to our sources, President Putin is about to sign 6 agreements on military cooperation and arms sales on the African continent.

After those signed with Mali and Central Africa, these new agreements could concern Ivory Coast in particular. To anticipate this rapprochement with Moscow, the United States proposed to Ivory Coast the creation of a large US air base in Abidjan. According to our sources, this project would also include a listening station.

Macron wants a Special Counter-Terrorism Intervention Force in the Sahel

During the summer, French President Emmanuel Macron headed several defence councils devoted to the fight against terrorism in Africa. The Elysée is seeking to develop a new strategy for Operation Barkhane. As part of this strategy, Paris wants to convince the United States, the Gulf States and the European Union to create a "Special Intervention Force" to deal with emergencies related to terrorism in Africa.

Erdogan covets mining and hydropower sectors in the DRC

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is actively seeking to court the new President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Felix Tshisekedi. Turkey is very interested in the country's mining and water sectors. To this end, Erdogan sent one of his main confidants to Kinshasa: Lokman SEVER, a businessman who manages the Turkish President's sensitive "interests".

TERRORISM

DGSE: Al-Baghdadi suffers from lung disease

Jihadist terrorism in Africa: towards a wave of ground-to-air missile attacks?

A confidential note, citing a Salafist source in London, reports suspicious activity within jihadist networks in Africa, suggesting a wave of attacks using surface-to-air missiles in the coming months. According to the source in question, these attacks could concern Libya, Nigeria and the Sahel area.

A recent report by the Technical Services of the DGSE, the French foreign intelligence service, states that the geo-medical analysis of the latest propaganda video of ISIS's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (see *Screen Watch*, No. 1, May 2019), showed that he has lung disease.

The DGSE report also said it was intrigued by the appearance of "signs of accelerated ageing" in the self-proclaimed Caliph of ISIS. ●

ISIS to attack Somalia

ISIS is seeking to create a wilayah in Somalia. Western anti-terrorist sources report that nearly 200 members of the organisation have been transferred to Somalia from Syrian-Iraqi territories formerly controlled by ISIS, including explosives experts and divers trained to work underwater.

Great Britain: the spectre of new attacks on London monuments

British intelligence services fear ISIS's attacks in London. Alert notes mention the multiplication, since last June, of propaganda operations carried out by the Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's organisation, via social networks, showing London monuments.

Europol: worrying leakss of anti-terrorist files

Sources within Europol are concerned that the internal investigation launched several months ago has still not succeeded in shedding light on the circumstances that led to the leakage of important anti-terrorist files, including some 50 confidential reports on terrorist networks in Europe and a list containing the names and contact details of 680 terrorists or personalities supporting terrorism among the most wanted on the old continent.

Doha bought €2.37 billion worth of arms from France in 2018

According to the 2019 edition of the French parliamentary report on arms exports, Qatar has spent €11.04 billion on arms purchases from France since 2009, including €2.37 billion in 2018 alone.

According to our sources, after receiving, last June, its first Rafale squadron purchased from France, Doha is currently seeking to acquire Roland MK-11 SP type missiles, Matra R530s and Aerospace SA 342 helicopters from Paris for its Land Force.

The Attorney General of Qatar complained to the Elysee about Judge Van Ruymbeke's "overzealousness"

At a hearing at the Elysee, the Attorney General of Qatar, Ali Bin Fetais Al-Marri, complained about the "overzealousness" allegedly shown by Judge Renaud Van Ruymbeke, on the eve of his retirement, regarding the corruption cases related to Qatar for which he was in charge. The famous anti-corruption judge reportedly spent the last few weeks before his retirement at the end of June writing detailed notes for his successors to ensure that his departure did not slow down ongoing investigations into Qatari corruption scandals in football and athletics.

QATAR Secret contract to provide the Qatari Air Force of Sukhoi Su-35

According to a Western confidential note, Moscow and Doha have concluded a secret agreement to provide the Qatari Air Force with Russian Sukhoi Su-35 fighters (the equivalent of the Flanker-E in the NATO code). This agreement was reportedly concluded in the wings of recent negotiations by Qatar's Ambassador to Moscow, Fahd Bin Mohammed Al-Attiyah, for the procurement of S-400 Triumph air defence systems. ●

Al-Jazeera is trying to take over the international rights of a documentary inspired from the book "Qatar Papers"!

After having tried, in vain, to hinder the distribution of the book "Qatar Papers" by Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot, by mobilizing Arab scholarship students to massively buy the book (see *Screen Watch*, n°2, June-July 2019), Qatar is trying to contain the audience of the documentary inspired from the same book.

Having failed to prevent its broadcasting in France, despite a letter of protest sent by the Qatari Embassy to Arte channel, co-producer and broadcaster of the film, the Doha authorities tried to acquire the international rights to the film, to ensure that no channel could broadcast it outside the French-speaking world.

Does Tariq Ramadan plan to badmouth Qatar?

According to a French confidential note, the Swiss Islamist Tariq Ramadan, who has made headlines in France following the publication of his book "Duty of Truth", reportedly requested the assistance of the Qatar Embassy in Paris, as part of his campaign to be rehabilitated in the face of the many complaints of rape to which he has been subjected for two years.

However, the Qatari ambassador is reported to have been instructed by his superiors to "stay quite" on the Ramadan case. A release that seems to irritate Ramadan's relatives, who would consider taking revenge by badmouthing the Qatari support their idol has long enjoyed.

According to the note, a close collaborator of Ramadan reportedly told a French journalist off: "We have many reports that show our relations with the Qatari government. Tariq Ramadan was supported by Qatar and we can prove it".

IRAN Tehran equips the Houthis with new technologies to produce "improvised explosive devices"

A Western expert report states that Iran has equipped the Houthi rebels in Yemen with new technologies to produce "Improvised Explosive Devices" (IEDs), hidden in fibreglass envelopes that give them the appearance of rocks. According to the report, these IEDs are similar to Explosively Formed Projectiles (EFPs), which are capable of penetrating the armour of military vehicles already used by pro-Iranian groups in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. ●

Doha provides Tehran information on US troop movements at al-Udeid base

A recent investigation report by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the Pentagon's intelligence service, alerted the White House to Qatari leaks to Iran regarding the movements of US air forces operating in the Persian Gulf from the US base at al-Udeid in Qatar.

Iran makes its embassy in Paris the spearhead of its diplomacy

The new Iranian ambassador in Paris, Bahram Ghassenmi, has received the largest budget allocation from the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Tehran intends to make its embassy in France the spearhead of its diplomacy in Europe, to counter American hostility.

According to our sources, since his appointment last March, the Iranian ambassador has launched a major seduction operation targeting politicians, the media and businessmen. He invited some 40 parliamentarians and dozens of journalists and business leaders to informal meetings. He also made numerous requests for hearings with the diplomatic cell of the Elysee, the Quai d'Orsay, the Ministry of Defence and the Prime Minister.

Tehran launches with Doha a centre for geostrategic studies of the Gulf countries

The Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently concluded a cooperation agreement with the Qatari authorities on the establishment of training courses in Doha for Iranian official media and the establishment of an Iran-Qatar Centre for Strategic Studies dedicated to the Gulf country.

Tehran calls back retired scientists and reservists to revive its nuclear potential

A confidential Western report, citing diplomatic sources, warns that several Iranian scientists, including pensioners and reservists hidden in Safe Houses, to protect them from "targeted assassinations", have recently been recalled to take part in discussions on new techniques to increase the country's nuclear potential.

The report concludes that, faced with American hostility, Tehran is betting on an increase, even a minimum, in its nuclear potential, to put pressure on European and UN mediators who are trying to defuse the crisis.

Turkey is building its second military base in Africa

Ankara is launching the construction of a large military base on Suakin Island, which Sudan granted to it for 99 years in December 2017. This base installed on one of the most strategic ports in the Red Sea is the second Turkish military installation on the African continent. In September 2017, Turkey inaugurated a military base in Mogadishu, considered to be the largest outside its borders.

NATO is concerned about Turkey's requests for funds from Russia and China

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is increasing secret missions to China and Russia to ask for financial assistance. Ankara's objective is to achieve with these loans \$50-60 billion in contracts with Beijing and around \$120 billion with Moscow. These steps are of concern to NATO at the highest level, of which Turkey is a member, because most of the contracts in question concern the purchase of Russian and Chinese weapons and military equipment.

TURKEY Ankara intensifies its offensive in Africa

The Turkish diplomatic and economic offensive in Africa is strongly accelerating. The African continent is an area of strategic importance for President Erdogan, who has visited Africa more than 40 times, visiting 26 countries as Prime Minister and then President.

Since 2016, this Turkish offensive has intensified, thanks in particular to the opening of new embassies, now numbering 41 on the Continent, and the multiplication of activities of TIKA (Turkish Cooperation Agency), which has 20 African offices and has been established over the last three years in Conakry, Dar es Salaam, Juba, Maputo, Moroni and Pretoria. It plans to expand its network in the near future to Gabon, Chad, Libya, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This Turkish influence also includes the intensification of the Turkish Airlines network, which serves 53 cities in 35 African countries, and the financing of charities, such as the construction of ultra-modern hospitals, such as those in Nyala in Sudan and Mogadishu in Somalia, and the construction of mosques, such as the one in Accra, which is the largest in West Africa and has an imam training school.

The Turkish authorities have also managed to get their hands on the Turkish Koranic schools, which used to belong to the Gülen Brotherhood in Africa. And this through the pro-government *Maarif* Foundation. ●

New Turkey - Qatar Summit in preparation

A new Turkey - Qatar summit is being prepared. In addition to the usual issues that form the basis of cooperation between the two countries (Iran, Syria, Yemen, relations with the Gulf countries, etc.), this summit will aim to strengthen the ties between Ankara and Doha initiated since the blockade of Qatar by its Arab neighbours.

A Western confidential note quotes, among the avenues under consideration, within the commissions in charge of preparing this summit, the establishment of coordinated military operations, intelligence-sharing agreements and joint actions in Africa.

The Muslim Brotherhood dossier on the agenda for Macron's visit to South Africa

Emanuel Macron is planning an important visit to South Africa this autumn. The objective is to strengthen economic, industrial and financial ties with this country, which enjoys a leading economic position on the African continent.

Agreements on the fight against terrorism will also be part of the programme, with a particular focus on the infiltration by Islamist associations linked to the Muslim Brotherhood of several of the most important humanitarian organisations in South Africa.

New special jurisdictions against financial crime

A major reform of the investigative justice system is under way in Paris, concerning white-collar crime, corruption and financial crime. One of the major innovations of this project is the creation of specialised jurisdictions with non-judicial experts.

This case is being handled by François Molens, the former prosecutor of Paris, currently Attorney General at the Court of Cassation. And the National Financial Prosecutor's Office is involved in the project.

FRANCE To please General Gaïd Saleh, Paris is considering appointing a military ambassador to Algiers!

Paris is considering appointing a new ambassador to Algiers to replace Xavier Driencourt, who was criticised by the new Algerian government for the "too great influence" he has acquired in recent years in circles close to the Bouteflika clan.

The Elysée is looking for a diplomat who can develop good relations with the country's new strong man, General Ahmed Gaïd Salah. According to our sources, the appointment of a career military officer is even being considered. ●

Macron back in China in November

Emmanuel Macron will provide another official visit to China in early November. On the agenda are major contracts to be signed with Beijing, including sales of Airbus and nuclear power plants.

The Mister Africa of the Quai d'Orsay appointed Ambassador to Ethiopia

Remy Maréchaux, the head of the Africa and Indian Ocean department at Quai d'Orsay, will be appointed Ambassador to Ethiopia.

A former member of the DGSE (General Directorate for External Security), this specialist in sensitive cases was a member of the Elysée's Africa Unit during President Chirac's time.

When the Hamas betrays the Palestinians

By **Martine Gozlan***

It is the only revolt of Arab people against its leaders that does not have right of citizenship in the European media, especially in French media. The revolt took place in Gaza last March: Hamas repressed in the blood the anger of people who shouted "We want to live!". It's the opinion makers who, from London to Paris, repressed it in silence.

This revolt did not oppose Palestinians to Israeli soldiers but to their own corrupt leaders who were indifferent to the suffering of the Gazans.

Hajar Harb, our sister of this unfortunate territory submitted on one side to fanaticism, on the other to the Egyptian and Israeli blockades, had nevertheless shown a month earlier a great courage by reporting on the bribes required by doctors in exchange of medical certificates: only these may authorize the release from Gaza. She was brought to justice and sentenced. The solidarity of his compatriots has scared the judicial system: Hajar is finally discharged on the eve of the hunger protests.

But another voice has just risen. It belongs to Soheib Yousef.

The own son of a senior executive of the Islamist organization in the West Bank, Hassan Yousef, currently imprisoned in Israel. Soheib was stationed in Istanbul where Hamas has a representation that lives in luxury and attends the best restaurants of the Bosphorus. With the blessing of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who authorized the installation of an intelligence platform that had put on alert the enemies brothers of the Palestinian authority as well as certain Israeli. This valuable information was sold at a good price to Iran. Money was passing by Turkish banks.

It was Soheib the defector who revealed that case and many others. For this he fled the Middle East to an Asian country remained secret. And he called Channel 12, the most watched Israeli TV. The one who sent straight away a reporter, Ohad Hemo, in the depths of Asia to meet him. This can be considered a passage to the enemy or true fury of a Palestinian in front of the duplicity of his former companions? Revolt against the father? In this case, Soheib is not the first. His older brother, Mosab, joined the Shin Bet and worked to thwart attacks from 1997 to 2007. It is nicknamed "The Green Prince" before his final installation in the United States. His family has cut all the ties with him and evokes his "mental disorders".

In his interview with the journalist Ohad Hemo - a personality quite on the left, who has often denounced the blockage of peace talks - the young Soheib says he does not want walk in the footsteps of the big brother. He is not interested in working for Israel: he decided to say with disgust everything he saw around him. We can judge: "The Hamas executives live abroad in five-star residences with swimming pool, their children are enrolled in private schools, they are paid between 4000 and 5000 dollars a month, while the income monthly per household in Gaza is \$ 360, they have private club membership cards..."

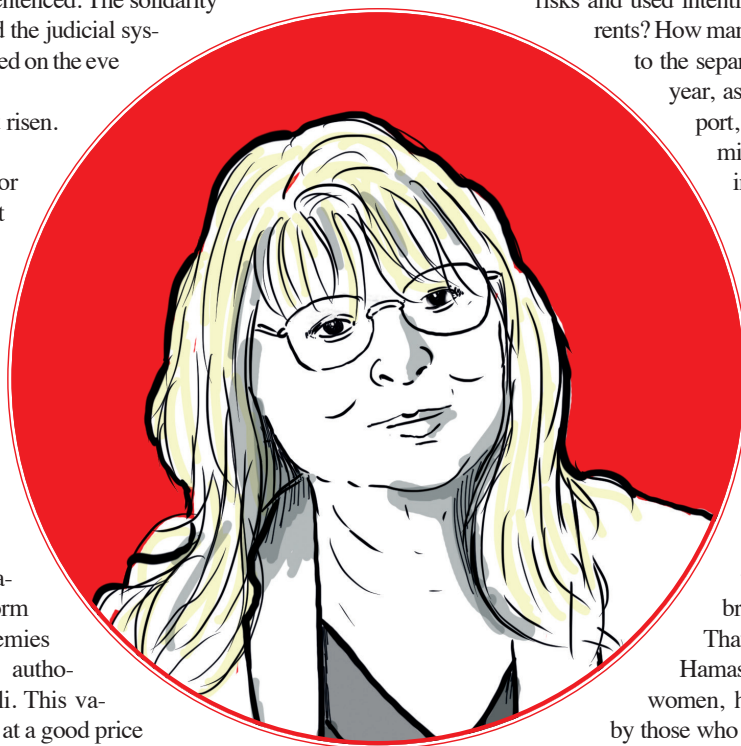
In Gaza itself, the district of the executives is full of luxurious villas. New fortunes have built thanks to the traffic of goods passing through tunnels. These tunnels dug in diverting millions of dollars from European aid, employing children. How many small Palestinians were buried by accident while officials knew all the risks and used intentionally the misery of the parents? How many of them have been brought to the separation fence with Israel for a year, as it is shown by a recent report, for a few tickets to their family, to serve as a human shield in front of the real members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad trying to infiltrate enemy territory?

So many events that do not pass the glass ceiling of information on Gaza. Because the Palestine, this real cause, was diverted to become an alibi. How to explain that no French pro-Palestinian organization has echoed the revolt of the Gazans, the brave word of Hajar Harb? That the religious dictatorship of Hamas, the dishonourable status of women, have never been denounced by those who claim to be defenders of human rights?

This is the debate that could finally open after the revolt of March 2019, the warning cry of our Palestinian sister, and finally the revelations of Soheib Yousef?

He is not the first to speak, and this is what matters. If we still believe, as in these columns, in the possibility of a Palestinian State, sovereign and democratic, alongside the Jewish State, this truth should be written: Hamas betrays the Palestinians. ●

** Journalist and essayist, editor-in-chief at the weekly newspaper Marianne, specialist in Islamism and the Middle East.*



Why Turkey plays with Russia versus the United States

By **Christian Malard***

In deciding to obtain Russia's S400 ground-air missiles, amongst the most sophisticated in the world, capable of reaching more than 80 targets at a time, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan merely defied the United States and jeopardised his country's chances of remaining within NATO.

Erdogan multiplied provocations to obtain concessions. But it is clear this military-diplomatic imbroglio raises questions about Turkey's slow drifting towards Russia and its progressive withdrawal from NATO.

Whenever Turkey's independence is at stake, Erdogan proves to be a maverick who can break free from the rules and logics of alliances. In the background, Turkey is primarily looking to balance its relations instead of breaking off with the Western Camp.

This been said, Trump's administration has every reason in the world to oppose the acquisition of these missiles. They are placing Russian technology at the heart of a key country within the Atlantic Alliance who possesses the 2nd strongest army after that of the USA. Russians may well have free access to all technological data of the F35 Stealth Fighter, one of the most advanced aircrafts of the American Army, which Erdogan has purchased.

But the United States have expelled Turkey from the F35's program, already acquired by allied countries such as Japan, Australia, Canada, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Italy and the United Kingdom.

Regarding this ultra-sophisticated equipment, America has always refused cooperating with Turkey as well as transferring its technology, as demanded by Erdogan.

According to Pentagon's strategists in Washington, the selling of Russia's S400 to the Turks is part of Vladimir Putin's scheme to divide NATO.

Today, American officials are wondering whether Turkey can remain an active NATO member while using a Russian Aerial Defense system. According to them, Turkey drifts towards a "non-Occidental alternative". It has of course long been a kingpin of the alliance but its interests haven't always been in line with that of an Occidental defense alliance created in 1949 to counter the Soviet Union.

Since the start of Syria's civil war, NATO positioned its American "Patriot" Ground-Air Missiles system on Turkish territory but, today, Erdogan insists that Turkey acquires such a system, an appeal which America has never followed up.

This been said, acquisition by Recep Tayyip Erdogan of a Russian defence missile system constitutes a political victory



for Vladimir Putin who brings Turkey back into its fold. He so reinforces his foothold in the Middle East after militarily intervening in Syria.

Let's add that, while supporting Iran, Russia maintains good diplomatic, economic and military relations with the Gulf monarchies and Egypt, all allies of the United States.

The bone of contention between Turkey and the USA may well deteriorate the relations between armies of the two countries.

The USA disposes of important military bases on Turkish soil, such as Incirlik as well as tactical nuclear weapons storage sites.

In the meantime, facing Congress which is hostile to Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Donald Trump does not wish to impose sanctions, to avoid NATO's destabilization.

He prefers negotiating with Erdogan with whom he must also address the problem of the Kurds at the Syrian-Turkish border.

Maybe all of them should sit around a table together with Vladimir Putin, who has become indispensable in bringing stability back to the Middle East. ●

** Expert in international politics and diplomatic consultant.*

Counter-terrorism: facing the “enemy from within” (1/3)

By **Roland Jacquard***

The fight against terrorism is a very particular kind of war. An asymmetric battle in which the intelligence services are engaged in a relentless battle against an enemy as radical as it is invisible. In other words, unlike the rules that determine the balance of power in conventional wars, when faced with the faceless adversary known as terrorism, striking power and military supremacy are not the most decisive elements.

It is therefore a shadow war where discretion and secrecy are required. This is why it is at the extreme opposite of spectacular gestures and ostentatious security devices, which aim to reassure public opinion or to heal the popularity ratings of governors.

And unlike military clashes or conventional police operations, the asymmetric and secret nature of the fight against terrorism means that it is not enough to hunt down and dismantle targeted organisations. It also and above all involves constantly listening to and monitoring a multitude of clandestine networks, dormant or active, in order to gather the necessary information to infiltrate and trace their various networks and branches. And to be informed of what is happening in the secret of terrorist groups, in order to be able to anticipate the fateful hour of their passage to action and to thwart their subversive projects.

Thus, the main purpose of this anti-terrorist intelligence war is not to destroy or break up terrorist organisations from within, as in the James Bond spy movies. Above all, it is a matter of establishing - and continuously updating - a set of markers and indicators to detect threats and anticipate terrorist projects before they are carried out. Because each attack perpetrated is an admission of failure for anti-terrorist intelligence.

A failure from which we must immediately learn lessons, in order to move up the Sisyphean slope, by setting up different markers to detect and anticipate the new faces and new forms that the future terrorist threat will take.

This is a perpetual - and sometimes macabre - cat and mouse play between terrorist groups and intelligence services. And never since the outbreak of modern terrorist phenomena at the beginning of the 19th century has this arm wrestling match known so many adventures, mutations and reversals of situation, as since the emergence of jihadist terrorism in the early 1990s.

This latent war has accelerated dramatically since the attacks of September 11, 2001. But it was with the emergence of ISIS neo-Jihadism, from the summer of 2014, that it reached its peak. This applies to the entire Western world, but it is in France, the Western country most targeted by jihadist attacks

since 2015, that its most tragic illustrations have been produced.

In less than four years, France has suffered 11 terrorist attacks, killing 245 people, 17 failed attempts and some 50 plans for attacks thwarted by the anti-terrorist services.

However, the exogenous threat that led to the *Charlie-Hebdo* attacks in January 2015 and the Paris and Saint Denis attacks in November 2015 quickly gave way to a new type of “endogenous terrorism” where the threat no longer comes from abroad, but from an “internal enemy”.

Thus, from the attack on the tram truck on the

“Promenade des Anglais” in Nice on July 14, 2016, to the attacks in Carcassonne and Trèbes on March 23, 2018, the

intelligence services have noted that the terrorist acts are no longer the work of jihadist commandos attacking France from the ISIS strongholds in the Iraqi and Syria jihadist areas. They are the poisoned fruit of spontaneous “jihadist vocations”, evoked at a distance by ISIS recruiters, among French “subjects” most often motivated by violent nihilistic impulses, more than by a real desire for a jihadist “holy war”. ●

(To be continued)

* *Writer and consultant, chairman of Roland Jacquard Global Security Consulting (RJGSC)*



The Swiss Nicolas Blancho: a fake crank, a true pro-Qatar Islamist

By **Ian Hamel***

Who is the Islamist in Switzerland who has monopolized the media most in the last decade? Tariq Ramadan, suspected of rape, or his brother Hani, director

of the Geneva Islamic Center, and a strong advocate of stoning? Not at all, it is Nicolas Blancho, a 36-year-old convert with a long bushy red beard, chairman of the Islamic Central Council of Switzerland (CCIS), a structure whose true audience it is difficult to assess. Although his father was French, Nicolas Blancho's notoriety in

Europe has not (yet) exceeded the borders of the Confederation. Born in Bienne, a bilingual city in the canton of Berne, the man does not really have the profile of a brilliant intellectual. In his first interviews in 2010, he admits that he was bored at school,

and that he did not complete an apprenticeship as a printer. At the age of 16, he converted to Islam. His readings guide him towards fundamentalist thinkers, Ibn Tamiyya, Sayyed Qutb, Al-Mawdudi. Very quickly, the Alemannic press, particularly the *Weltwoche*, demonized him by presenting him as “Bin Laden of Bienne”, “the most dangerous Islamist in the country”.

Yet Nicolas Blancho's first actions would place him more in the category of the cranks. With its inflatable minaret at a CCIS congress,

the distribution of yellow eight-pointed stars bearing the inscription “Muslim”, and stickers associating Islamophobia with the Holocaust, because “*Muslims in Switzerland are subjected to discrimination comparable to the one endured by the Jews before the Shoah*”. His announcements about the construction of a mosque in Bern, at 20 million Swiss francs (18 million euros), the creation of separate schools for Muslims, the launch of Muslim television, discount cards for Muslims, did not have the slightest beginning of a debut.

In other words, is he not a vulgar agitator at the head of a ghostly organisation (it claims, without proving it, 3,500 members, or 1% of Muslims in Switzerland)? Nicolas Blancho's right-hand man, Qasim Illi, does not have any more guarantees of seriousness. Before his conversion to Islam, he spent time in an evangelical fundamentalist church, before flirting with the Swiss extreme right. He was convicted in 2005 of possessing pornographic and scatological images, and for racial discrimination... As for his wife Nora Illi, also a convert, she is a strong advocate of polygamy. She asserts that “*a woman's duty is to satisfy a man. It is in a man's nature to desire other*

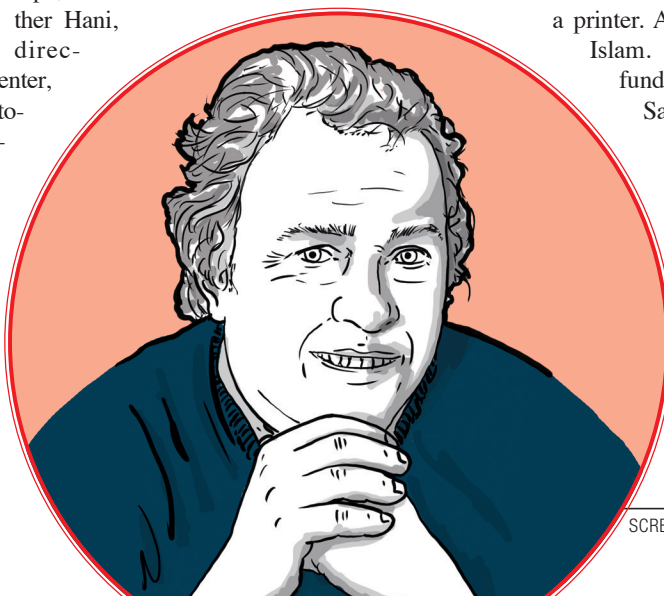
women. Many women are selfish”. It also assures that “*fighting against Syria, against Assad's henchmen and for justice*” does not present, “*from the Islamic point of view, anything wrong*”.

This is to forget that this team of converts, who play the fools in front of the press, also knows, more discreetly, how to forge links with Qatar. Nicolas Blancho has registered two associations in Bern, *Qoranova* and *Aziz Aid*, whose president is Abdulaziz Abdul Rahman Al-Thani, a member of the royal family. He is also vice-president of the *Islamic Central Council of Switzerland (ICCS)*, based in Berne, headed by the Qatari Ali Abdullah al-Suwaidi,

In September 2015, the ICCS broadcast an interview with Saudi Abdullah Al-Muhaysini, the spiritual leader of the al-Nusra front. This 38-minute video, subtitled in English, German and French, was viewed more than 100,000 times on *YouTube* before being removed. As a result, Nicolas Blancho, Qasim Illi and the German-Tunisian Naim Cherni, director of the cultural production of the ICCS, were prosecuted by the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office before the Federal Criminal Court in 2018 for propagating the ideology of Al-Qaeda. The first two were acquitted. Naim Cherni, the author of the video, was given a two-year suspended sentence. He appealed, considering that this video “*is part of a journalistic context*”.

As for Nicolas Blancho, taking advantage of the indulgence of the Swiss authorities towards him, he no longer hesitates to let go, conceding to be in contact with characters on the terrorist list of the United States and extolling that for him “*the armed jihad is part of the means of self-defence for a Muslim*”. ●

* *Journalist and writer, specialist of the Muslim Brotherhood*



The challenges of water management in the Middle East (1/3)

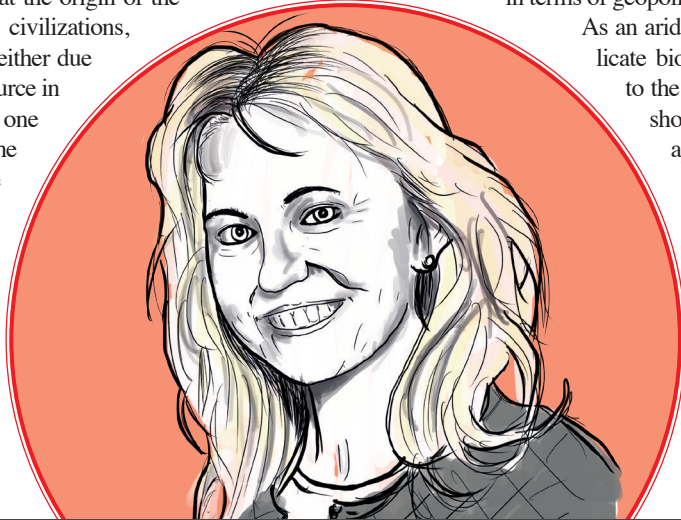
Geopolitical stability and sustainability

By **Fabienne Durand***

In the Middle East, water has always been seen as a scarce and sacred resource. It is present in Sumerian and Akkadian myths. And the symbolism of water nourished the belief systems of the Hebrews and Arabs. Water is at the origin of the foundation of great hydraulic civilizations, which are water civilizations, either due to their control of this rare resource in a desert environment, like the one of the Nabataeans, or due to the capacity to mobilize this same resource, but in abundance, by the populations of the Fertile Crescent.

The Arab civilization, dominant in the Middle East, is a water civilization, which reached its peak in the 9th-12th century, partly due to water control.

The question of water



arises as an endogenous desire in this arid region, which is also the “crossroads of all desires”, according to Philippe Moreau-Defarges. This issue raises many paradoxes and major challenges in terms of geopolitical stability and sustainability.

As an arid region, the Middle East is a delicate bioclimatic environment. Contrary to the common perception, there is no shortage of water. The multiscale approach shows that it is unevenly distributed in this region, which implies an adaptation of human societies to this natural constraint, which is increasingly suffering from global warming, modifying the precipitation regime and the water cycle at the surface of the planet.

Indeed, the Middle East forms a long arid strip, acci-

dentally interrupted by areas of heavy rainfall (around 500-700 mm/year), such as the mountains of Lebanon, the West Bank or Yemen. In some hyper-arid areas, annual rainfall is less than 50 mm/year, as in the Golan Heights, and can fall below 10 mm, like in Koufra, Libya, or Aswan in Egypt. On the other hand, water is very abundant in most of the region, located south of the isohyet indicating 300 mm/year. However, the effect of precipitation is limited, as it mainly affects the winter season from October to February. As a result, stream flows and floods remain irregular throughout the year, as well as being irregular over the years. Water is abundant in the Nile region, in the Mesopotamian basin, drained by the Euphrates and Tigris, and in smaller rivers, such as the Jordan or Yarmouk.

In addition to inequalities in the distribution of water resources, there are also inequalities in the appropriation of the resource. There are differences in the level of water consumption in the Middle East, resulting from socio-economic development gradients, or dissimilar territorial development strategies, as between Egypt, which has based its agriculture on the Nile and has made agrarian and water issues the priority since Nasser, and Ethiopia, where the

Blue Nile was born, which seems to ignore any water development, although essential to development. These inequalities in mobilization are coupled with a balance of power between the states of the region. Water was initially a factor of civilization and social and political structuring, but has become a factor of division, rivalry and conflict, rather than conflict, due to water pressure.

After the Cold War, the term “water war” was used as a new paradigm for reporting conflicts in the world, namely in this desert place. In fact, there is no “water war”, but rather a power struggle between States, due to inequalities in distribution and appropriation, which are an objective reality, to which are added more subjective factors based on representation, the perception of the precariousness of water supply that is facing rapidly increasing needs due to the economic development and population growth.

More than ever, water has become an issue of power, political stability and, above all, economic, social and environmental development.

** Political scientist consultant in communication on sustainable development and global warming.*

My meeting with Abdelrahman Al-Nuaimi, Qatari terrorist money maker!

By **Georges Malbrunot***

For years - and until recently - a good half a dozen Qatari individuals were funding al-Qaeda in Iraq *Al-Nusra* in Syria or the *Shebab* in Somalia. For the purposes of our investigation, on the book published with my colleague Christian Chesnot *Nos très chers émirs* (Our dearest emirs), we met in 2016 one of these terrorist financiers, Sheikh Abd Al-Rahman Bin Omer Al-Nuaimi in Doha, who has been on the European Union and United States black lists since 2014.

In 2013, the US Department of Treasury called him a “specially targeted terrorist” for having “assisted, sponsored or provided financial, material or technological assistance” to terrorist organisations. In short, under his appearance of a quiet grandfather with his thick grey beard, the man is anything but a second fiddle!

In the mid-2000s, Sheikh al-Nuaimi paid \$2 million each month to al-Qaeda in Iraq - ISIS's ancestor - and then financed the Lebanese group *Osbat al-Ansar* from the Palestinian refugee camp of *Ein al-Hilweh* in southern Beirut. In 2014, according to information from the US State Department, he transferred another \$600,000 to Abu Khalid Al-Suri, the envoy to Syria of al-Qaeda's leader, Ay-

man Al-Zawahiri. Finally, in 2015, he provided \$250,000 to the management of *Al-Shabaab*, the Somali group linked to al-Qaeda.

So many accusations that the sheikh brushes aside. “Bring evidence that we are funding extremists,” he replied. “The reasons for the Americans' accusations against me,” he added, “are the publication of a report on drones that I presented to United Nations experts on 8 December 2013, in which I explained that the United States was illegally killing innocent people, including in Yemen where nearly 950 people were killed by drone fire”.

While the Qatari authorities recently reportedly tightened the noose around Sheikh Al-Nuaimi, this was not the case when we met him without any problem, except for his mistrust of the Western journalist. But “I have no problem with the Qatari authorities”, he assured us, then. “My troubles are limited to Americans, they want to silence me. But I am only forbidden to travel in Europe, the United States and Saudi Arabia”.

Close to the *Diwan Al Amiri*, his NGO - *Alkarama* - is suspected of being financed by the Qatari State. It must be said that its links with the ruling elite of the emirate are long-standing. Admittedly, Sheikh Al-Nuaimi was imprisoned in 1998 when he was an official

of the Ministry of Education. He had launched a petition opposing the emancipation of women in society, including Sheikh Moza, the second wife of the Emir at the time, Sheikh Hamad, who had him thrown in prison. The petition in question had been signed by three members of the ruling family, a sign that it is still being worked on by ultra-conservative movements. But upon his release in the spring of 2001, the Islamist was received by Emir Hamad who then made him his emissary to jihadist figures, such as Yemeni Abdul Majeed al-Zindani, a former relative of Osama Bin Laden, also claimed by the USA.

In short, Sheikh Al-Nuaimi suffered no disgrace. In 2004, he founded his NGO, *Al-karama*, based in Gene-

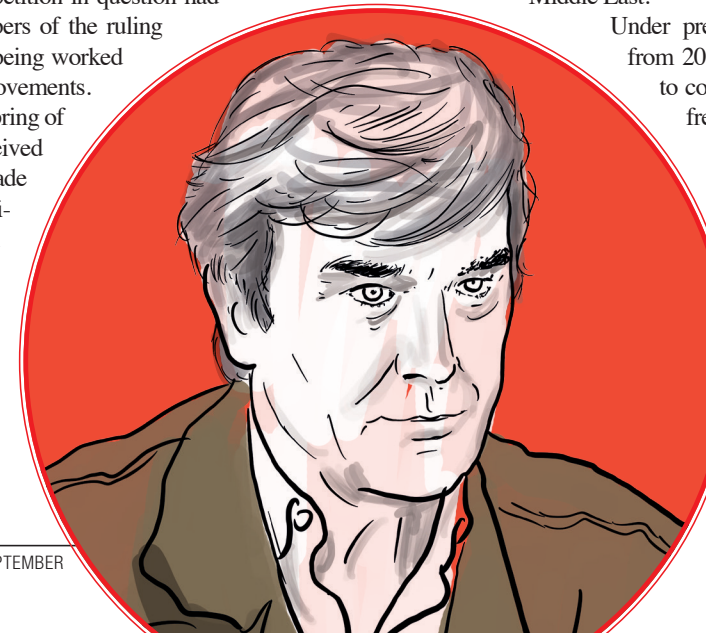
va. It is actually a cover. In 2009, *Al-karama* called for support for Iraqi “resistance” against foreign, i.e. American, occupying forces. The United States, whose military base in Qatar provides security for the tiny emirate. See the double dealing...

Al-Qaeda's financier has also benefited from the leniency of some of Qatar's “friends” in Europe. Did he not come to Paris at the end of 2011 without being worried by the French authorities, at the time very close to Qatar.

Al-Nuaimi is not an isolated case. At least half a dozen financiers of terrorist organisations have long benefited from the leniency of the Qatari authorities. As early as 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated in a diplomatic telegram, revealed by Wikileaks, that cooperation with Qatar was “the worst in the region” of the Middle East.

Under pressure from the United States, from 2015 onwards, Doha made efforts to counter the financing of terrorism, freezing accounts and imposing a ban on two “terrorist financiers”, Saad Al-Ka'bi and Abdelatif al-Kawari, to leave the country.

** Writer and journalist, specialist in the Middle East, latest book “Qatar Papers, comment l'émirat finance l'islam de France et d'Europe” (co-written with Christian Chesnot).*



Terrorist financing

New revelations on the “Qatar Connexion”

Despite the denials of the Qatari authorities, which are trying to deny any involvement in the financing of terrorism, scandals have multiplied, and revelations have followed one another since the beginning of the summer, bringing a surprising amount of documents and evidence that overwhelm the gas emirate. Revelations that splash on many local businessmen and dignitaries, but also prominent members of the princely family, including Fahad Bin Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, one of the brothers of the current Amir, Tamim Bin Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, and former Prime Minister Hamad Bin Jassim Al-Thani, close advisor and business associate of former Emir Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani...

The summer saga with revelations providing evidence of Qatar’s involvement in terrorist financing began on June 20 with an investigation by the *Wall Street Journal*. Based on internal UN documents, this investigation revealed that al-Qaeda’s famous Qatari money lender, Khalifa Al-Subaiy, known as the financier of the “brain” of the September 11, 2001 attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, registered as such on the UN and US Treasury black lists, had continued - with the help of the Doha authorities - to access his assets supposed to be frozen by the UN Security Council since 2008.

Worse still, with impunity due to its proximity to some of the leading figures of the princely family of Qatar, including former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Hamad Bin Jassim Al-Thani, Al-Subaiy did not hesitate to resume his activities as a “patron of terror”, by raising funds again in 2009, then in 2011, 2012 and 2013, for networks linked to al-Qaeda and ISIS in Pakistan, Iran, Iraq and Syria (see Roland Jacquard’s column, *Screen Watch*, n°2, June-July 2019).

Doha is home to and protects another equally famous “patron of terror”. His name is Abderrahman Al-Nuaimy. UN investigations have established that since 2005 he has collected more than \$2 million per month on behalf of al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia, in other words for the Al-Zarqawi organisation, ISIS’s ancestor. In 2013, the Ameri-

can Treasury classified him as a “specially targeted terrorist”. His name was then included on the American, European and United Nations blacklists. As with Khalifa Al-Subaiy, Al-Nuaimy’s assets are supposed to be frozen. But this does not prevent him from continuing to finance *Osbat al-Ansar* in Lebanon, the *Shebbab* in Somalia and the *Al-Nusra* front in Syria (See page 13, Georges Malbrunot’s column on his meeting with Al-Nuaimy in 2016 in Doha).

Al-Nuaimy’s generosity does not spare the European continent. Through the *Eid Charity* association, of which he is co-founder, he finances, in Great Britain, *Human Appeal International*, an association linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, affiliated to the *Union of Good* organisation, founded and chaired by Sheikh Youssef al-Qaradhwai, registered by the American Treasury on the black list of organisations financing terrorism, since 2008 (see page 18 the document on controversial links between the Muslim Brotherhood and Jihadist extremism).

And through its *Al-Karama* foundation, Al-Nuaimy is accused of providing funding to many associations linked to the Muslim Brotherhood and terrorist groups, including Palestinian Hamas, through two controversial characters based in Switzerland: Khalifa Bin Mohammed Al-Rabban and Ahcene Kerkadi,

Eight other Qatari dignitaries and businessmen have

been pinned down by Western or UN investigation reports.

For example, Salem Hassan Kuwari and Abdullah Ghanim Khawar were pinned by the US Treasury for “providing several hundred thousand dollars to al-Qaeda for its operations, as well as for the release of al-Qaeda detainees in Iran and elsewhere”. A third Qatari citizen, Ibrahim Issa al-Bakr, was also blacklisted by the US Treasury for raising funds for al-Qaeda and the Taliban. He also reportedly provided logistical support to the *Al-Nusra* front in Syria.

In 2012, former Qatari Olympic Committee member Abdulaziz Bin Khalifa Al-Attiyah was arrested in Lebanon for providing funding to activists linked to al-Qaeda in Syria.

In 2014, two brothers of Qatari nationality, Abd al-Malik and Ashraf Mohammed Yusuf Abd al-Salam, were put on the American blacklists for their financial support to the *Al-Nusra* front in Syria. They are the sons of Mohammed Yusuf Abd Al-Salam, aka Abdulaziz al-Qatari, the founder of the Jihadist group *Jund al-Aqsa* in Syria.

And in 2015, under pressure from the United States, Doha froze the assets of Saad al-Ka’bi and Abdelatif al-Kawari, considered by Washington to be major terrorist financiers, and imposed a ban on them to leave the country. ●

EXCLUSIVE

Five members of the Qatari princely family involved in the financing of terrorism

For a long time, the Doha authorities’ defence strategy, faced with increasing revelations about the involvement of many Qatari dignitaries in terrorist financing scandals, has been to describe them as individual initiatives that do not represent the government.

However, the latest revelations in the Anglo-Saxon press point to prominent members of the princely family of the Al-Thani. For example, following recent revelations in *The Times* about the *Al-Rayan* bank scandal, former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hamad Bin Jassim Al-Thani - who had already been splashed last February by a corruption scandal linked to the Barclays bank - panicked. According

to British consulting and strategy firm *Cornerstone Global*, the former right-hand man of former Emir Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani has put several of his properties in Paris and London up for sale at discount prices.

Indeed, on August 5, *The Times* revealed that *Al-Rayan* Bank, the largest and oldest Islamic bank in Britain, which provides sharia-compliant banking services to more than 85,000 customers, is operated by Qatar to finance some 15 Islamist organisations, including one association on the US terrorist lists and four other entities (a mosque and three charities) that have taken refuge with *Al-Rayan* Bank following the freezing of their accounts by

other British banks, in connection with terrorist financing investigations.

The other ten controversial organisations, funded by Qatar through the *Al-Rayan* bank, are linked to the Muslim Brotherhood. The most famous is *Nectar Trust*, which took over from the British branch of *Qatar Charity*, dissolved in 2014. *Nectar Trust* is said to have paid more than £37 million (€40 million) via *Al-Rayan* Bank to entities linked to the Muslim Brotherhood across Europe.

Yet, 70% of *Al-Rayan* Bank’s capital is held by the Qatari bank *Masraf Al-Rayan*, based in Doha. The remaining 30% of *Al-Rayan*’s capital is held by an investment portfolio owned by the Qa-

tari sovereign fund and led by Hamad Bin Jassim Al-Thani.

The names of two other members of the Al-Thani family, and not the least, are mentioned in Western investigations and judicial complaints. They are two brothers of the current Emir Tamim Bin Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani. The first, Fahad Bin Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, whose Salafist tendencies are an open secret known to all Western chancelleries, is cited in an investigation targeting an association that finances radical madrasas (Koranic schools) in Pakistan. The second, Khalid Bin Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, has been the subject of a federal complaint in the United States since July 23 for having

ordered an attempted murder of two American citizens.

The fourth member of the princely family, suspected of terrorist financing, is Abdulaziz Abdulrahman Al-Thani. A key figure in Qatari “charities”, he was successively the CEO of the *Qatar Charity* Foundation, the *Qatari Royal Family Council* and the *Qatari Joint Committee for Relief*. He currently chairs two Islamic associations in Switzerland, *Qoranova* and *Aziz Aid*, co-led by Nicolas Blancho, a highly controversial Swiss converted Islamist, described by the Swiss press as “the most dangerous Islamist in the country” and nicknamed “Bin Laden of Biel”

(see page 12 the Ian Hamel’s column).

Blancho has set up two Swiss associations, which serve as parachutes, through which *Qoranova* and *Aziz Aid* provide financial support to Salafist networks. These are the Islamic Central Council of Switzerland (ICCS) and the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS).

The Secretary General of the ICCS, Qatari Ali Bin Abdullah Al-Suwaidi, is on the US blacklist of personalities financing terrorism because of his financial support for al-Qaeda. AMS President Abdulmohsen Al-Mutairi was also blacklisted by the US Treasury in December 2016 for financing terrorism. The same is true for Abdel Wahab Al-Homaiqani, a member of the AMS leadership, who was pinned for providing logistical support to al-Qaeda in Yemen (AQAP). And Shefqet Krasniqi, another AMS executive, was sentenced in Kosovo in February 2017 for terrorist financing and tax evasion. ●



Muslim Brotherhood and jihadist extremism

The nefarious links

Apart from belonging to radical Islamist ideology, what is the common link between Al-Qaeda and ISIS, even though they are rivals? And the one between the brain behind the 11 September attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, and the 'star' preacher of the Al-Jazeera TV channel, Youssef Al-Qaradawi? And a myriad of pro-Islamic networks of influence and funding, established both in the Arab world and in the great capital cities of the West?

The answer is unequivocal: the pan-Islamic Fraternity of the Muslim Brotherhood! This emerges from a very detailed study titled 'The Muslim Brotherhood's ties to Extremists' produced by the US think-tank Counter Extremism Project.

Despite the apparent pacifism of the Muslim Brotherhood and their alleged 'moderation', jihadist radicalism was created at the heart of this Fraternity, known as the 'mother company' of contemporary Islamism. That is what this very well-documented study endeavours to show, through a detailed review of the backgrounds and profiles of several jihadist terrorism figures who have -or have had- close links with the Fraternity.

The study points out that the jihadist terrorism the world is facing up to today is the prolongation of a violent ideology that emerged from the ranks of the Muslim Brotherhood. Indeed, the most virulent figures of global Jihadism take their inspiration from Qotbism, the radical current of the Muslim Brotherhood, founded by Sayyid Qotb, the theorist of the modern-day *Takfir*, who was executed by Nasser in 1966.

The study retraces the links of the leaders of Jihadism to the Fraternity, from just after the war against the Soviet Union waged by the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan (1979-1989) until the emergence of Al-Qaeda and then ISIS.

Abdellah Azzam, the historic leader of the Arab Mujahedeen, later known under the name of the 'Afghan Arabs', Osama Bin Laden, the founder of Al-Qaeda, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, his successor, and Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, the self-proclaimed caliph of ISIS, all started out in the Muslim Brotherhood. The study points

out that these leading figures of global Jihadism "all belonged to the Muslim Brotherhood before taking on their respective roles in their terrorist networks".

In the long list of jihadist figures trained in the Muslim Brotherhood, the study puts the Palestinian Abdallah Azzam in pole position. Stemming from the Fraternity, he became the historic chief of the Palestinian branch of the Fraternity and later the founding father of global Jihadism. He was among the most influential figures who have helped to spread the Muslim Brotherhood's thinking and to set up the networks of the Fraternity in several Arab and Asian countries. He later used these networks to set up "hotbeds of transnational jihadism" such as Hamas, Al-Qaeda or Lashkar-e-Toiba.

Abdul Majeed Al-Zindani is another emblematic figure of radical Islamism. The founder of *Al-Iman* University in Yemen, he is known in intelligence circles for "his crucial role in the indoctrination of thousands of young Yemenis and Arabs". Co-founder of the Yemen branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and the local political showcase of the Fraternity, the party *Al-Islah*, he is known for his extremist positions and his commitment to the radical movements. The US Treasury claims that he "plays a key role in the purchase of weapons for Al-Qaeda and in the funding of Hamas, a movement affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood".

The potential trouble-making capa-

city of the Brotherhood also depends on the wide audience it reaches, both in Muslim countries and in the West, and thanks to a worldwide network of fierce preachers. Among them, according to the study, the case of Hani El-Sibai stands out. An Egyptian exiled in the UK, he is considered as one of the "mullahs of Londonistan". According to the study, the US authorities accuse him of "financing Al-Qaeda and conspiring to commit terrorist acts". He is also suspected of having indoctrinated Mohammed Emwazi, alias Jihadi John, one of the most bloodthirsty Western fighters of ISIS.

MONEY: THE SINEWS OF HOLY WAR!

The links between the Muslim Brotherhood and jihadist extremism are not restricted to ideological and organisational influences or to the radical nature of the narrative of many of its preachers. They also have to do with money, the fuel of any war, even a holy one.

Among the Muslim Brotherhood figures involved in the financing of jihadist terrorism, the study mentions Mohammad Jamal Khalifa from Saudi Arabia, a member of the Brotherhood and the brother-in-law of Osama Bin Laden. It also refers to a nefarious personality from Qatar: Abderrahman Al Nuaimi, a former member of the supervisory board of Qatar Islamic Bank. Included on the blacklist of personalities who finance terrorism, he is accused by the US Treasury of funding numerous terrorist groups, among them Al-Qaeda in Iraq and in Syria, *Osbat Al-Ansar* in Lebanon and the *Shebab* in Somalia.

Another no less nefarious figure, Ahmed Idriss Nasreddin is among the very first 'Muslim Brotherhood bankers' accused of being involved in the financing of jihadist terrorism. The US authorities accuse him of contributing to the financing of Al-Qaeda and Hamas through the *Al-Taqwa* bank, of which he was one of the founders, together with Youssef Nada and Ali Ghaleb Himmat in 1988.

The study also mentions another Muslim Brotherhood financial backer,



Essam Mustafa, who has also financed Hamas through the Islamic NGO 'Union of Good', founded by the Egyptian preacher with Qatari nationality Youssef Al-Qaradawi. This NGO has been on the US Treasury's blacklist of organisations that finance terrorism since 2008.

SPREADING OF THE RADICAL ISLAMIST NARRATIVE:

Beyond the financing of terrorism, the study refers to numerous figures in the Muslim Brotherhood who finance projects designed to spread radical Islam

and impose Sharia law, also in Western countries. Among them, Ali Al-Qaradaghi, the Secretary-General of the International Union for Muslim Scholars (IUMS), founded also by Sheikh Al-Qaradawi and based in Doha. Another is the current president of this organisation, the Moroccan Ahmed Raissouni.

The study also highlights the close and organic links between the Muslim Brotherhood and leaders of Hamas in Palestine, both among its political leaders and the heads of its armed branch: Abdelaziz Rantisi, Ismael Haniyeh, Khaled Mechaal, Mohamed Deif and several other figures of Hamas are official-

ly affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood.

The study also describes the progression of several terrorist chiefs of the global jihadist movement who 'started out' in the ranks of the Muslim Brotherhood, such as the Pakistani Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, the brain behind the 11 September attacks, and the Turk Husseyn Mustafa Peri, one of the leading figures of ISIS.

THE BENEVOLENCE OF THE 'BIG BROTHERS'

The study reveals that radical jihadist groups often adopt a critical narrative towards the Muslim Brotherhood, even though many heads of these groups emerged from the Brotherhood. This can be explained by the fact that these groups are 'mutants' hatched by the Brotherhood before leaving it and becoming more radical. In contrast, the Muslim Brotherhood acts towards these radicalised groups as 'big Brothers'. The proof can be seen in that when the Brotherhood came into power in Egypt, its headquarters politically and diplomatically defended jihadist groups like Hamas or the *Al-Nosra* front, the branch of Al-Qaeda in Syria. ●

Counter Terrorism Project

The Counter Extremism Project (CEP) is a US think-tank that has published studies and expert reports on extremist movements and their financing and indoctrination networks since its creation in 2014. Through its research, the CEP works towards the strengthening of US laws against extremism. Its founders include numerous former ambassadors, senators and senior civil servants. The document we present here puts together the profiles of 40 figures who have emerged from the Muslim Brotherhood and who have links to four other jihadist organisations worldwide.

Hamza Bin Laden, the end of al-Qaeda's dynastic dream

The death of the youngest son of al-Qaeda's founder, Hamza Bin Laden (30 years old), announced at the end of July and officially confirmed by the Pentagon on August 22, is one of the hardest blows that the mother house of global jihadism has suffered since the death of its founder in May 2011.

Indeed, the death of the "new prince of jihad" brutally ended the dynastic dream through which the new leader of al-Qaeda, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, hoped to restore the image of an ageing and declining organisation.

In August 2015, seeing its organization competing and then supplanted by the rise of ISIS, al-Zawahiri announced the integration of Hamza Bin Laden into al-Qaeda's "central leadership". At his instigation, the "new prince of jihad" then issued several audio messages encouraging fighting and calling for the unity of the jihad's ranks.

In his very first letter, dated May 9, 2016, Hamza Bin Laden called for support for the "*Knife Intifada*" in Palestine and referred to the "*liberation of Jerusalem*". A radical discourse that inflamed jihadist social networks. Al-Zawahiri immediately began to dream of inducting a "new Bin Laden" at the head of al-Qaeda, with whom he would once again play the faithful No. 2, as he did for a quarter of a century, alongside the founding father, Osama Bin Laden.

Weakened by nearly two decades of clandestine life and criticized by his peers for his lack of charisma and authority, Al-Zawahiri - known as a fine strategist - saw Hamza Bin Laden's storming entrance into the jihadist media scene as a "providential gift" that would give al-Qaeda the second wind it had been lacking since the loss of its founder.

Because, who else could carry the flag of Osama Bin Laden's legacy better than his favorite son? The very

one who appeared alongside him, at the age of 12, in the famous video broadcast by *Al Jazeera* in November 2001, which was the very first public appearance of the al-Qaeda leader after the attacks of 11 September.

To this aura acquired by Hamza Bin Laden, from an early age, due to his proximity to his father, was added another factor of popularity, no less important in the eyes of jihadists: his marriage, in 2007, to the daughter of the Egyptian Mohamed Atta, the leader of the September 11 commandos.

Moreover, this alliance with the family of the most famous kamikaze of the global jihadism was an important pledge to reassure the "Egyptian family" within al-Qaeda about its future and its influence within the jihadist movement.

As a result, al-Zawahiri could reassure his compatriots that his plan to abdicate in favour of Hamza Bin Laden would not weaken the Egyptian clan whose control over the leadership of al-Qaeda is being challenged by Yemeni and Maghrebi jihadists.

This dynastic project envisaged by Al-Zawahiri to enthrone a "new Bin Laden" at the head of al-Qaeda had a double objective.

First of all, it was a question of exploiting the aura of the name "Bin Laden", to give al-Qaeda back an attractiveness that could make it the ideal alternative for thousands of ISIS defectors, disoriented by the collapse of the pseudo Caliphate established by Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi.

In addition, Hamza Bin Laden's enthronement could also restore al-Qaeda's attractiveness to jihadist donors in the Gulf countries, whose flows of donations have declined considerably since Osama Bin Laden's death and the establishment of an Egyptian-dominated Shura.

It was this whole strategy that was shaken by the July 31 raid that targeted and killed Hamza Bin Laden. ●

5 DATES

1989

Born in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

2007

Wedding in Iran with the daughter of Mohamed Atta, the leader of the suicide bombers of September 11.

AUGUST 2015

His integration into al-Qaeda's management is announced by Ayman Al-Zawahiri.

JAN. 5, 2017

His name is on the American black list of most wanted terrorist leaders. And the reward for him is increased to \$1 million in February 2019.

JULY 31ST 2019

Announcement of his death during an American raid. The information is confirmed by the Pentagon on August 22.

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ROOSEVELT HOUSE,
6 AVENUE FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT,
75008, PARIS

PHONE: +33 1 70 91 55 07
FAX: +33 1 70 91 55 66

contact@global-watch-analysis.com

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191 WALTHAM WAY,
LONDON, E4 8AG,
UNITED KINGDOM

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for publication:

ATMANE TAZAGHART

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and consultants:

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