Chapter 9
Recent Developments in International Relations in the Light of the Syrian Crisis

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ABSTRACT

Much ink has already been spilt on the unprecedented terrorist attack in Paris on November 13, 2015 in an atmosphere of endless despair. Many characterize it as the “new 9-11”. Nevertheless, they tend to defy the significant fact that that attack was launched by an acknowledged organization, Al-Qaeda, acting as a frontispiece of the Afghan state. In the present case study, the current threat is of a much larger extent and ambit, gradually conquering the globe. What one needs to conceive is that ISIS enjoys no single and specific nationality- on the contrary, it operates as an amorphous mass, a totality achieved as a result of illegal forms of collaboration and interstate crime in countless regions of the world, though serving a common purpose: the violation of security, democracy and freedom of expression. The ultimate goal of the organization is the breakdown of democratic regimes and the emergence of the Caliphate as a global superpower that will handle telecommunications, (inter) governmental, (inter) state security systems, and so on. One thing is for sure: Islam serves as the pretext for these modern bloody crusades. No religion that respects itself preaches and initiates a “holy war”; a war that is being constantly heretically interpreted- to say the least. Global co-operations frequently alter, as the international components are defined by ephemeral alliances, perhaps with

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classic conflicting interests, such as the US-Russia common goal opponent against ISIS. Parallel to that, other fronts hover vis-à-vis the question of military intervention of France and USA-UK in the disputed area of Raqqa, the struggle between Turkey and Russia around the management of natural resources not only on their behalf, but also in terms of ISIS, the implementation of geopolitical strategies over the area along with the future of millions of Syrians, who were accounted for either as refugees in neighboring countries, such as Lebanon, or Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs). The recent EU-Turkey Ankara Summit on refugees ignited hot debate over the way in which the Schengen area should be further fostered via the creation of the so-called “refugee hot-spots” within the Turkish territory.

SYRIA: A BRIEF BACKGROUND

Syria is a country of 185,000 km2 and comprises 21.1 million inhabitants. The numbers are striking: 6 million out of the total Syrian population are refugees and 2 million are primarily located in neighboring countries, namely Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt (UNHCR, 2016) –and the numbers are constantly augmenting-, whilst the more fortunate were able to enter the EU milieu, where they came across acute and inhumane conditions during their transition through borders. The remaining 4 million are displaced and uprooted to travel to peaceful territories. At the time, most of them flee away from Syria via Cyprus or Turkey to Greece which is regarded as a transit area so as to reach their final destination (Germany, Sweden etc.) (UNHCR, 2015).

Antonio Gutierrez, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has stated that the situation of Syrian refugees is much more than a mere “humanitarian crisis”. It is the largest and most unprecedented outlet in the last forty years. The levels of uncertainty as to whether these refugees will be able to return to their country are augmenting. As it happened in the case of Palestinians in 1948 and 1967, the demographic map of the neighboring countries altered. As far as the Syrian issue is concerned, it is considered a bone of contention -especially for the neighboring economies that cannot support the fugitives. What is more, the expenditure rates UN has undertaken lead to a large-scale economic halt for some of the organization’s members. Governments provide endless amounts of money for military equipment and scarce financial contribution to war victims.

Aleppo has been transformed into a scene of a seismic shift to the Syrian conflict highlighting a crucial question: who will fight for Syria’s Sunni Arabs?

Hospitals keep being bombarded amidst a yearly religious conflict between Syrian Sunni rebels that are often supported by Turkish forces and Gulf States, not excluding other groups such as Kurdish warriors, the YPG, and so forth, that are mostly backed up by the US (Shaheen, 2016).
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