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del Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

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I Quaderni del Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

Il Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore ha più di trent'anni di vita, essendo stato costituito nel 1983 sulla base del precedente Istituto di Scienze Politiche. Conta attualmente ventisei membri di prima afferenza; oltre ai Docenti e Ricercatori di ruolo ed ai Professori a contratto, svolgono la loro attività di studio e di ricerca nell'ambito del Dipartimento un numero rilevante di collaboratori a vario titolo (Assegnisti di ricerca, Borsisti post-dottorato, Dottori e Dottorandi di ricerca, Addetti alle esercitazioni, Cultori della materia).

Il Dipartimento costituisce una delle due strutture scientifiche di riferimento della Scuola di Dottorato in Istituzioni e Politiche. Inoltre il Centro di Ricerche sul Sistema Sud e il Mediterraneo allargato (CRiSSMA), costituito nel 1999, «collabora – in particolare – con la Facoltà di Scienze Politiche [oggi Facoltà di Scienze Politiche e Sociali] e con il Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche».

Gli afferenti al Dipartimento appartengono a diverse aree scientifico-disciplinari – diritto, scienza politica, storia – orientate allo studio dei fenomeni politici, nelle loro espressioni istituzionali e organizzative, a livello internazionale ed interno agli Stati. Il fondatore del nostro Ateneo, Padre Agostino Gemelli, affermava nel 1942 che diritto, storia e politica costituiscono «un tripode» sul quale si fondano le Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, delle quali difendeva l'identità e la funzione. Circa vent'anni dopo, Francesco Vito, successore del fondatore nel Rettorato e in precedenza Preside della Facoltà di Scienze Politiche affermava: «Noi rimaniamo fedeli alla tradizione scientifica secondo la quale l'indagine del fenomeno politico non può essere esaurita senza residui da una sola disciplina scientifica. Concorrono alla comprensione della politica gli studi storici, quelli filosofici, quelli giuridici, quelli socio-economici». Per Gianfranco Miglio, la storia è il laboratorio privilegiato della ricerca politologica.

I Docenti e i Ricercatori del Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore sono quindi tutti profondamente radicati nelle loro rispettive discipline, ma ritengono che il loro rigore metodologico, la loro specifica competenza, la loro capacità di comprendere i fenomeni oggetto dei loro studi siano arricchiti dal confronto interdisciplinare consentito dalla struttura scientifica alla quale appartengono. Vi sarà modo di verificare e approfondire anche in questi *Quaderni* il valore scientifico irrinunciabile del Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche.

Come immagine caratterizzante dell'identità del Dipartimento, le cui aree scientifiche hanno tutte una forte dimensione internazionale, è stata scelta la mappa disegnata nel 1507 dal cartografo tedesco Martin Waldseemüller (1470-1521), di grande importanza storica essendo la prima nella quale il Nuovo Continente scoperto da Cristoforo Colombo è denominato "America". Nel 2005 tale mappa è stata dichiarata dall'UNESCO "Memoria del mondo".

La frase «*Orbem prudenter investigare et veraciter agnoscere*», che esprime lo spirito di libera ricerca nella fedeltà alla vocazione cattolica, utilizza alcune espressioni della seguente preghiera di S. Tommaso d'Aquino: «*Concede mihi, misericors Deus, quae tibi placita sunt, ardentem concupiscere, prudenter investigare, veraciter agnoscere, et perfecte adimplere ad laudem et gloriam nominis tui. Amen*». Tale preghiera, «*dicenda ante studium vel lectionem*», a sua volta forma la prima parte di una più lunga orazione «*Ad vitam sapienter instituendam*».

Il Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche promuove:

- il coordinamento fra Docenti e Ricercatori per un efficace svolgimento della ricerca negli ambiti disciplinari di competenza;
- lo sviluppo della ricerca scientifica in ambito storico, politico, giuridico-internazionale e un attivo dialogo tra gli studiosi delle varie discipline;
- l'organizzazione di convegni, seminari e conferenze, attraverso i quali realizzare un proficuo confronto fra studiosi, l'avanzamento e la diffusione delle conoscenze nel campo delle scienze politiche;
- la realizzazione di pubblicazioni scientifiche, che raccolgano i risultati delle ricerche promosse e i contributi dei membri del Dipartimento e degli studiosi partecipanti alle attività seminariali e di ricerca organizzate dal Dipartimento stesso.

Proprio la rilevante e qualificata attività promossa dal Dipartimento ha indotto alla pubblicazione (a stampa e su Internet) dei presenti *Quaderni*, per ospitare atti e testi derivanti dalle iniziative promosse dal Dipartimento, nonché saggi e articoli dei suoi Docenti e Ricercatori, dei loro collaboratori a tutti i livelli e di autori esterni.

Da questo numero entrano in vigore alcune modifiche nell'organizzazione scientifica e redazionale dei *Quaderni*, rese necessarie dal loro crescente sviluppo. La pubblicazione degli articoli già da questo numero è soggetta a *Peer Review* anonima. Viene creato un Comitato di redazione il cui segretario sarà il Dr. Davide Borsani. Il Direttore ringrazia per il suo impegno il Prof. Gianluca Pastori, che ricopriva l'incarico di Capo redattore, ora abolito.

Il presente numero pubblica nella prima parte le relazioni pervenute e pubblicabili presentate al IX Convegno di studio sull'Alleanza Atlantica: *La lotta al terrorismo transnazionale: un ruolo per la NATO?* Nella sezione *Miscellanea* compaiono due articoli su aspetti del pensiero cristiano, cattolico e ortodosso, in campo politico.

Il prossimo Quaderno n. 12 verrà pubblicato nel corso del 2017.

The Reasons of a No Victory and the Future Perspectives. The New Phase of the Afghan War and the Role of the Islamic State (IS/Daesh)

di CLAUDIO BERLOTTI

Abstract – Il 2015 ha visto l'avvio della nuova missione della NATO in Afghanistan: Resolute Support (RS). A causa del deterioramento della sicurezza e dell'incapacità delle forze afgane di garantire un minimo livello di sicurezza, colpite da grandi perdite, diserzioni e forte corruzione, gli Stati Uniti hanno avviato un'ulteriore revisione del piano di disimpegno: uno sforzo pari a 10.000 soldati, oltre ai quali 5.000 militari della NATO, sino a tutto il 2017. Sul terreno, prosegue incontrastata l'offensiva dei talebani, in grado di detenere il controllo di circa il 20% del territorio e la capacità di operare efficacemente in un altro 30%. Inoltre, gli sviluppi del percorso per la pace avviati dal Quadrilateral Coordination Group (Cina, Pakistan, Stati Uniti, Afghanistan ma, al momento, non i talebani) sono in bilico a causa del rischio di tre fattori principali. Il primo è l'impasse politica della diarchia di potere (Ghani-Abdullah), incapace di dare al paese un governo in grado di operare. Il secondo è la frammentazione del fronte insurrezionale, conseguenza della morte del mullah Omar e di una leadership insurrezionale non più condivisa (quella del mullah Mohammad Aktar Mansour). Infine, terzo fattore, è la penetrazione in Afghanistan del nuovo attore della violenza, lo Stato islamico (IS/Daesh), che potrebbe trasformare una guerra di liberazione nazionale (il punto di vista dei talebani) in guerra globale fortemente ideologizzata. È l'evoluzione di un fenomeno che è corretto definire "Nuovo Terrorismo Insurrezionale".

Afghanistan general situation

In 2015, NATO has commenced its Resolute Support (RS) mission in Afghanistan, a train, assist and advise mission in support of the Afghan Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF). Therefore, the combat role of the NATO in the Afghan operational theatre has come to an end (excluding the residual special forces). On the other hand,

* Original article is C. Bertolotti, *Afghan Theatre*, in *2016 Borders and Conflicts. Geopolitics Is back*, Roma, 2016, pp. 95-104.

with the ending of the Enduring Freedom mission, the USA is now proceeding with the counter-terrorism operations with the Enduring Sentinel (ES) mission. As anticipated in March, the US President Barack Obama has announced his revision plan for the disengagement from Afghanistan in November. No longer an extensive pull-out as previously illustrated, but a long-lasting presence until the end of 2017. The US effort will consist of a minimum of 10,000 soldiers (split between the RS and the ES missions), in addition to them there will be 5,000 servicemen sent by NATO and approximately 15,000 contractors will be joining them. The US presence has now been confirmed in Afghanistan (but not the numbers) until the end of 2024, based on what was arranged with the Security and Defense Cooperation Agreement endorsed by Washington and Kabul in September last year. This choice is the response to a formal request by Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and it is a consequence of the progressive deterioration of the security and the ability to govern of the State of Afghanistan – thus confirming the evaluations expressed in the *Global Outlook 2014* and *Global Outlook 2015*. The aim of this decision is to avert the reoccurrence of a total failure seen in Iraq – with a rushed pull-out of the troops and the ensuing state of chaos with the advent of the Islamic State (IS/Daesh). One of the reasons why the US has failed to turn the military efforts into political reforms in Afghanistan was the connection between the investments made and a clear-cut strategic end-state. This failure was accelerated by President Obama's choice to establish his strategy making his domestic policy a priority, and not taking into consideration the outlook of Afghanistan and how to keep up with its pace. The announcement of the deployment of troops (surge) and setting a specific date for their pull-out initiated a non-synchronous process that has not taken into account the Afghan developments. The Taliban onslaught and their territorial expansion are persisting – the most violent and intense in the last fourteen years. The occupation of the city of Kunduz at the end of September is an event that adds to the process of insurrectional expansion and that represents the biggest success ever obtained by the Taliban in their “resistance war”: a clear example of tactical and headline grabbing abilities – from insurrectional armed opposition groups (AOG) and, at the same time, of operational and strategic inabilities of the ANDSFs. The Taliban proceed respectively:

- on the battlefield, hitting highly symbolic targets (the conquest of a city, the occupation of military bases, etc...) and rewarding as they attract publicity through the news broadcasting
- on the political and diplomatic front, with the aim to gain power and a *de facto* division of the country

Peace process and fragmentation on the insurrectional front

All parts – the US administration, the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, and the Taliban – agree on the need for the peace talks as the only solution in the current conflict, such a development is seriously at risk. Nowadays, the Taliban movement is seeking formal recognition of its own role “in” Afghanistan and “for” Afghanistan pursuing the political goal also through the use of diplomacy (notwithstanding a military confrontation); a strategic approach that led to a dialogue with several countries interested in the process of stabilization (e.g. Qatar, China, Pakistan). There has been a slow attempt to initiate negotiations with the principal insurrectional movement that since first contacts in 2007 have met officially beyond the Afghan borders. The fragmentation process and the internal power struggle to succeed the historical leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar – whose death in 2003 was announced last July have led to new conflicts: its mechanisms are a consequence of the diffusion of the IS/Daesh in Afghanistan. Firstly, the issue of a change of leadership needs to be addressed, today the *de facto* leader is Mullah Aktar Mansour, once Mullah Omar’s closest aide indicated as pragmatic and willing to negotiate with the Afghan Government. He has a delicate role that has been challenged. Secondly the ability of the Taliban leadership to maintain a united front and tackle the internal power struggle. Lastly, the external pressure on the process of insurrectional fragmentation. They are pressures and mechanisms related to the fight for power and the diffusion of IS/Daesh. Some of the youngest and most radical fighters, ex Taliban chiefs, in some way marginalised or expelled by the movement, or other fighters refusing to disarm in the event of a peace agreement would have joined the insurrectional jihadism (NIT – New Insurrectional Terrorism), accelerating the division and incrementing the number of conflicts from within and without.

IS/Daesh: a new threat

Two years after conquering the Iraqi city of Mosul, IS/Daesh keeps expanding from “Syraq” to the Greater Middle East, from Libya to Afghanistan, competing with a weaker al-Qaeda faced by a new opponent seeking new operational bases and allies: thus, Pakistan and Afghanistan are the aim of a strategic design that has become rooted in the Indian sub-continent with the premium brand Islamic State “Wilayat Khorasan” (Khorasan Province). IS/Daesh has managed to infiltrate Afghanistan, through affiliation, operational activities and the recruitment of fighters, including foreigners. Thousands of foreign fighters are known to be with al-Qaeda and IS/Daesh or other groups affiliated to them; approximately 6,500 are believed to be fighting in the Afghan operational theatre and a part of them are members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU).

Political deadlock and external priorities

The Ghani-Abdullah diarchy – the administration by two leaders, respectively President and CEO, although the post of CEO is not formally recognised by the Afghan constitution – has led to a substantial and chronic political deadlock of this national unity government, as a result of vote rigging in the latest controversial elections. Corruption, weak leadership, abuse of power, permanent conflicts and political competition are amongst the factors that have led the insurrectional phenomenon to prosper, despite the military engagement and investments made by the international community over the past few years. A year after the beginning of its administration, the substantial differences in interests have brought the government to a halt, unable to lead the country properly and forfeiting the US and NATO military effort. At present governance and security are extremely important, although it is difficult to believe that the country will rise from the ashes when its government is risking collapse and it constantly needs aid from external sources.

Outlook

Taking into account the country’s strengths is essential for a correct forecast for 2016 and 2017. First of all, we should note the political

and economic support of the International Community (IC) and the interests of the regional actors in a common process of stabilization. Lastly, there are practical benefits in the presence of a small foreign military force. On the other hand there are weaknesses to be taken into consideration: the political weakness resulting from the Ghani-Abdullah administration (and of their respective lobbies), a weak democracy, large scale corruption, government malfunctioning, the slowing down in the negotiation process, the lack of collaboration among national agendas (of the contributing countries) and the goals reached in Afghanistan, the search for a conclusion in the short term, the state of war and the reduction of the international military presence, the unstable geopolitical situation and finally a weak financial system. The aforementioned factors confirm for 2016 and 2017 the weaknesses of the Afghan State, as witnessed in the last few years. From a security point of view, the ANDSFs have demonstrated that they are not adequately maintaining the security of the country, they have limited operational abilities and they are not able to fight the AOGs' insurrectional movement. On the insurrectional front, the AOGs have proved their operational abilities that they have demonstrated with the occupation of important symbolic targets, with the deployment on land of compact units of few hundreds of men at the same time and, in few cases, deploying up to a thousand men. Opportunities for the country are the international interest (primarily, the US) and effort, and its role as a transit area for regional trade. Chinese interests in the natural resources of Afghanistan (e.g. oil, gas and minerals) and the cooperative relationship between Afghanistan, the bordering countries and the region. Last but not least, the opening to Iran thanks to their dialogue on nuclear power. Italy, Germany, Turkey and the United States of America have an active role in co-operating and supporting the country, as principal actors of the effort of NATO. Potential threats need to be taken into consideration. In the first instance, the absence of international troops has given AOGs ample room to manoeuvre; IS/Daesh infiltrates Afghanistan (and more widely in the Indian sub-continent) in an ever changing scenario and contributes to the shattering of the insurrectional front. Lastly, the alternative choices (trade-offs). These are variables that can interfere on/affect the socio-political and diplomatic, military development in progress. The interests of the regional actors are linked to those of the Afghan lobbies in a relationship of cooperation and competition. The role that the

CI will be able to play and its ability not to get involved in the vastly growing crisis of the MENA area, particularly “Syraq” and Libya, but also Russia that is looking outward in order to defend its national interests. On a security level, the shattering of the insurrectional front can slow down and potentially destabilize the negotiations for a power sharing and a balance of power with the AOGs.

On a domestic social and political level, there may be the certain outcomes. They can be caused by the ability of the Afghan government to overcome the critical political deadlock, the origin of which is to be found in a precarious balance of power and power sharing between the lobbies of Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah; the power-sharing between lobbies, AOGs and criminals; the IS/Daesh’s ability to penetrate the social fabric and the military. From a security point of view, the internal dynamics will affect the insurrectional phenomenon and the IS/Daesh’s role. Overall AOGs have not been defeated either formally or substantially. They are capable soldiers and are able to lead successful operations and limit the ANDSF’s actions. The role that the AOGs will be able to play and maintain in the next couple of years could drive to the collapse of the Afghan State and lead to a new phase of the civil war. The Afghan government, afflicted by structural problems due to a 40 year-long war and by one of the largest scale corruption in the world, is open to negotiations. At best, such agreement could cost a revision of the constitution (individual and family rights), power-sharing and the control over peripheral areas (and of the illegal drug trade). In the wake of the conflict that has been degenerating, it is possible to confirm that for the next two years what outlined in the previous *Global Outlook 2015*. This will result in a rise in conflicts due to the activities of the AOGs and the appeal and operational abilities of IS/Daesh, a reduction in the capabilities of the Afghan State with a substantial pull-out from the peripheral/suburban areas, and an increasing socio-political instability as a result of critical economic issues. In the next couple of years, we will probably see in Afghanistan:

- political weakness caused by a precarious power-sharing and unable to handle the balance of power with the lobbies, adversaries but linked to the Ghani-Abdullah diarchy;
- vulnerability to the pressure exerted by the AOGs;
- unstable domestic security;
- inability to manage international funding.

Analysis, assessment, forecasting

We foresee for the short to medium term a significant rise in the activity of both domestic and foreign AOGs, as shown in the past few years a rise in the number and the increased intensity of the actions led against the ANDSFs and against targets with a wide media appeal (e.g. cities, institutional infrastructures, military targets).

Moreover, several Taliban fighters might join IS/Daesh in Afghanistan (Wilayat Khorasan), among them there would be many of the foreign fighters in the region; other foreign volunteers militating in the ranks of the AQIS (al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-continent), created by al-Qaeda as a reaction to the expansion of IS/Daesh. The above dynamic factors have led Afghan conflict to increased instability and to further violence. The Ghani-Abdullah administration is interested in a constructive dialogue with Pakistan in the role of facilitator. As a consequence of the presence of IS/Daesh, the talks with the Taliban could prove difficult as a result of the secessionism that might see the leadership (older generations) and its counterpart (young and radical individuals that might choose IS/Daesh) drift apart. Besides Iran's regional role and ambitions are growing as a possible consequence of the dialogue on nuclear power with the US and thanks to Teheran's effort in contrasting the IS/Daesh's expansion in "Syraq" and also in Afghanistan, where Iran is ready to support the counter-terrorism activities alongside Islamabad and Kabul. This would start a new phase of the Iranian role in the region.

What are the consequences of a fragmentary insurrectional phenomenon?

Proceeding with the negotiations and the beginning of a process of power-sharing contemplating the inclusion of the Taliban might persuade part of the insurrectional front to carry on fighting, but there are 4 mechanisms to be taken into account when addressing the succession to the leadership of the movement:

- a leadership open to negotiations would lead to the polarization of the currents that are for and against a peace-making process involving Pakistan in a leading role;
- the risk of a violent secession of the insurrectional front;

- the risk of the “national” conflict (the mujahidin’s Resistance) turning into a global war (an ideological supported and instigated by IS/Daesh) that would drive Afghanistan towards a scenario of conflicts involving the other areas of the Greater Middle East;
- al-Qaeda welcoming other jihadist groups (including IS/Daesh) with common ground against the West as formalised last November – the declaration of the alliance (*bayah*) with the Taliban as announced by emir Ayman al-Zawahiri – with regard to this we should acknowledge two possible scenarios: the awareness of the decline of the al-Qaeda brand and the pursuit of a last minute solution in order to escape the shattering of the insurrectional front.

This might lead to four scenarios:

First scenario. The invigorating nature of IS/Daesh might convince the Taliban to accept negotiations as a solution involving substantial power-sharing. This would facilitate the disengagement of a significant part of the foreign military. Possible, not very likely.

Second scenario. The competition with IS/Daesh could lead to a new phase of the civil war. The Taliban might launch an offensive against the new target. An evolution of the conflict that would involve minor players, local second rank or marginalised AOGs, lobbies and outlaws. Likely.

Third scenario. Coalition of mujahidin. If conflicts do not cease, the likelihood of a collaboration among the main insurrectional actors: IS/Daesh, Taliban and HIG (Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin Hekmatyar). Possible.

Fourth scenario. As observed with the Pakistani Taliban members (Teherik-e Taliban-e Pakistan), the Afghan Taliban might get involved in a secession process where the two opposing factions would be: the older fringe willing to negotiate a compromise solution and the radical fringe of the young mujahidin that might choose to join the IS/Daesh project. This is the most likely hypothesis.

Policy indications

It is widely known that the IS/Daesh phenomenon and premium brand has also shown its abilities in Afghanistan. Analyzing how the phenomenon has developed using a double perspective method of “time” and “space”, it is essential for decision-makers to be aware that

in order to repress, fight and defeat IS/Daesh it is extremely important to act wherever the phenomenon can be found, fighting against it as it represents a trans-national and global threat. We cannot analyze the events and violent actions in the whole of the MENA area separately: each event, although not co-ordinated, is part of a greater political plan based on ideological, revolutionary and destructive principles. This is the true nature of the New Insurrectional Terrorism (NIT) and IS/Daesh is leading the way.

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