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NATO Triggers Destruction, Insecurity and Poverty. It Must be Abolished!

By Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya and Silvia Cattori

March 31, 2013

*Appreciated for the rigor and the accuracy of his analysis, Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, age 30, has emerged as one of the best scholars on NATO. His articles, which have been translated into many languages, have acquired an international audience and, today, his book **The Globalization of NATO** has become a reference guide. In 400 dense, fascinating and worrying pages it makes us realize the extent of the threat that NATO poses to world peace and to the future of many nations. It also makes us aware of the urgency involved in obtaining the dissolution of this dangerous organization.*

Silvia Cattori: *In your remarkable study you reveal the strategies that have been implemented by NATO to expand its military power in the world. I would like to ask you what motivated you to devote so much energy to such a difficult and demanding subject. How did you come to believe that it is an absolutely essential task to make an analysis of the role of NATO and its strategies?*

Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya: The seeds for this particular book were laid in 2007. In 2007, I had written a small manuscript that connected the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (which followed the tragic events of September 11, 2001 or 9/11) with NATO's expansion, the US missile shield project (which I described as ultimately taking on the mantle of a NATO project), the concept of what the neoconservatives and their Zionist allies called "creative destruction" to redraw and restructure the countries of the Middle East, and the encirclement of both Russia and China.

I had always held the position that all the negative events that the world was facing were pieces of a whole or what the Hungarian scholar and revolutionary György Lukács called a "fragmented

totality.” The serial wars, the increasing security laws, the War on Terror, the neoliberal economic reforms, the colour revolutions in the post-Soviet space, the demonization of different societies by the media, the expansion of NATO and the European Union, and the false accusations about an Iranian nuclear weapons program are all part of a whole. One of my articles written in 2007, laid out much of the roadmap and connected all the dots of the perpetual warfare we are witnessing.

I wrote this book, because I thought it was a very important topic. I have read most the important literature on NATO and none of it examines NATO in the critical perspective from which I do. Nor does any of it tie NATO in a relevant way to the “bigger picture” in international relations. Someone at Carleton University who read the book told me that it was like a Bible for international relations and all the important issues. I too look at my book on NATO in a similar way.

My main motive for writing the book was to raise awareness about the imperialist nature of modern international conflicts and to help readers see the “totality” instead of its “fragmented” pieces. When you see the bigger picture, you are able to make better decisions. I also think that I gave NATO a fair assessment. Even NATO itself has a copy of my book in the NATO Library in Brussels and made a public announcement in November 2012 about the acquisition of my book as one of their library’s resources. This book is my contribution as a scholar to the world to try to allow readers to make well informed decisions by seeing past the smoke and mirrors and the fragmented pieces of the picture.

People are on the whole getting more educated around the world. But unfortunately ignorance is proliferating about power relations and what is happening globally. We are entering a deceptive era of history where many individuals around the world are feeling more and more like they can do no more than look on helplessly while they are reduced to mere particles or gears, levers, components, and extensions of a much larger and expanding invisible machine that they have no control over.

The scenarios in George Orwell’s *1984* have essentially arrived. People are now disconnected from their world and governed more and more by this invisible capitalist machine that is working to destroy all alternative ways of life or thinking; the order of our day is like Max Weber’s hardening “iron cage” which is confining our independence and movements more and more.

Most people now look at the news and television passively. They try to distract themselves from reality; they try to numb their consciousness’s and live in a false state of happiness that allows them to ignore reality and the miseries of the world. Collectively our minds have been colonized and made to believe a false order of things. Humanity is being de-humanized more and more. Maybe I sound Hegelian, but people are being alienated from their own selves as the people they were meant to be. They are also being alienated from the facilities of their own minds and the talents that they have been blessed with. But the truth is that we are not separate from the events and processes shaping this world. We should not become the slaves of objects and structures of our own making, be it capitalism or political structures. We do not need to be mere spectators in our life-courses.

Hegemony is an ongoing process for leadership, control, and influence that involves both coercion and consent. But it is never fixed or total and it can always be confronted. We see the challenges to hegemony in the building of historical blocs that confront imperial and capitalist

centres of power. Hugo Chávez's Bolivarian Movement and ALBA are examples of a successful challenge to the traditional hegemony of the comprador elites that managed his region [Latin America and the Caribbean] for external forces.

Silvia Cattori: *A great chapter, exciting and disturbing, of your book is on Africa. France's entry into war in Mali must have been no surprise for you. Doesn't the destabilization of this weak country, caused by the intervention of France in Libya, open a serious crisis in all countries of the Sahel, from the Atlantic to the Red Sea?*

Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya: Well from the very start I held the position that the division of Sudan, the American-supported French invasion of Côte d'Ivoire, and NATO's war on Libya were part of a second "scramble for Africa." I explained that the war in Libya was aimed at destabilizing other parts of Africa and would have a ripple effect across a large portion of Africa, including countries like Niger and Mali.

In my book I look at the Sahel, which is formed by the interior lands of Algeria, Niger, Libya, and Mali. NATO's war on Libya has set off a chain reaction, like a controlled demolition, that the US and its allies are using to control a vast stretch of Africa and its resources. Like the first "scramble for Africa" that was sparked by an economic crisis in the industrialized countries of Western Europe, these moves are really about controlling economic resources. As the US has become more involved in Africa, the US government and Pentagon have increasingly talked about the expansion of Al-Qaeda franchises in Africa and how the US military and its allies must intervene into the African continent to fight it. In fact, the US put a budget aside in 2011 for the current war in Mali under the guise of fighting Al-Qaeda in West Africa. Strategic interests like the increasing US obsession with the Gulf of Guinea and the oil supplies in West Africa are casually brushed aside in this narrative about fighting the terrorist groups that are casually called Al-Qaeda. We see from experience that the American Empire has actually worked with these groups in both Libya and Syria. Very little is ever mentioned about pushing China, Russia, India, Brazil, and the other economic rivals of the Western Bloc out of Africa. Instead the interests of the US and its NATO allies, like France, are presented as altruistic ones based on the objective of helping fragile states.

Returning to Mali, I was not surprised when President François Hollande and his government ordered French soldiers to invade. Both France and the US are aware of the gas and oil reserves in Mali, Niger, and the whole Sahel. My book discusses these points and how the French government even created the Petroleum Research Office for the purpose of extracting oil and gas from it in 1945. In 1953, a few years later, Paris would issue oil exploration licenses to four French companies in Africa. Due to its fears of both US encroachment and African demands for independence, Paris would even form the Common Organization of the Saharan Regions or the *Organisation Commune des Régions Sahariennes* (OCRS) to maintain its control over the resource-rich portions of its African territories that had oil, gas, and uranium. Ultimately, the uranium in the OCRS was important for guaranteeing French independence from Washington through the creation of a nuclear strategic deterrent and as a riposte to the Anglo-American monopoly.

This is why it is no mere coincidence that the areas of the Sahel that the US and its allies have designated as part of the zone where Al-Qaeda and the terrorists are located roughly corresponds to the borders of the energy-rich and uranium-rich OCRS. In 2002, the Pentagon started major operations aimed at controlling this area of West Africa. This took place in the form of the Pan-

Sahel Initiative, which was launched by US European Command (EUCOM) and US Central Command (CENTCOM). Under the banner of this US military project the Pentagon would train troops from Mali, Chad, Mauritania, and Niger. The plans to establish the Pan-Sahel Initiative, however, date back to 2001, when the initiative for Africa was launched following September 11, 2001 (9/11). On the basis of the Pan-Sahel Initiative, the Trans-Saharan Counter-terrorism Initiative (TSCTI) was launched by the Pentagon in 2005 under the command of CENTCOM. Mali, Chad, Mauritania, and Niger were joined by Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal, Nigeria, and Tunisia. TSCTI would be transferred to the recently activated AFRICOM's command in 2008. It should so happens that Captain Amadou Sanogo, the leader of the military coup in Mali that took place in March 21, 2012, is one of the Malian officers that was trained under these US programs in West Africa.

Analyzing the 2012 coup in Mali, we see foul play. The military coup overthrew President Amadou Toumani Toure on the excuse that he could not restore Malian authority in northern Mali. President Amadou was about to leave office and did not plan on staying in politics and Malian elections were going to take place in less than two months. The coup essentially prevented a democratic election from taking place and Captain Sanogo's actions ended the democratic processes in Mali and destabilized the country. His new military dictatorship was recognized by NATO and the French-installed government of Côte d'Ivoire. The US would even continue to fund the military government of Mali and there would be military and civilian delegations from the US and Western Europe that would even meet with Sanogo's military regime. Soon afterward France would also declare that it had the right to intervene anywhere in Africa where its citizens and interests were at risk too. This was all foreplay.

The weapons that are being used in Mali and Niger by both terrorist groups and the Tuareg tribes are tied to NATO's actions in Libya. Specifically these weapons would come from Libya's looted armouries and French, British, and Qatari shipments sent into North Africa. NATO has a direct hand in this and the French are known to have bribed and helped arm and fund the Tuareg groups during the war against Libya. Moreover, the French have a history of manipulating the Tuareg and Berbers against other ethnic groups in Africa for colonial purposes.

The tensions between Sudan and South Sudan are being fueled separate from this. Sudan's Darfur region and Somalia are still trouble spots. All this is part of an African arc of crisis that is being used to restructure Africa and demarcate it within the boundaries of the Western Bloc.

Silvia Cattori: *After 33 years of withdrawal, when France resumed its participation in the military command of NATO under the initiative of President Sarkozy, there was no protest. Isn't this a sign that citizens are unaware that this organization is a threat to humanity and that being a member of NATO means the subordination of their country to the hawkish foreign policy of Washington and the loss of their country's sovereignty?*

Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya: I am of the position that what President Sarkozy did with France's re-entry into NATO's military command structure is largely a reflection of the consensus within the political class of France. I know that many political voices in Paris criticized him, but if the opposition in the French political establishment was adamant its members could have done much more than speak out. Today the members of the French political establishment, including both the so-called *left* and so-called *right*, fight among themselves to see who can serve the imperialist and capitalist centres in Washington and New York City the most. The French political establishment does not do this because it is particularly pro-American per se, but because its

serves the corrupt so-called world-system that itself serves global capitalism from its weakening centre in the United States. Thus, I should also mention that we need to re-assess what anti-Americanism is or what anti-American feelings actually stem from and represent.

Large segments of the Western European elite serve this world-system, because their own interests are invested and tied to it. As the weakening United States or American Empire struggles to maintain global primacy as the centre of capitalism and both capitalist regulation and accumulation, the US will outsource more of its imperial missions to countries like France. We will also see more compromises between the US and allied countries like France and Germany. It is a dialectical de-centralization of US power aimed at strengthening the hegemony of the world-system and maintaining a devolved American Empire. I should mention that this capitalist world-system is fragmented into blocs and this is why we see American, Chinese, and Russian rivalries.

In general, the majority of citizens in many societies are becoming more and more passive vis-à-vis the decisions of their governments and leaders. This is a reflection of the increasing feeling of alienation, detachment, and helplessness that has turned human beings into commodities and objects. This is part of the tightening of the “iron cage” that I described earlier in Weberian language.

Silvia Cattori: *From the beginning France, along with Qatar, has been a main “sponsor” of the destabilization of Syria. China and Russia have, by their vetoes, prevented the adoption of a UN Security Council resolution that would have allowed a NATO military intervention, as was the case in Libya. But one may ask whether the countries of NATO and their Arab allies have not succeeded in overriding the resolution by destroying Syria by other means? And do you think that China and Russia will be able to contain, in a durable way, NATO so far as emerging countries do not have their say nor the means to impose real multilateralism in the Security Council?*

Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya: In the first instance, we should look at the events in Syria as part of a bloc proxy war with the US, NATO, Israel, and the Arab dictatorships (like Saudi Arabia) fighting against China, Russia, Iran, and their allies. Secondly, when we look at the events in Syria from an international lens we should think of it in terms of the Spanish Civil War that erupted before the Second World War. By the same token we can look at the events in Libya and Africa, and maybe the earlier invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, in terms of the Japanese invasion of China or the German invasion of Czechoslovakia before the Second World War. This does not mean that Syria or these events are necessarily preludes to a Third World War, but they have the potential to ignite a large global fire — unless you conceptualize that all these events are part of World War III.

Giovanni Arrighi’s thesis about systematic cycles of accumulation in the world-system can help ground us. His work is important, because we can use it to help us tie everything in Syria and Africa that we are talking about in terms of the fragmented totality that makes the world-system. The cycles of accumulation that Arrighi studies relate to periods of time that take a hundred years or more under which the centre of capitalism in the world-system resides in a given geographic location or country. This is heavily influenced by the French scholar Fernand Braudel’s work on capitalist expansion. For Arrighi these centres of accumulation were the hegemonic powers of the expanding world-system. At the final stage of each cycle, capitalists move their capital from these centres to other locations and ultimately the new emerging capitalist centre. Thus hegemonic power in the world-system has been chronologically

transferred from the Italian city-state of Genoa to the Netherlands to Britain, and finally, to the United States of America. The shift in the location of the world-system's centre occurs during a period of crisis, at least for the old capitalist centre and not the new capitalist centre, and in shorter periods of time. Thus, we are brought in front of the People's Republic of China. What is happening is that the centre of capital is about to move out of the United States. If the trend outlined by Arrighi is to be followed then the next centre of capitalist accumulation for the world-system will be China. Yet, we should not overrule other scenarios, such as a global directorship of all the major capitalist powers. Through my reference to Arrighi's work, my point here is that we are dealing with a capitalist world-system that includes China and Russia. Neither the US or China and Russia want to disturb this world-system. What they are doing is competing to be the world-system's centre of capitalist accumulation. This is why neither side wants to have a direct war. This is why the Chinese have not used the American foreign debt to devastate the American economy; China wants to see an orderly transfer of the centre from the United States.

China and Russia will not change their policies or positions on either Syria or Iran, but they want to avoid a war that disrupts the capitalist world-system. Of course the US is trying to maintain its position as the centre of the world-system through brute force or by involving its allies and vassals in its imperialist operations, such as in Mali and Libya.

Silvia Cattori: *You dedicate a long chapter (pp. 67-113) to the NATO intervention in Yugoslavia. Can you summarize for our readers where this war, which dismembered the country and generated so much suffering, was going to lead?*

Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya: The dismantlement of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was an important step for opening the doors of the eastward expansion of both NATO and the European Union. It opened the path for the march towards the borders of Russia and the former Soviet Union. The former Yugoslavia was also a major roadblock that stood in the way of erasing any alternatives to the Euro-Atlantic project of NATO and the EU in Europe. Additionally, NATO's wars in Yugoslavia allowed for the logistics to be prepared for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Silvia Cattori: *NATO "only yields destruction and human poverty, insecurity and misery. NATO must be abolished!" writes Denis J. Halliday in his preface to your book. When one knows that there is no movement that opposes war, that Amnesty, HRW, MSF, MDM are supporting intervention, as we have seen in Sudan, Libya, Syria, what can one suggest to the younger generation that is in search of justice and willing to work for a better world? What can the peoples of Europe concretely do against this destructive and frightening machine, under US command, that is, in reality, NATO?*

Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya: As I said earlier, George Orwell's *1984* has arrived. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and a large segment of the humanitarian NGO industry are tools of imperialism with double-standards. Foreign aid is deeply political and politicized. This does not mean that all their employees are bad people who do not want to help the world. Many of their employees or volunteers are good people; they do not understand all the facts and they have good intentions. These people have been misled or blinded by institutional group-think. In a real task of dedication, their minds have to patiently be cleared of all the biases and misinformation that they have been nourished with.

Citizens of NATO states should work to position themselves to educate their respective societies about NATO and ultimately influence their respective countries to withdraw from NATO. This can come about in many shapes and ways. But it starts with understanding what NATO is and knowing its uncensored history.

I am no moral authority or master strategist. Keeping one's self on the right path is already a hard enough challenge I think. I have no real right to pontificate over others on how to live. I will tell you what I personally think though. In my humble opinion, the biggest problem for many people is that they want to change the world on much too big a scale without addressing the immediate problems in their own lives. I find that the best way to change the world is by starting with small steps in our everyday lives. I am talking about "scales" here and not really about "gradual change" or "speed." Making a better world starts with your immediate environment. Change starts with yourself and those around you, just as charity should. Imagine if most people did this; the world would be changed through small steps that would collectively amount to monumental change. None of this can be done without patience and determination either, and again I have to stress that action and learning should not be separated. I do not know what more to say than this.

Silvia Cattori: *In putting together the pieces of the puzzle, you have masterfully shown in your book how serial wars are part of a strategy of "creative destruction" designed by "the neocons and their Zionist allies", and how, from Yugoslavia to Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, so many wars, that were waged under humanitarian pretexts, were in fact related to this criminal strategy. Leading figures such as former Deputy Secretary General of the UN Denis J. Halliday say you are absolutely right: NATO is indeed the greatest threat to world peace. But you know that in Europe, especially in countries like France, where Jewish organizations have a strong grip on politicians and the media, the fact of denouncing the neoconservative strategy and its ally Israel or the color revolutions was enough to have you labelled as a "conspiracy theorist" and to remove you from the debate. What has to be done, in your opinion, to modify this appalling situation?*

Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya: My experience (in Canada) has been different, because I have never been labelled a conspiracy theorist. I think that media censorship and systematic disregard are the key tactics against views that challenge the dominant narratives or views articulated by the hegemonic forces that dominate a society. Demonizing someone with the label of a "conspiracy theorist" is used with few people or groups, because the main aim is to snub and overlook them like they do not exist. Calling such people conspiracy theorists usually comes when they are getting a relatively high degree of attention and when they also have a few wrong ideas that can be ridiculed tied to their positions. Nonetheless, anyone who is labelled a conspiracy theorist should not let that deter them from maintaining their position or reaching out to people. Demoralization is ultimately part of the tactics in repressing "inconvenient" views and thoughts.

Zionist groups and lobbies have a strong and disproportionate presence in the political and media sectors of several countries, but we have to recognize that they are not homogenous and that they are not alone as influential factors; they are part of a bloc of interests that have an interest in preventing any critical narratives from displacing the current hegemonic forces influencing society. Nor are all Zionist lobbies linked to Israel. Sometimes a Zionist group works to impose or internalize external projects into Israel. The motivations of these groups are not all the same,

but they are part of the dominant program that has been expanding in what the well-known sociologists Giovanni Arrighi and Immanuel Wallerstein would describe as a singular capitalist world-system.

In my humble opinion, being heard is the most important thing. The internet and social media have helped in this process. I think that to be heard, it is also important that well articulated and rigorous analyses be put forward. This is a hard task that has to be met, which is part of a broader cultural process that involves education and re-education. If the dominant hegemonic forces in society are to be displaced, it has to be done through establishing new currents of thought that can challenge their hegemony. Criticism is not enough either, an alternative and better program needs to be articulated and offered. Criticism by itself is useless if there is no alternative program offered alongside it. Thought and action also have to be linked and simultaneous as part of a process of praxis.

Silvia Cattori: *Will your book be translated into French? Did the media coverage allow it to be read by a wide audience?*

Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya: My book was supposed to be translated into the French language by a publisher in France in three volumes, but unfortunately the agreement fizzled. In the age of shortened attention spans, not many people can read a book that is over 400 pages. Very little large-scale media attention has been given to my book on NATO. Many months ago *Le Monde Diplomatique* also contacted my publisher in the United States, and then the company that publishes my book in Britain, to get a review copy sent to Paris. I do not know, however, if *Le Monde Diplomatique* intends to go through with a book review of such a critical book and in all honesty I do not really care.

I have seen a few good reviews of it saying that it is a must read book. It is also growing in popularity in universities and colleges. Copies of it are in the libraries of various institutions like Harvard University and the University of Chicago. The Hague in the Netherlands also has a copy of it in the prestigious collection of the Peace Palace Library that keeps references and books that specialize in international laws. It is selling as one of the top books on NATO and is gaining a good foothold I think. If you even look at Amazon sales in the United Kingdom, for example, it is ranked as one of the top books on NATO.