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## Secret Army of Mercenaries

June 2011

by Manlio Dinucci, Geographer and geopolitical scientist. His latest books are Geograficamente. Per la Scuola media (3 vol.), Zanichelli (2008); Escalation. Anatomia della guerra infinita, DeriveApprodi (2005).

Each member state of the Gulf Cooperation Council is invited to take part in the Arabic counter-revolution. As regards the United Arab Emirates, which have already supplied a contingent of policemen to quash demonstrations in Bahrain, they have decided to take their contribution a step further by building a secret army. For this purpose, they will be counting on Xe (ex-Blackwater) mercenary services .

In Zayed Military City, in a training camp in a desert area of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a secret army is in the making.

This secret army of mercenaries, which is slated to be used not only in the Emirates but throughout the Middle East and North Africa, was created by Erik Prince, a former member of Navy SEALs who in 1997 founded Blackwater, the largest private military company on contract to the Pentagon in Iraq, Afghanistan and other war zones. The company, which in 2009 was renamed Xe Services (also in order to escape legal action for the massacres of civilians in Iraq), owns a large training camp in the United States, where more than fifty thousand "specialists of war and repression" have been trained. And Xe is in the process of opening other training camps.

In Abu Dhabi, Erik Prince, without appearing in person but through the joint-venture Reflex Responses, signed a first contract of \$529 million (the deal was signed on July 13, 2010,

according to The New York Times) [« Secret Desert Force Set Up by Blackwater's Founder », « United Arab Emirates Confirms Hiring Blackwater Founder's Firm », par Mark Mazzetti et Emily B. Hager, The New York Times, 14 et 15 mai 2011.1].

In several countries including South Africa and Colombia, they started recruiting mercenaries to form an initial battalion of 800 men. They are trained in the UAE by U.S., British, French and German military professionals, with a background in special forces and the secret services. The trainers are paid 200-300 thousand dollars a year, while the recruits receive about \$150 a day.

Once the efficiency of the battalion has been tested in a "real action" scenario, Abu Dhabi will fund with billions of dollars a whole brigade of several thousand mercenaries. It is expected to set up a large training camp in the UAE, similar to that operating in the United States.

The main supporter of the project is the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheik Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, who was trained in the British military academy Sandhurst.

Sheik Mohammed bin Zayed is a trusted Pentagon associate. He also supports military intervention directed against Iran. The crown prince and his friend Erick Prince, however, are the executors of the project, which was decided in Washington. Its purpose was revealed in documents quoted by The New York Times:

"[the secret army trained in the UAE will conduct] special operations missions to put down internal revolts, like those sweeping the Arab world this year".

The secret army of mercenaries will therefore be used to suppress the people's struggles in the Gulf countries, with interventions similar to those last March in Bahrain involving troops from the Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. These troops brutally crushed the people's demands for democracy.

"Special operations missions" will also be conducted by the secret army in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia, to break people's movements and to ensure that power remains in the hands of governments which support the interests of the United States and major European powers.

The secret army is also slated to be sent to Libya, where the U.S. and NATO have envisaged sending in both European as well as troops from the Arab World, theoretically to "provide humanitarian aid to civilians".

Whatever the scenario will be - either a "balkanized" Libya divided into two territories under the control of Tripoli and Benghazi, or a situation of similar to Iraq or Afghanistan, geared towards overthrowing the Libyan government - the US NATO military alliance is planning to use the secret army of mercenaries. The underlying objectives are to:

- 1) protect the oil facilities in the hands of American and European oil companies,
- 2) eliminate their opponents, and
- 3) keep the country weak and divided.