



حملة Operación Opération Operation 行动 Операция

MOEZ SURANI

FIRST EDITION

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cover art by Rosângela Rennó, from Red Series (Military), 2000

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The production of this book was made possible through the generous assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council. BookThug also acknowledges the support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund and the Government of Ontario through the Ontario Book Publishing Tax Credit and the Ontario Book Fund.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA
CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION

Surani, Moez, 1979-, author

Ḥamlah, operación, opération, operation, xing dong,
operatṣiā / Moez Surani. — First edition.

Poem.

Parts of the title romanized.

Issued in print and electronic formats.

ISBN 978-1-77166-268-0 (PAPERBACK)

ISBN 978-1-77166-269-7 (HTML)

ISBN 978-1-77166-270-3 (PDF)

ISBN 978-1-77166-271-0 (KINDLE)

I. Title. II. Title: Operation.

PS8637.U74.H34 2016

C811.6

C2016-905014-9

C2016-905015-7

PRINTED IN CANADA

INTRODUCTION

ONE

This is a poem of violence. It is a collection of the names of military operations conducted by member states of the United Nations (UN) from the UN's inception in October 1945, to the incorporation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) document in 2006. The title is the word "operation" in the six official languages of the UN: Arabic, Spanish, French, English, Chinese and Russian. The poem that follows is a globe-spanning inventory of the contemporary rhetoric of violence and aggression.

Representatives from fifty countries gathered in San Francisco in April 1945, and by the end of June an agreement was reached to create an international system unifying these countries. President Truman declared that this constituted "a solid structure upon which we can build a better world" and "a victory against war itself." In light of the events of the Second

World War and military activities since that time, his belief in the promise of that document now appears naïve. Most prophetic was his conclusion: “If we fail to use it we shall betray all those who have died so that we might meet here in freedom and safety to create it. If we seek to use it selfishly—for the advantage of any one nation or any small group of nations—we shall be equally guilty of that betrayal.”

The UN’s birth in 1945 is the opening frame of this poem. A second UN document, the Responsibility to Protect, sixty-one years later, is the closing frame. The R2P language emerged from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan’s question to the public in 2000: “If humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica—to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?” Twelve people met in Ottawa to determine how to rightfully breach a country’s sovereignty to prevent calamity. Their answer: a government has a responsibility to protect its citizens. When this responsibility is abdicated, the UN can rightfully intervene.

With this poem beginning at the outset of the UN and closing at the 2006 ratification of the R2P language, this framing embodies a movement in the poem itself, away from conflicts between countries and towards those within them.

TWO

During World War Two, Winston Churchill wrote a memo with directives for how to name British military operations:

- I. Operations in which large numbers of men may lose their lives ought not to be described by code words which imply a boastful or overconfident sentiment . . . or, conversely, which are calculated to invest the plan with an air of despondency. . . .
- II. They ought not to be names of a frivolous character. . . . They should not be ordinary words often used in other connections. . . . Names of living people—Ministers and Commanders—should be avoided. . . . After all, the world is wide, and intelligent thought will readily supply an unlimited number of well-sounding names which do not suggest the character of the operation or disparage it in any way and do not enable some widow or mother to say that her son was killed in an operation called “Bunnyhug” or “Ballyhoo.”
- III. Proper names are good in this field. The heroes of antiquity, figures from Greek and Roman mythology, the constellations and stars, famous racehorses, names of British and American war heroes, could be used, provided they fall within the rules above.

These rules are still observable today. Most of the names, even those American ones that were generated automatically but altered and approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have dignity, an inspirational loft, a sense of worthiness and tend towards the heroic.

THREE

Who wrote this poem? Over the past four years, I've treated عملية *Operación* *Opération* *Operation* 行动 *Операция* as a piece on which 193 countries have inadvertently collaborated. But who, specifically, is responsible for draping *County Fair* over the menace of an operation in Vietnam? Or for *Grapple* being the sign under which nuclear weapons detonated high above the Pacific? Even thinking of this as a collaboration forsakes precision. Who are the authors—the committees or those at the top tiers of command—who selected these names and sent them down through their fighting ranks and out into the international media?

Despite my effort, this piece is simply a gesture towards the comprehensive poem that I've failed to fully excavate. When I began, I envisioned it encompassing all the names and for it to be so perfect that no matter the researcher—whether in Geneva, Toronto or Seoul—the resulting text would be identical. I had to concede that this isn't exhaustive; it would be different if it was done by another. One

of the difficulties encountered in the composition process is that communist countries were harder to research than non-communist countries. This poem, then, has shadow entries, names of military operations nested between those cited that I failed to discover. The second complication is the number of judgment calls needed to determine whether an operation belonged on this list or not. What if it was a police operation and not a military one? Or if the source was not a government document, but a less official one—one that doesn't boast the same stature and veracity? The police operations, I omitted; operations derived from folk documents, I have included. So the entries *Hammer* (a 1987 Los Angeles Police Department operation targeting gang violence), *Trident* (a 1998 London Metropolitan Police operation targeting gun violence) or *Fire for Fire* (a 2001 Nigerian operation to counter armed robberies) are absent. But *Albacete* (a 1960 exercise in Spain) and *Ixil* (a Guatemalan operation targeting internal subversives) are present.

Following these parameters, I've also omitted operation names by non-governmental organizations that aren't signatories to the UN's charter. Because of this, the operation names of, for example, the Tamil Tigers do not fit within this text. So in this poem it could appear as though the Sri Lankan army, in *Thunder Strike*, *Fire Flame* and *Battle Cry*, was fighting ghosts.

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And now, O Muses, dwellers in the mansions of Olympus, tell me—
for you are goddesses and are in all places so that you see all
things, while we know nothing but by report

—Homer, *Iliad*, Book Two

The Purposes of the United Nations are: To develop friendly relations
among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and
self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures
to strengthen universal peace

—United Nations, “Charter of the United
Nations” (1945), Ch. I, Art. I (2)

1945

Clobber
Haystack

1946

Archery
Asylum
Bille
Blizzard
Copyright
Goodwood
Homing Pigeon
Honeybee
Hunger III
Marriages
Olympic
Sandstone
Stork
Trademark
Wasp
Whisk
Surgeon
Epilogue
Freshman
Ribbon
Keynote
Puff

Sam
Wallop
Nipoff
Swallow
Heartbreak
Outward
Squeeze
Castanets
Kipper / Faggot
Davy Jones' Locker
Agatha
Crossroads
Tabarin
Shark
Keelhaul
Marriage
High Jump
Mudlark
Woodpecker
Oasis
Odeon
Retail
Octopus
Pedestal

1947

Asbtract / Bad Sachsa / Oberjoch
Blackcurrant

Curfew
Folium
Happy Return
Hunger IV
Inkpot
Mackerel
Old Lace
Sandfly
Sparkler
Stockpile
Traffic
Westward Ho
Source
Cantonment
Crossline
Polly
Roundabout
Eastwind
Fleacomb
Posterity
Valuable
Papillon [Butterfly]
Wisła [Vistula]
Diagram
Product
Tiger
Terminus
Bluecoat
Grand National

Totalize
Léa
Windmill
Rollup
Ceinture [Belt]
Veritable

1948

Bystander
Caravan
Double Quick
Greenford
Harness
Journey's End
Pickle
Pinstripe
Planet
Second Slip
Smoke
Snooker
November
Seahawk
Stress
Itzuv [Stabilization]
Hashmed [Destroy]
נחשון [Nachshon]
Dawn
Sandstone

1955

Alpha
Debenture
Deepfreeze
Doubleshuffle
Dragon Return
Hermes
Negation
Nervine / Lurcher
Sanjak
Snowdrop
Suntan
Yated [Stake]
Zipper
Chui
Teapot
חץ שחור [Black Arrow]
Longshot 1
Gimlet
Wigwam
אלקיים [Elkayam]
יונתן [Jonathan]
Bonaparte
אגד [Egged]
הר געש [Volcano]
Deep Freeze
Gnat
עלי זית [Olive Leaves]