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FOREIGN NEWS & PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT



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ON THE COVER:

Venezuelan tanks during a military parade

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BTR-80A_VEN.jpg, Attribution: CCA-SA 2.0

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China Sharpens Tone Against U.S. Policy, Deepening Ties in Syria

By Lucas Winter
OE Watch Commentary

Chinese rhetoric toward the U.S. presence in Syria has recently sharpened, signaling a further convergence of narratives with Russia criticizing U.S. involvement in Syria while possibly hinting at greater Chinese involvement in the Levant. Until recently, China's criticism had largely been muted and vaguely worded, in contrast to the more direct accusations made by Syrian and Russian government officials and media outlets. The excerpted article from the Arabic-language version of the Chinese state-run publication *The People's Daily* is illustrative, alluding to a U.S. policy of "frantic piracy and resource looting" in Syria and beyond. The article reinforces statements made by Chinese diplomats and is one of several pieces published in Arabic-language Chinese media highlighting the U.S.-facilitated transfer of oil from Kurdish-controlled areas of Syria across the border into Iraq. The Chinese emphasis on "looting" echoes a narrative that has been pursued by Russian and Syrian officials for several months, partially in response to the Western emphasis on Russia's control over Ukrainian resources. Thus, China's new approach reflects a narrative convergence with Russia, one that may portend greater coordination between these countries in the Levant.

Meanwhile, China is working on telecommunications development that would further enable its rhetoric and influence with Syria. In early 2022, Syria officially signed on to the Belt and Road Initiative, potentially setting the stage for greater Chinese economic involvement in the country. In late July, the two countries signed a letter of intent for China to furnish \$30 million dollars of telecommunications equipment and software for Syria to rebuild its tattered network in war-torn areas of the country. As portrayed in an article from the pro-regime Syrian daily *al-Watan*, the agreement is a further landmark of deepening bilateral ties. An analyst



Wang Yi, China's Foreign Minister at the Supporting Syria conference (2016)

Source: DFID - UK Department for International Development, Flickr, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/dfid/24789378436>, Attribution: CC BY 2.0

The United States has not stopped looting Syrian local resources...

cited by the Qatar-aligned daily *al-Araby al-Jadeed* ascribes security significance to the deal, arguing that it is for "listening and jamming devices," though no evidence is presented to back this claim. The deal could indeed be the start of greater Chinese involvement in Syria's technological sector, though the modest sums involved belie the idea that it is of great consequence. Nonetheless, media coverage of the deal highlights a growing pattern of magnification of the significance of any Chinese aid or assistance. A good example of this comes from a recent report by the *Center for Operational Analysis and Research*, a Syria-focused research consultancy group. The report notes that even though Syria received more than triple the number of COVID-19 vaccines from the World Health Organization's COVAX initiative than it did from China, Syria's official news agency published at least 38 articles praising Chinese assistance, and only one reference to the COVAX aid.

Source:

"تعليق: سرقة النفط والقمح من سوريا .. حقيقة سيناريو الديمقراطية وحقوق الانسان الامريكي في الشرق الأوسط" (Theft of oil and wheat from Syria. The reality of the American democracy and human rights scenario in the Middle East)," *China People's Daily – Arabic* (Chinese daily), 8 August 2022. <http://arabic.people.com.cn/n3/2022/0808/c31662-10132765.html>

In recent years, the United States has engaged in frantic piracy and looting of resources in the Middle East... The United States has not stopped looting Syrian local resources since it stationed itself by force in the name of "fighting terrorism" in 2015.

Continued: China Sharpens Tone Against U.S. Policy, Deepening Ties in Syria

Source:

... سورية والصين توقعان على مشروع لتوريد تجهيزات خاصة بالاتصالات والبرمجيات بقيمة 30 مليون دولار"

(China and Syria agree on project to supply communications and software equipment worth \$30 million...)" *al-Watan* (pro-regime Syrian daily), 21 July 2022. <https://alwatan.sy/archives/311198>

The Chinese ambassador also revealed that China's \$30 million grant for the supply of telecommunications technology equipment—which was preceded about a month ago by the grant of 100 Chinese buses—will be followed in the coming days by the arrival of a new batch of Chinese food aid, including wheat and rice... In turn, the head of the Planning and International Cooperation Authority, Fadi Salti Al-Khalil... referred to the memorandum of understanding that was signed with the Chinese side at the beginning of this year for Syria's accession to the Belt and Road Initiative...

Source:

الصين تزود النظام السوري بمعدات وبرمجيات اتصالات"

(China supplies Syrian regime with software and telecommunications equipment)," *al-Araby al-Jadeed* (Qatari aligned daily), 20 July 2022. <https://tinyurl.com/utsk4cym>

Meanwhile, economic researcher Younes al-Karim said in an interview with al-Araby al-Jadeed that the Chinese communication equipment announced today is likely to be "military, not civilian." Al-Karim said that "the agreement is not new, it was revealed a while ago, and it is related to bringing in military listening and jamming devices.

Source: "China in Syria: Aid and Trade Now, Influence and Industry Later?," *Center for Operational Analysis and Research – COAR* (Syria-focused research consultancy), 11 July 2022. <https://coar-global.org/2022/07/11/china-in-syria-aid-and-trade-now-influence-and-industry-later/>

As of February 2022, Syria has received more than 8.3 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines through the WHO-supported COVAX facility, while China has committed an estimated 2.6 million vaccine doses. As of early May 2022, SANA had published no fewer than 38 articles referencing Chinese bilateral support for COVID-related measures, noting that it "has spared no effort" to support Syria throughout the pandemic. By comparison, SANA had referenced the (largely Western) WHO-supported COVAX facility only once.

China Using Japanese Higher Education To Build Military Capability

By Cindy Hurst
OE Watch Commentary

The following article, originally published by influential Japanese weekly *Tokya Shukan Shincho*, argues that China is using Japanese cutting-edge technology to build its military capability. The author, Hirai Koji, a member of the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies Policy Advisory Board, explains that 43 higher-level universities in Japan have accepted students from seven leading Chinese universities, known as the “Seven Sons of National Defense.” These “Seven Sons” fall under the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology in China and are responsible for the research and development of weapons and equipment used by the People’s Liberation Army. According to the article, completing their advanced education in Japan, “more than a few” of these students returned to China to develop key weapons. For example, after attending one of Japan’s higher-level universities and returning to China, many researchers participated in hypersonic-related research at universities and research institutes. The article goes on to note nine experts in related fields, such as jet engines, fluid dynamics, and heat resistant materials, who also had studied in Japan and returned to develop this new weapon. The author argues that while Japan’s academia has not been cooperating in any way with Japan’s national security, “it has been eagerly cooperating with China’s military buildup.”

There are concerns that China has utilized Japan's knowledge in the development of the latest technology, which is also known as a 'game changer' that could revolutionize the face of war.

Source: Hirai Koji, “中☒「大軍☒」は日本の技術の賜物 (China’s Military Expansion Due to Gift of Japanese Technology),” *Tokyo Shukan Shincho* (considered one of Japan’s most influential weekly magazines), 21 July 2022. <https://news.yahoo.co.jp/articles/a37c3552fced0105932811c60d9e39dea70aa3fd?page=1>

In China, there are universities called the "Seven Sons of National Defense," which are responsible for the development of weapons and equipment used by the People's Liberation Army [PLA] which are: 1) Beihang University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, 2) Harbin University of Technology, 3) Beijing University of Technology, 4) Harbin Engineering University, 5) Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, 6) Nanjing University of Science and Technology, and 7) Northwestern Polytechnical University. They fall directly under the jurisdiction of the State Administration for Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense.

According to the "Survey on Inter-University Exchange Agreements With Overseas Universities and Overseas Centers of Excellence" revised in October 2021 by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 43 public and private universities in Japan have established partnerships with the Seven Sons of National Defense. Starting with the University of Tokyo, Kyoto University, Tokyo Institute of Technology, and others that represent Japanese higher education institutions, they have accepted students from the Seven Sons of National Defense affiliated with the PLA to engage in research on military and civilian technology.

Of course, more than a few of the foreign students who came to Japan have gone on to work on weapons development and performance improvement research after returning home.

On 20 February of this year [2022], Yomiuri Shimbun’s morning edition reported under the title “‘Economic Security: Invisible Threat’ (4) Japanese Technology for ‘Hypersonic Missile’” that Japanese technology may have been used in the development of a new weapon, a hypersonic missile developed by China.

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Continued: China Using Japanese Higher Education To Build Military Capability

Source Continued: Hirai Koji, “中「大軍」は日本の技術の賜物 (China's Military Expansion Due to Gift of Japanese Technology),” *Tokyo Shukan Shincho* (considered one of Japan's most influential weekly magazines), 21 July 2022. <https://news.yahoo.co.jp/articles/a37c3552fced0105932811c60d9e39dea70aa3fd?page=1>

The following is a long quotation from the article. "Hypersonic missiles fly at speeds of Mach 5 or faster and are considered difficult to intercept with the current missile defense system. There are concerns that China has utilized Japan's knowledge in the development of the latest technology, which is also known as a 'game changer' that could revolutionize the face of war.

The Public Security Intelligence Agency secretly submitted a report to the relevant cabinet ministers warning them of this situation. This was in May 2021.

The report pointed out that 'after returning to China, many researchers engaged in hypersonic-related research at universities and research institutes and pointed to nine experts in the fields, such as jet engines, fluid dynamics, and heat resistant materials.

According to an agency member, one of them became an assistant professor at Tohoku University in 1994 after working as a researcher at a research institute under the umbrella of a Chinese military corporation. He received a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (GASR) and had access to a facility affiliated with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) in Miyagi Prefecture. Around 2000, he returned to China and joined a research institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, where he was involved in the establishment of a hypersonic experimental facility in 2017, similar to that of JAXA."

If this is true, it means that Japan's own advanced technology was transferred to China through a national university and used to develop a new weapon that is said to be virtually impossible to intercept.

China Probably Expanding Its Nuclear Testing Capability

By Cindy Hurst
OE Watch Commentary

Satellite images suggest that China is expanding its nuclear test facilities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Popular Tokyo-based news website *Nikkei Asia* said the images appear to show newly installed power transmission cables and a facility that could be used to store high-explosives and extensive coverings. Also, broken rocks appear to be piled up along a nearby mountainside, evidence that China could have been excavating a new “sixth tunnel” for testing. Other evidence, according to the article, includes a notice in which the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), a paramilitary organization under the China Communist Party, invited bids for “10 radiation dose alarms,” “12 protective suits,” and “one detector of wound, site taints.” These items could be part of “a project for emer-

gency monitoring of nuclear and radiation accidents.” Also raising the author’s suspicion is that, while there are no nuclear power plants in Xinjiang, the XPCC had stated it will “make 2022 the starting year for strengthening the capacity to monitor radioactivity” (see “XPCC: The Militarization of Agriculture and Construction,” *OE Watch*, October 2015). According to the article, President Xi Jinping could be contemplating reunification with Taiwan by force if needed. However, as “Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has provided a sobering warning about the risks of military adventures,” an added nuclear capability, perhaps small nuclear weapons, could be the force needed to deter Taiwan from seeking independence and the United States from interfering.

Extensive coverings have been erected on a mountainside in this arid region, and broken rocks piled up nearby are believed to be evidence of excavation of a new “sixth tunnel” for [nuclear] testing hidden beneath.

Source: “Satellite Photos Show China’s New Nuclear Test Site in Xinjiang,” *Nikkei Asia* (Tokyo-based news website that focuses on the Asian continent), 1 August 2022. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/The-age-of-Great-China/Satellite-photos-show-China-s-new-nuclear-test-site-in-Xinjiang>

...Nikkei has viewed Satellite photographs with a number of experts that appear to confirm China is strengthening its nuclear testing capability.

Extensive coverings have been erected on a mountainside in this arid region, and broken rocks piled up nearby are believed to be evidence of excavation of new “sixth tunnel” for testing hidden beneath.

Power transmission cables and a facility that could be used for storing high explosives have recently been installed, while unpaved white roads lead from a command post in various directions.

China has 2.04 million military personnel. Although that is already the largest standing force in the world – and 1.5 times larger than that of the U.S. – it has been unable to recruit enough troops of late, according to one retired military officer. This is a combination of the old “one-China policy” and a preference among the younger generation for less physically demanding work in the private sector.

The Xi administration may be contemplating the reunification of China, and that would involve taking Taiwan by force. But Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has provided a sobering warning about the risks of military adventures, not least for the serious shortcomings in the quality of Russian military equipment. Russia supplies China with over 66% of its imported military hardware.

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Continued: China Probably Expanding Its Nuclear Testing Capability

Source Continued: “Satellite Photos Show China's New Nuclear Test Site in Xinjiang,” *Nikkei Asia* (Tokyo-based news website that focuses on the Asian continent), 1 August 2022. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/The-age-of-Great-China/Satellite-photos-show-China-s-new-nuclear-test-site-in-Xinjiang>

There is also telling evidence to be found in tenders invited from the region. In April, an official Chinese procurement website invited bids for “10 radiation dose alarms,” “12 protective suits,” and “one detector of wound site taints.” This was ostensibly part of “a project for emergency monitoring of nuclear and radiation accidents.” The invitations were issued by the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), a paramilitary organization under the CCP.

Although there are no nuclear power plants in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, the XPCC said that it will “make 2022 the starting year for strengthening the capacity to monitor radioactivity.” Procurement of related equipment has increased in the region.

Russia has threatened the use of small nuclear weapons on airports and underpopulated areas in Ukraine. The U.S. has so far had no direct involvement in the war there, and some analysts have argued that the possible use of nuclear firepower has made it even more wary of any entanglement.



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Check out back issues of **FMSO's Operational Environment Watch** dating back to 2011. They provide translated selections with background from a diverse range of foreign media that our analysts and expert contributors believe will give security professionals an added dimension to their critical thinking about the Operational Environment.

China Issues New White Paper With Special Emphasis on Taiwan

By Peter Wood
OE Watch Commentary

Recently, China issued a new white paper on Taiwan and Reunification, building on two previous white papers published in 1993 (*The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China*) and 2000 (*The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue*) and a significant speech by Xi Jinping in January 2019. A close comparison of these sources indicates some important shifts in emphasis, such as the current policy description of a post-reunification Taiwan and the urgency of achieving rejuvenation to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership.

Let there be no doubt—we will tolerate no foreign interference in Taiwan, we will thwart any attempt to divide our country, and we will combine as a mighty force for national reunification and rejuvenation. The historic goal of reuniting our motherland must be realized and will be realized.

The first two white papers went into considerable detail regarding the “One Country, Two Systems” approach to peaceful reunification. The 1993 white paper promised “a high degree of autonomy” where Taiwan would be a special administrative region with its own governmental system, a degree of independence in foreign affairs, and its own military forces. The 2000 white paper similarly promised that China would not “send troops or administrative personnel” to the island. The new paper uses less explicit language but notes that “We maintain that after peaceful reunification, Taiwan may continue its current social system and enjoy a high degree of autonomy in accordance with the law” and that Taiwan’s “social system and its way of life will be fully respected.”

Other elements of the paper have close similarities with Xi’s 2019 speech, in which he argued that reunification was



Map of Taiwan

Source: USG, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ed/Taiwan_CIA_map_updated.jpg, Attribution: Public Domain

a historical necessity, such as the statement “Our country must be reunified and will surely be reunified. This is a historical conclusion drawn from the evolution of cross-straits relations over the past seven decades; it is also critical to the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in the new era.” The new paper also echoes Xi’s commitment to “make no promise to renounce the use of force and reserve the option of taking all necessary means.” While this latest white paper and China’s five-year plans have continued to express commitment to deepening economic and social ties with Taiwan, this document appears to be an attempt to more strongly lay out a vision for a post-reunification future as much as it is a restatement of the CCP’s policy regarding Taiwan.

Continued: China Issues New White Paper With Special Emphasis on Taiwan

Source: “《台湾问题与新时代中国统一事业》白皮书(全文) (The Taiwan Question and China’s Reunification in the New Era),” *State Council Information Office*, 10 August 2022. <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/32832/Document/1728489/1728489.htm>

We Chinese will decide our own affairs. The Taiwan question is an internal affair that involves China’s core interests and the Chinese people’s national sentiments, and no external interference will be tolerated. Any attempt to use the Taiwan question as a pretext to interfere in China’s internal affairs or obstruct China’s reunification will meet with the resolute opposition of the Chinese people, including our compatriots in Taiwan. No one should underestimate our resolve, will, and ability to defend China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We will work with the greatest sincerity and exert our utmost efforts to achieve peaceful reunification. But we will not renounce the use of force, and we reserve the option of taking all necessary measures. This is to guard against external interference and all separatist activities. In no way does it target our fellow Chinese in Taiwan. Use of force would be the last resort taken under compelling circumstances. We will only be forced to take drastic measures to respond to the provocation of separatist elements or external forces should they ever cross our red lines.

We will always be ready to respond with the use of force or other necessary means to interference by external forces or radical action by separatist elements. Our ultimate goal is to ensure the prospects of China’s peaceful reunification and advance this process.

The journey ahead cannot be all smooth sailing. However, as long as we Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Straits devote our ingenuity and energy to the same goal, let there be no doubt - we will tolerate no foreign interference in Taiwan, we will thwart any attempt to divide our country, and we will combine as a mighty force for national reunification and rejuvenation. The historic goal of reuniting our motherland must be realized and will be realized.

China Carries Out Ballistic Missile Defense Test Amid Related Developments

By Peter Wood
OE Watch Commentary

In August, China fired ballistic missiles over Taiwan and into Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) during mass military exercises, demonstrating that the mobility and survivability of its conventional and nuclear forces are improving. In the past seven years, China's strategic missile forces have been reorganized, expanded, and equipped with several new types of long-range precision cruise and road-mobile ballistic missiles (see "China's New Road-Mobile ICBM DF-41 Official Unveiled," *OE Watch*, November 2019). China continues to diversify its missile defense system platforms and the quality of training for its nuclear forces (see "China's Rocket Forces Conduct Readiness Training," *OE Watch*, April

2019). A parallel development involves the development of anti-ballistic missile systems. According to the excerpted article below, China successfully conducted another test of a ground-based mid-course ballistic missile defense system in June. China is also developing an airborne leg of its nuclear forces to complement its existing nuclear ballistic missile submarines, road-mobile, and rapidly expanding silo-based missile force. Along with its extensive use of decoys, hardened shelters, and other passive defenses, the addition of tested ballistic missile defense systems can only further improve the overall capability and survivability of China's growing nuclear force.

It is worth noting that this is not the first time the Chinese military has announced a successful land-based midcourse anti-missile test.

Source: “中国成功实施陆基中段反导拦截技术试验 (China Successfully Carries out Test of Ground-based Mid-course Intercepting Ballistic Missile Defense System),” The Observer Online (Independent PRC media), 20 June 2022. https://www.guancha.cn/military-affairs/2022_06_20_645392.shtml

According to the Chinese Ministry of Defense's public Wechat account, on 19 June 2022, China successfully carried out a land-based mid-course anti-missile interception technology test within its territory. This test is defensive in nature and not directed against any country.

China is one of the few countries that has mastered land-based mid-course missile interception technology. Only China, the United States, and Japan have conducted similar tests. It is worth noting that this is not the first time the Chinese military has announced a successful land-based midcourse anti-missile test.

According to public information, the PRC Ministry of National Defense previously announced that it had “successfully carried out a test of ground-based anti-ballistic missile technology” or “achieved the expected purpose” five times...

In an interview with CCTV News, military expert Shao Yongling [邵永灵] previously commented on CCTV News that land-based mid-course anti-missile technology is a strategic investment in scientific and technical reserves [技蓄蓄蓄] (Note: this term refers to small-scale testing which lays the foundation for more significant capabilities in the future). She said that all countries currently emphasize both offense and defense. China has stated that it will not be the first to use nuclear weapons in a conflict and has limited the scale of development of its nuclear forces. Therefore, it is necessary to develop appropriate defensive capabilities to ensure the survivability of its nuclear force.

Algerian Military Deepening Ties to Russia

By Lucas Winter
OE Watch Commentary

Russian-Algerian security cooperation has not been dampened by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Last March, a high-level Russian military delegation visited Algiers, where the two sides agreed to hold joint anti-terror military exercises in southern Algeria this November (see “Algeria Caught Between Neutrality and Strategic Relations with Russia,” *OE Watch*, Issue 5, 2022). Following a visit to Algiers in May, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov spoke of “a new strategic cooperation document” that was being drafted to replace the 2001 agreement that currently guides Russian-Algerian relations. In early June, the new director of Algeria's Advanced Warfighting School led a group of officers on a tour of General Staff colleges in Russia (see “Algeria Inches Closer to Russia Amid Frosty Relations with Morocco and Spain,” *OE Watch*, Issue 7, 2022). Also in May, as reported in the influential Saudi daily *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, a high-level Russian delegation led by Viktor Bondarev, the former head of the Russian Aerospace Forces who is now Chair of the Russian Federation Council's Committee on Defense and Security, visited Algiers to discuss military cooperation and developments in Ukraine. In late June, the general director of the Russian defense export entity

Rosoboronexport visited Algeria, where he met with top military leadership.

Despite other Algerian sentiment, the Algerian military seems likely to deepen military ties with Russia. Over the past decade, Algeria has invested a substantial percentage of its GDP in new weapons purchases, particularly from Russia. In recent months, high oil prices and new demand for natural gas in Europe have provided Algeria with a revenue windfall, parts of which will likely be channeled toward importing advanced weaponry. Morocco, in turn, is set to boost its own military expenditures and capabilities through a blossoming relationship with Israel. The Algerian-Moroccan arms race of the past decade is poised to intensify in the coming years, in the shadow of growing geopolitical tensions between Russia and the West.

Israel Defense Forces' Chief of Staff Kochavi's visit to Morocco resulted in a series of technical and strategic agreements between the two armies and the two governments...

Source:

مسؤول روسي رفيع يبحث بالجزائر التعاون العسكري

(High-level Russian official discusses military cooperation in Algeria)," *al-Sharq al-Awsat* (influential Saudi daily), 17 May 2022. <https://tinyurl.com/2s3jt5ms>

Yesterday, a senior official in the Russian Federation Council discussed with local Algerian officials the ongoing war in Ukraine, the development of military cooperation between the two countries, and the previously announced joint military exercises scheduled in the Algerian desert in November.

Source: "Lieutenant General Saïd Chanegriha, Chief of Staff of the People's National Army receives in audience the General Director of the Russian company Rosoboronexport, Mr. Alexandre Mikhaev," *People's Democratic Republic of Algeria Ministry of National Defence* (Algerian Defense Ministry), 28 June 2022. https://www.mdn.dz/site_principal/sommaire/actualites/an/2022/juin/cem28062022an.php

The Lieutenant General Saïd Chanegriha, Chief of Staff of the People's National Army, received in audience, this Tuesday 28th June 2022, at the headquarters of the People's National Army, the General Director of the Russian company Rosoboronexport, Mr. Alexandre Mikhaev.

Commercial UAVs Creating “Revolution in Artillery”

By Charles Bartles
OE Watch Commentary

The accompanying excerpted article from Russian government news agency RIA Novosti features an interview with General of the Army (ret.) Yuri Baluyevsky, the former chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces (2004-2008). General Baluyevsky states that commercial unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) have created a “revolution in artillery.” He particularly notes the enhancement of reconnaissance, target designation, and adjustment of artillery fire for tube and rocket artillery systems, saying that UAVs are “almost completely solving” these “age-old problems.” In today’s restricted environment of open-source information in Russia, such comments from a former senior officer serves as a signpost to future Russian military considerations.



General of the Army (ret.) Yuri Baluyevsky, former chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces (2004-2008)

Source: Russian Ministry of Defense, <http://encyclopedia.mil.ru/encyclopedia/heroes/USSR/more.htm?id=11863357@morfHeroes>, Attribution: CC BY 4.0

Simple Chinese-made commercial quadcopters have made a real revolution in the use of traditional cannon and rocket artillery, almost completely solving the age-old problem of reconnaissance, target designation and adjustment of artillery fire."

—Former General of the Army Yuri Baluyevsky

Source: “Генерал Балуйевский рассказал о революции в артиллерии (General Baluyevsky discussed a revolution in artillery),” *RIA Novosti* (Russian government news agency), 11 August 2022. <https://ria.ru/20220811/kvadrokoptery-1808761668.html>

Simple Chinese commercial quadcopters have made a real revolution in the use of traditional cannon and rocket artillery, said the former chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces (2004-2008), General of the Army Yuri Baluyevsky.

Earlier in August, the Almaz-Antey East Kazakhstan concern announced the creation of a new multifunctional drone. According to experts interviewed by RIA Novosti, it can be used for reconnaissance and target designation during a special military operation in Ukraine.

"Simple Chinese-made commercial quadcopters have made a real revolution in the use of traditional cannon and rocket artillery, almost completely solving the age-old problem of reconnaissance, target designation and adjustment of artillery fire." Baluyevsky says in the author's preface to the CAST [Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies] book "Alien Wars—a New Paradigm" published on Wednesday.

The general noted that when adjusted with the help of a drone constantly hovering over the target area, it is possible to use artillery with conventional projectiles with accuracy and efficiency comparable to firing precision-guided munitions. In particular, the number of shells and guns required for destruction has sharply decreased.

"This, ironically, contributed to the return (most likely, still temporary) of traditional artillery to the pedestal of the god of war in a meaning comparable to its value during the First World War..."

"There is no doubt that the integration of UAVs with high-precision weapons has not yet exhausted the possibilities," the former chief of the General Staff noted...

High-Profile Female Colonel From Russian Proxy Force Killed in Ukraine

By Charles Bartles
OE Watch Commentary

On July 29, 2022, Colonel Olga Kachura, the commander of the multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) battalion of the 31st Motorized Rifle Brigade, 1st Army Corps, of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) was killed by Ukrainian artillery. Colonel Kachura had gained some notoriety as a female commander of an MLRS battalion and was posthumously awarded the title of 'Hero of Russia' by Russian President Putin. The accompanying excerpted article from official Russian government newspaper *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* features an interview of Colonel Kachura shortly before her death. The interview describes Colonel Kachura's beliefs about why the war was justified, but also about the perceived nature of the conflict. Colonel

Kachura believed that the Ukrainian forces she fought were well-trained and well-armed by NATO and were also commanded by NATO. Therefore, she believed that she was not really fighting Ukraine, but NATO by proxy. While other combatants of the DNR and the Luhansk People's Republic may have different beliefs, Colonel Kachura's perspectives certainly support the narrative of the Russian government.

What makes you think that I am at war with Ukraine? I am at war with NATO.

—Colonel Olga Kachura, commander of the MLRS battalion of the 31st Motorized Rifle Brigade, 1st Army Corps, of the Donetsk People's Republic.

Source: Alexander Stepanov, “Последнее интервью Ольги Качуры: Фашистов будем бить, никого не спрашивая (Olga Kachura's last interview: We will beat the Nazis without asking anyone),” *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* (official Russian Government daily newspaper), 3 August 2022. <https://rg.ru/2022/08/03/poslednee-interviu-olgi-kachury-fashistov-budem-bit-nikogo-ne-sprashivaia.html>

In Gorlovka, Kachura Olga Sergeevna, whom the entire Donetsk People's Republic knew under the call sign Korsa, died. A fragile woman with iron nerves and a steel character was the commander of the multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) battalion of the 31st Motorized Rifle Brigade, 1st Army Corps, of the Donetsk People's Republic. Quite recently, Rossiyskaya Gazeta correspondents came to Olga Sergeevna at one of the positions near Yasinovataya in order to interview and film the work of the battalion. She immediately said that she would not let us go to Gorlovka, under which her Grads were then working, because it was very dangerous there. We interviewed, agreed to call later to finish shooting. Did not work out. The life of a remarkable woman and a talented officer was cut short.

Olga, are you still the People's Militia or the 1st Army Corps of the DPR?

Officially, of course, we are the People's Militia, but calling us militia is somehow ridiculous. It's more of a political play on words. The name of the 1st Army Corps of the DNR is closer to me.

I know that your battalion is thrown into the most dangerous areas. What are you fighting for?

By conducting a military special operation against Ukraine, we continue the work of our grandfathers - we destroy fascism. We have the right to do this not only morally, but also legally. This right is enshrined in the UN Charter. Thus, articles 106 and 107 of this organization explicitly state that the victors in the Second World War of the USSR, whose successor is Russia, the United States, Great Britain and China, have been given the right to apply all measures against the countries that fought against them to suppress actions aimed at revising the results of the Second World War. This includes the use of military force against these countries. To do this, it is enough to notify the other three countries, but not to obtain their consent.

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Continued: High-Profile Female Colonel From Russian Proxy Force Killed in Ukraine

Source: Alexander Stepanov, “Последнее интервью Ольги Качуры: Фашистов будем бить, никого не спрашивая (Olga Kachura's last interview: We will beat the Nazis without asking anyone),” *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* (official Russian Government daily newspaper), 3 August 2022. <https://rg.ru/2022/08/03/poslednee-interviu-ol-gi-kachury-fashistov-budem-bit-nikogo-ne-sprashivaia.html>

Therefore, sorry. We will beat the Nazis without asking anyone... Artillery is my creed. This is my life. It's rocket artillery. They even gave me earrings in the form of guns. I haven't taken them off since 2015.

What was the beginning of the special military operation for you?

This is what was expected for more than one day. We've been waiting for this all eight years. Prepared for this, studied. Maybe even waiting too long.

You are opposed mainly by those Ukrainian nationalists who were born in the south of Ukraine, there are few Western Ukrainians among them. How can this be explained?

Wait. And where did you get the idea that I am at war with Ukraine? I am at war with NATO. The Ukrainian units include Ukrainians, Moldovans, Russians, Belarusians, Georgians. Look at those defendants who were sentenced by the court of the DNR. There are citizens of those countries who do not understand what is forgotten here. There is no confrontation purely with Ukraine. We are at war with NATO. The territory of Ukraine is a springboard for hostilities.

China's cyber policy appears to have three vectors —peace activist, espionage activist, and attack planner— that dominate China's cyber policy. Some are always hidden from view while others are demonstrated daily. *Three Faces of the Cyber Dragon* is divided into sections that coincide with these vectors.



Armenia Questions Russian Peacekeeping After Nagorno-Karabakh Incident

By Matthew Stein
OE Watch Commentary

There have been several clashes between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in Nagorno-Karabakh since the ceasefire agreement of November 2020 took effect. While the Russian Ministry of Defense investigated violations of the ceasefire, Russian peacekeeping forces did not take action in response to any of them. On 3 August, Azerbaijani forces not only carried out strikes on Armenian forces in Nagorno-Karabakh but seized territory near the Lachin corridor, which serves as the only route connecting Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia. As the accompanying excerpted article from the independent news website *Kavkazskiy Uzel* reports, this incident sparked criticism from Armenia regarding the Russian peacekeeping mission in the region.

The article reports on the aftermath of the incident and includes comments from Putin's Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov, who stated that Russia "is acting in accordance with the trilateral ceasefire agreement and expects compliance from Armenia and Azerbaijan." Peskov's comments came as a response to Armenian President Nikol Pashinyan's pro-

posal to discuss the function of the Russian peacekeeping force. The article mentions a few details of the incident, including that the "Russian Ministry of Defense blamed Azerbaijan for violating the ceasefire." In addition, the article notes that "Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev accused the Russian Defense Ministry of not fulfilling a promise to ensure the withdrawal of Armenian troops from Karabakh" as part of the ceasefire. The article includes President Pashinyan's criticism of the Russian peacekeepers, including that Armenia expects "that any attempt to cross the line of contact will be prevented by the peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation." While the aftermath of this incident continues to unfold, Azerbaijan's seizure of territory marks a significant difference from previous clashes in Nagorno-Karabakh since the 2020 ceasefire agreement. As Russia continues to carry out its war in Ukraine, its response to this incident could be an important measurement for how the Russian peacekeeping force responds to any further incidents.

The Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan announced the operation "Retribution" in Nagorno-Karabakh in response to the killing of a service member.



2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict map

Source: File: Nagorno-Karabakh war map (2020).svg - Wikimedia Commons Attribution: CCA 4.0

Continued: Armenia Questions Russian Peacekeeping After Nagorno-Karabakh Incident

Source: “Кремль отреагировал на слова Пашиняна о функциях миротворцев (The Kremlin reacted to Pashinyan’s words on the function of the peacekeepers),” *Kavkazskiy Uzel* (independent news website reporting on the Caucasus), 5 August 2022. <https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/379832/>

The Russian side is acting in accordance with the trilateral ceasefire agreement and expects compliance from Armenia and Azerbaijan, Putin’s Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov said in response to Nikol Pashinyan’s proposal to discuss the function of the Russian peacekeepers...

...on 3 August, the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan announced the operation “Retribution” in Nagorno-Karabakh in response to the killing of a service member. The ministry also reported that it took strategic heights. Baku demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Armenian military from Nagorno-Karabakh and threatened “even more destructive countermeasures” in the event of provocations on the line of contact. Authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh reported two were killed and 19 were wounded as a result of the incident. The Russian Ministry of Defense blamed Azerbaijan for violating the ceasefire.

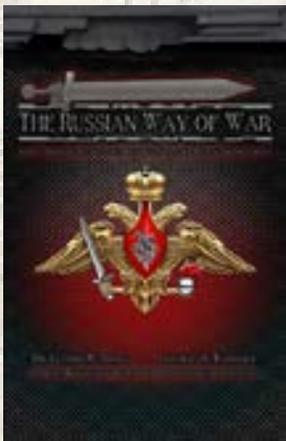
... Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev accused the Russian Defense Ministry of not fulfilling a promise to ensure the withdrawal of Armenian troops from Karabakh in accordance with the agreements of 10 November 2020. On 19 July, the Secretary of the Armenian Security Council Armen Grigoryan said that Armenian troops will be withdrawn from Nagorno-Karabakh by September...

...Nikol Pashinyan stated the need to specify the functions of Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh. “A number of events taking place today and earlier have revealed problems of a systemic nature.... Continued violations of the ceasefire regime along the length of the line of contact... in the presence of peacekeepers are unacceptable,” he said.

Pashinyan stressed that the line of contact “is called the zone of responsibility of the Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh.” “And we expect that any attempt to cross the line of contact will be prevented by the peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation...” Novosti-Armenia quoted him as saying...

THE RUSSIAN WAY OF WAR

by Lester W. Grau and Charles K. Bartles



At any given time, assessments of the Russian Armed Forces vary between the idea of an incompetent and corrupt conscript army manning decrepit Soviet equipment and relying solely on brute force, to the idea of an elite military filled with Special Operations Forces (SOF) who were the “polite people” or “little green men” seen on the streets in Crimea. This book will attempt to split the difference between these radically different ideas by shedding some light on what the Russian Ground Forces consist of, how they are structured, how they fight, and how they are modernizing.

Russia Rebuilding Military Airfields in the Arctic

By Les Grau
OE Watch Commentary

According to the independent Norwegian news service The Barents Observer, Russia is reconstructing airfields in the Arctic despite other defense spending needs, suggesting the Kremlin considers the Severomorsk airfields a high priority. Severomorsk-2 is adjacent to the main airfield, Severomorsk-1, and is close to the city of Murmansk. This is an indication that it is not an emergency field but

is within the existing air defense umbrella of the Northern Fleet. Renovation work on Severomorsk-1 was completed in 2018, allowing it to accept all aircraft, including the heaviest transports. *Emperor Nicholas II International Airport* supports commercial aviation in the Murmansk region.

As part of a major upgrade of Northern Fleet airstrips in the European Arctic, the Severomorsk-2 that was shut down in 1998 will now be reconstructed and reopened.

Source: Thomas Nielsen, “Abandoned military airport on Kola will be reconstructed”, *The Barents Observer* (independent Norwegian internet news service in Russian and English currently blocked in Russia), 13 June 2022. <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2022/06/abandoned-military-airport-kola-will-reconstructed>

As part of a major upgrade of Northern Fleet airstrips in the European Arctic, the Severomorsk-2 airfield that was shut down in 1998 will now be reconstructed and reopened. Comprehensive investments are needed. After being abandoned 25 years ago, most of the airfield facilities and gear on taxiways were looted. The 1,800-meter runway is still intact, but in bad shape with severe cracks even visible from satellite images like Google Earth.

In recent years, the runway has been used for smaller UAVs operated by Russia’s Northern Fleet whose Headquarters is located in the city of Severomorsk, seven kilometers to the northeast of the former air base. Severomorsk-2 is 11 kilometers northeast of Murmansk.

Northern Fleet Commander, Admiral Aleksandr Moiseev, included Severomorsk-2 among Russian Arctic military airfields to be reconstructed or newly-built by 2030. “The development and construction of airstrip network in the Arctic area continues. The development plan for the network until 2030 includes construction of two [airstrips] in Nagurskoye and Temp, as well as reconstruction of seven airstrips in Severomorsk-1, Severomorsk-2, Severomorsk-3, Rogachevo, Talagi and Kipleovo,” The former seaplane facility at Safonovo, south of Severomorsk in the Kola Bay, will also be re-established.

No details were provided as to which aircraft would be based at the reconstructed Severomorsk-2. Upgrade of the airstrip could be a preparation for more advanced UAVs that Russia has said will play an important role in future military plans. Today, the Northern Fleet has two major air bases on the Kola Peninsula, Severomorsk-1 and Severomorsk-3.

Located on the outskirts of Severomorsk city, Severomorsk-1 air base has a 3,500-meter-long runway and is home to maritime surveillance aircraft (Il-38), and anti-submarine helicopters (Ka-27).

Severomorsk-3 is the air base for the Northern Fleet’s fighter jets and is located 28 kilometers east of Murmansk.

There are two other military air bases on the Kola Peninsula as well, the Olenya near Olenogorsk which is home to long-range Tu-22 bombers and the Monchegorsk with fighter jets.

Iran Reportedly Using New Carrier, Submarines To Expand Reach of Drones

By Michael Rubin
OE Watch Commentary

Iran was among the first countries in the Middle East to recognize the military utility of drones. Whereas Turkey developed its indigenous drones only a decade ago, Iran began building drones in 1985 to fly over and surveil Iraqi trenches during the Iran-Iraq War. Over subsequent decades, the stable of Iranian drones proliferated with different models available to the regular Iranian military, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and domestic law enforcement agencies. While drones allowed Iran to project force within range of its land borders, unless the Iranian military was to outsource drone operation to its proxies—as it has in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen—it was unable to utilize them farther afield. The problem with outsourcing drone operations, however, is that it gives control to militias that are not always in sync with Iranian aims and objectives.

The excerpted article from the *Iranian Students News Agency*, a semi-official agency supposedly run by students, but which projects the government’s official line, discusses

July exercises in the northern Indian Ocean in which the Iranian Navy unveiled a “drone carrier” capable of launching numerous drones with surveillance, general attack, and kamikaze capabilities. It is unclear from the reporting if the drone carrier will be able to recover the drones it launches. Such a capability enables the Iranian military to strike with drones over the open ocean where, previously, Iran’s capabilities were limited. A greater concern for those seeking to counter Iranian aggression would be the article’s claim that Iran also launched drones from both its domestic-made submarine and its Russian-built Kilo-class import. While the range and underwater endurance of Iranian submarines are limited compared to U.S. nuclear submarines or the German-built diesel submarines, which Israel uses, submarine-launched Iranian drones would enhance Iran’s special operations by enabling the Iranian military to evade radar when conducting offensive drone operations throughout the region.

Source: “Ravanmaye az Avalin Navdasteh Pehpadbar Niruye Daryayi (Unveiling of the Navy’s First Drone Carrier),” *Iranian Student News Agency* (semi-official student led news agency projecting the government line), 15 July 2022. <https://www.isna.ir/news/1401042416384>

The army's first strategic navy drone fleet was unveiled with the presence of Army Commander-in-Chief Amir Maj. Gen. Mousavi in the Navy's Southern Fleet. According to the Iranian Student News Agency quoting the public affairs department of the Army, the regular Navy unveiled its first drone carrier fleet in the presence of both the commander-in-chief of the Army and the Navy. It consisted both of surface and sub-surface units carrying all types of combat, surveillance, and suicide drones in the southern fleet of the regular Iranian Navy.

*In the unveiling ceremony for this flotilla, a variety of advanced and cutting-edge drones produced by the Army and the Ministry of Defense including the **Pelican**, Homa, Arash, Chamrosh, Zhubin, Ababil-4, and Bavar-5 drones flew over the waters of the Indian Ocean.*

*According to this report, in addition to the flight of vertical and sea-based UAVs from the deck of surface units, for the first time, combat UAVs were flown from the Iran-made **Fateh submarine** and Kilo-class **Tareq submarine**....*

Major General Seyyed Abdul Rahim Mousavi, commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army, expressed his satisfaction with the successful deployment of combat drones... He added, "As seen, surveillance drones have actually increased the intelligence capability of our vessels by hundreds of kilometers beyond the country's borders, and combat and kamikaze drones are considered the Islamic Republic of Iran's long hand in international waters and the open sea. Both deter threats and, if necessary and the enemy makes a mistake, they will ensure the enemy will face a regrettable response.

Iran Unveils Stealth Speedboats

By Michael Rubin
OE Watch Commentary

The excerpted article from *Serat News*, an outlet associated with the state-run, hardline *Kayhan* newspaper, reports on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Navy (IRGC-N)'s unveiling of new, supposed stealth speedboats at the Malik Ashtar festival held just outside Iran's main Persian Gulf port Bandar Abbas. The IRGC often names exhibitions, exercises, units, and festivals after either religious figures or religious artifacts as part of an effort to imbue the Guards with a religious patina.

That the IRGC-N would mass produce speedboats is consistent with long-held tactics and strategy. The chief lesson the IRGC learned in the wake of their clash with the U.S. Navy during Operation Praying Mantis in 1988 is that they could not confront the U.S. Navy directly given the superiority of American ships. They then turned to small speedboats to harass slower, larger shipping. Speedboats are cheaper and quicker to manufacture than large ships. Should the IRGC-N load these speedboats with explosives and conduct suicide strikes against larger ships, they hope they can do enough damage both to cripple a ship and to cause enough casualties to get the American domestic audience to question the U.S. Navy's presence in the region. The drawback of the IRGC-N speedboats is their range. They might be able to operate throughout the relatively narrow and shallow Persian Gulf, but they are of little value in the northern Indian Ocean or Arabian Sea. This, alongside the IRGC's financial interest in the security of Iran's offshore gas and oil infrastructure, explains why the IRGC-N claims the entirety of the Persian Gulf as its area of operation while the regular Iranian Navy operates outside the Gulf. In practice, this makes the Persian Gulf more harrowing for international shipping. Commercial shipping, Arab militaries, and the U.S. Navy report more professional communications and de-confliction with the regular Iranian Navy than with the IRGC-N.



Source: "Qayeqha-ye Tondaru Sepah Radar Gariz Shod (IRGC Stealth Speedboats Evaded Radar)," *Serat News* (media outlet associated with the state-run hardline *Kayhan* newspaper), 25 July 2022. <https://www.seratnews.com/fa/news/593277>

Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Navy [IRGC-N], said on the sidelines of the Malik Ashtar Festival that based on the orders of the Supreme Leader...we have been witnessing the festival for 12 years. He stated that additions have been made to this [IRGC-N] force: Over the past three years, we have had eight additions. Generally, these were of domestic equipment provided to our warriors and by God's grace, we will witness such happy events again in the future.

Tangsiri remarked that it was one of the honors of the Navy and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to be able to use domestic knowledge and products developed by Iranian scientists. He continued: "We have everything from tanks to amphibious tanks to fixed-wing aircraft and drones...." Tangsiri stated, "We in the Navy are proud that our equipment is made by knowledge-based companies. Some of the drones and quadcopters that we use are actually from our knowledge-based companies, and we have put the order of the Supreme Leader, who said to use our knowledge-based companies, into practice. And we are proud that the Navy has done this for years.

The commander of the IRGC-N also spoke about the new radar-evading speedboats: We have made the hulls of our boats radar evasive and we are trying to use domestically made hulls. Emphasizing that the extent and quality of our presence in the region has caused the enemy to flee from the Persian Gulf, he said, "We have always told the countries of the region that we can establish security ourselves and, by the grace of God, with the departure of the Americans, more security has been established in this sensitive and strategic region."

The IRGC displays speedboats it alleges have stealth capability

Source: Tasnim News <https://newsmedia.tasnimnews.com/Tasnim/Uploaded/Image/1400/09/20/14000920165842669242530410.jpeg> Attribution: CC SA 4.0

Iran's Flawed Statistics and Growing Drug Addiction

By Michael Rubin
OE Watch Commentary

Iran has dealt with a long history of drug addiction. For centuries, Iranians openly cultivated opium and used it both medicinally and recreationally. In the first decade of the 20th century, Iran participated in a number of international opium conferences to try to reduce and regulate the opium trade. Because addiction was so great, however, it sought to slowly devolve access rather than end it precipitously. In the years immediately prior to the revolution, clerics pointed to the prevalence of opium addiction to societal corruption under the shah and promised a new, cleaner order.

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the clerical leadership took Draconian measures to end drug addiction. Imprisonment and public execution of addicts and traffickers became commonplace. It did not work. Opium cultivation exploded in Afghanistan against the backdrop of the Soviet invasion, civil war, and state failure. Iran became both a transit and consumer country as Afghan drug smugglers struck deals with corrupt Iranian clerics and security officials. Ultimately, the Ministry of Health formed a counternarcotics headquarters and the high-level Expediency Council established the Independent Committee against Drugs and Narcotics to combat addiction.

In the excerpted interview from prominent reformist newspaper *Aftab-e Yazd*, Ali Hashemi, the former chairman of the Independent Committee, discusses the latest statistics on addiction and abuse. His assessment is that the Islamic Republic's ninth government, which correlates to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's second term, cor-



Iranian police display Afghan opium seized inside Iran
Source: Islamic Republic News Agency (Government), <https://img9.irna.ir/d/r2/2019/06/25/4/156425841.jpg> Attribution: Public Domain

rupted statistics. In the article, Hashemi shows that, contrary to the Ahmadinejad-era claims, the rate of addiction has increased steadily. Unstated but underlying his interview is technocratic disdain for the denial of reality inside the Islamic Republic under hardline administrations. While he references the lack of current statistics, he omits mention that the current Iranian administration of Ebrahim Raisi is rooted, like Ahmadinejad's, more in the camp of hardliners. Regardless, Iranian government efforts to stamp out addiction have clearly failed. Hashemi expresses special concern that the recent increase in drug addiction is among the young. This has profound implications both for society and the military. It both suggests that many young Iranians have given up hope for their future, suggests problems with both crime and health loom, and can affect military readiness (see "Iran's Revolutionary Guards To Expand Drug Treatment Center," *OE Watch*, Issue 8, 2022).

This means a human capital disaster in the country.

Source: "Faz-e Jadid Markaz-e Daman-e Shahid Ziadian bezudi Ahdas Mishavad (The Old Wound of Addiction in Iran and the 800 Million Rial Cost Per Addict Each Year)," *Aftab-e Yazd* (prominent reformist newspaper published in Yasd), 31 July 2022. <https://aftabyazdonline.ir/4913-دات-عم-ره-ین-وی-لی-م-۸۰۰-ت-راس-خ-و-ن-اری-ارد-دای-ت-ع-ا-هن-ک-م-خ-ز-4913.html>

[Former chairman of the Expediency Council's Independent Committee against Drugs and Narcotics] Ali Hashemi, while examining the status of addiction in the country and Iran's performance in the field of countering narcotics and reducing the rate of addiction, says, "In the strategic study of addiction status in the country... there are two basic indicators based on the prevalence rate of addiction and the incidence rate of addiction, according to which we can comment on the performance of the country, the current situation and future approaches in the

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TERRORISM AND TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

Mexican Cartels Display Their Post-Pandemic Power With Orchestrated Violence

By Ryan Berg
OE Watch Commentary

Mexico's cartel violence flared once again in August. In just one week, more than 250 people died in cartel violence. The cartels burned cars, established roadblocks, and enforced curfews in typically bustling urban centers. Allegedly, Sinaloa Cartel leaders want to display their power and avenge the arrest of kingpin Rafael Caro Quintero, according to French international news service *Agence France-Presse*. Caro Quintero, a wanted fugitive known for the torture and killing of Drug Enforcement Agency agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, was captured in an operation by the Mexican Navy with the assistance of intelligence provided by the United States. Not to be outdone, the Jalisco New Generation Cartel also contributed to the shutdown of major urban areas, such as Tijuana and Guanajuato, according to British government-run Spanish-language *BBC News Mundo*. The Jalisco New Generation Cartel pur-

portedly wants to push back against the attempted arrest of a cartel leader. This orchestrated cartel violence in Mexico reveals that Mexican drug cartels vastly expanded their territory during the COVID-19 pandemic and instill fear to control and govern that territory. Additionally, the latest round of violence shows Mexico's cartels have become so powerful that they pose a major threat to the Mexican state, operating more on the level of criminal insurgencies than transnational organized crime outfits.

For the first time, the National Liberation Army has a leftist government as its counterpart. The last active guerrilla in Colombia will return to a peace negotiation, but in a completely different scenario.

Source: "Ola de violencia de los carteles lleva al gobierno mexicano a desplegar el ejército en varias ciudades (Wave of cartel violence leads the Mexican government to deploy the army in several cities)," *BBC News Mundo* (Spanish-language version of the popular state-owned media company), 14 August 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-62538468>

Thousands of federal soldiers were deployed in several Mexican border cities after a week of street violence generated by drug cartels...President Andrés Manuel López Obrador blamed the powerful Jalisco New Generation Cartel for the chaos...Earlier this week, drug cartel gunmen burned down vehicles and businesses in the western states of Jalisco and Guanajuato, after authorities tried to arrest a Jalisco cartel leader. A gang riot at a prison in the border city of Ciudad Juárez also quickly spread to the streets, killing 11 people.

Source: "Ola de violencia en México: autoridades apuntan a cárteles como responsables (Wave of violence in Mexico: authorities point to cartels as responsible)," *Agence France-Presse* (private French company with government access and long-time regional reporting), 14 August 2022. <https://www.france24.com/es/am%C3%A9rica-latina/20220814-mexico-juarez-violencia-carteles-crisis>

The Government of Baja California attributed the events that occurred...to the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG). The wave of violence was caused by more than twenty criminal acts in five of the seven municipalities of the state...The Secretary of National Defense said that it happened due to the arrest of a criminal entity in another part of the country...Cargo trucks, passenger buses, private vehicles, among others, were burned in five municipalities. The violence caused the closure of markets and shops, mainly in the tourist area, in addition to the suspension of public transport, which generated problems for the mobility of passers-by.

TERRORISM AND TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

Colombia's Leftist President Seeks To Resume Negotiations With National Liberation Army

By Ryan Berg
OE Watch Commentary

Gustavo Petro, Colombia's recently inaugurated president, represents a radical departure from the country's traditional political establishment. Petro campaigned on a restart to negotiations with the National Liberation Army (ELN), the last active guerrilla group in Colombia. As Spanish daily *El País* reports, Petro began the long process of negotiating with the ELN just days after his inauguration. The article states that this is the first contact between the Colombian government and the ELN in years, since former president Iván Duque suspended negotiations following an ELN attack on a police academy that killed 20 cadets. According to the article, Cuba will once again play host to negotiations between Colombia and its guerrilla groups, reprising a role it played in previous negotiations with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). According to leading Colombian weekly *Semana*, Petro intends to pursue "total peace," by which he means no confrontations with either leftwing guerrilla groups or drug trafficking organizations. Furthermore, Petro says that he intends to finish implementing the 2016 peace agreement with the FARC. Negotiations with the ELN could have significant impact in the Western Hemisphere. Once again, negotiations would serve as a diplomatic boost for Cuba, even as they place a spotlight on Havana's ongoing support for



Members of Colombia's ELN stand at attention.

Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/brasildefato/45464974124>, Attribution: CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

violent left-wing guerrilla groups. In the past, the ELN has wielded violence as a form of negotiating with the government, a tactic it could revive against the Petro administration. Lastly, the ELN has been growing at a rapid pace, partly thanks to the safehaven in neighboring Venezuela, and any attempt to broker peace could fracture the organization between those in favor of a negotiating process and those against it.

For the first time, the National Liberation Army has a leftist government as its counterpart. The last active guerrilla in Colombia will return to a peace negotiation, but in a completely different scenario.

Source: "La apuesta de Gustavo Petro para la paz con el ELN: un gobierno de izquierda en el poder y Cuba como sede (Gustavo Petro's bet on peace with the ELN: a leftist government in power and Cuba as its headquarters)," *El País* (Spanish daily with excellent coverage in Latin America), 13 August 2022. <https://elpais.com/america-colombia/2022-08-13/la-apuesta-de-gustavo-petro-para-la-paz-con-el-eln-un-gobierno-de-izquierda-en-el-poder-y-cuba-como-sede.html>

For the first time, the National Liberation Army has a leftist government as its counterpart. The last active guerrilla in Colombia will return to a peace negotiation, but in a completely different scenario...Before setting the table, Colombia must revoke the arrest warrants against the guerrilla leaders who are in Cuba so that they can leave there and enter a period of consultation with the leadership that is in Colombian territory. It must also name the new delegation and build and agree on a mechanism that allows for a bilateral ceasefire.

TERRORISM AND TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

Continued: Colombia's Leftist President Seeks To Resume Negotiations With National Liberation Army

Source: “Este es el plan de Gustavo Petro para lograr una ‘paz total:’ así van los acercamientos con el ELN y el Clan del Golfo (This is Gustavo Petro’s plan to achieve ‘total peace:’ this is how the rapprochements with the ELN and the Clan del Golfo will go),” *Semana* (a leading Colombian weekly), 30 July 2022. <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/este-es-el-plan-de-gustavo-petro-para-lograr-una-paz-total-asi-van-los-acercamientos-con-el-eln-y-el-clan-del-golfo/202247/>

In these dialogues, protocols for negotiation were discussed, a ceasefire that the ELN would put in place, and a six-point discussion agenda: participation of society in the construction of peace; democracy for peace; transformation for peace and victims; end of the armed conflict; and, implementation. In any case, it will be difficult to talk immediately about a possible bilateral ceasefire. A source from the new government...said that a ceasefire cannot be demanded of the ELN when its main enemy are the dissidents of the FARC and the Clan del Golfo, with whom it is waging a war to the death over drug trafficking routes and territorial control.



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[HTTPS://ODIN.TRADOC.ARMY.MIL/WEG](https://odin.tradoc.army.mil/weg)

TERRORISM AND TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

Global Reactions Vary After Death of Al-Qaeda Leader Al-Zawahiri

By Jason Warner
OE Watch Commentary

The announcement on 1 August 2022 that the United States had killed the longtime leader of Al-Qaeda, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, as he stood on a balcony in Kabul, Afghanistan, was celebrated around the world. While U.S.-based scholars and analysts have debated what the killing of Zawahiri means for Al-Qaeda, the international Salafi-jihadist movement, and the U.S. role in the world, so too have commentators from around the world offered their own, local perspectives on the implications of Zawahiri's death. These range from assessing the ongoing strength of Al-Qaeda to lamenting the empowerment of brutal indigenous leaders and governments.

Writers hailing from more powerful global states have shown broadly similar concerns as U.S. commentators. In France, noted analyst Wassim Nasr stated in the private, left-leaning French outlet *L'Opinion* that from his perspective, even after Zawahiri's death, "Al-Qaeda Central is now more powerful than during the Bin Laden era." Similarly, in Australia, commentary from the centrist *Australian Institute of International Affairs* argued that the death of Zawahiri in no way significantly weakened Al-Qaeda. The author likewise cautioned that as the world begins to give attention to right-wing extremism, the threats posed by Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State remain real and should not be ignored. In contrast, in India, a writer in the Hindi-language daily *Dainik Jagran* argued that Zawahiri's death was a "huge setback" for Al-Qaeda, especially in its attempts to grow

its presence in the subcontinent. However, he worried that disenchanted members of Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, might drift towards the Islamic State in Khorasan province.

Other commentators writing from less powerful states around the world underscored the link between Zawahiri's killing and their own local political and security situations. For instance, in Nigeria, an article in the major newspaper *Daily Trust* quotes a former Nigerian Minister of Aviation as lamenting: "The Americans killed Osama Bin Laden, Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi and now Ayman Al Zawahiri. Kudos! In Nigeria we do not kill terrorists: we beg them, pay them, appease them, reward them, bow before them, and give them chieftaincy titles." In Rwanda's private but state-supportive *New Times*, authors critiqued the current U.S. Secretary of State for hailing the death of Zawahiri while also recently criticizing Rwanda's detention of U.S. citizen Paul Rusesabagina, who has been convicted by Rwandan courts as being a terrorist. As they wrote: "If the US has the right to kill a foreign national using 'transnational repression,' then Rwanda... has the right to bring to justice to Rusesabagina, a Rwandan citizen." In sum, whether interpreted globally or more locally, the impact of Zawahiri's death has elicited concerns regarding the continuation of Al-Qaeda and the empowerment of brutality by individual leaders and governments.

Source: Pascal Airault, "Al-Qaïda est plus forte qu'à l'époque de Ben Laden (Al-Qaeda is stronger than in Bin Laden's era)," *L'Opinion* (private French daily), 2 August 2022. <https://www.lopinion.fr/international/al-qaida-est-plus-fort-qua-lepoque-de-ben-laden>

Al-Qaeda central is stronger than in the era of Bin Laden. It's difficult to evaluate the number of its member even if certain experts talk of tens of thousands of them. The organization is well-anchored in Afghanistan, with the ability to raise money, give directives, and assure international communications.

Source: Michael Zekulin, "Al-Zawahiri's Death and its Impact on the Future of Al-Qaeda," *Australian Institute of International Affairs* (Australian think tank), 11 August 2022. <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/al-zawahiris-death-and-its-impact-on-the-future-of-al-qaeda/>

News that a US drone strike killed al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri created a myriad of reactions... But what should we make of this event? Is it as consequential as some believe? One thing we know for certain is it would be a mistake to believe this is the death knell of al-Qaeda...

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TERRORISM AND TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

Continued: Global Reactions Vary After Death of Al-Qaeda Leader Al-Zawahiri

Source Continued: Michael Zekulin, “Al-Zawahiri’s Death and its Impact on the Future of Al-Qaeda,” *Australian Institute of International Affairs* (Australian think tank), 11 August 2022. <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/al-zawahiris-death-and-its-impact-on-the-future-of-al-qaeda/>

Is this the end of al-Qaeda? This is highly unlikely. In addition to what the group has become, we must also remember that more than anything, these are belief communities which persist despite the loss of any one member, ever senior leadership. The group survived Osama bin Laden’s death in 2011... Despite the current resurgence and focus on right-wing-inspired extremism and terrorism, the West should not neglect the threat posed by Islamist-inspired terrorism.

Source: Aalok Sensharma, “How Ayman Al-Zawahiri’s Death with Will Impact Al-Qaeda in India Explained,” *Jagran English* (private Indian daily), 3 August 2022. <https://english.jagran.com/india/how-ayman-al-zawahiri-s-death-will-impact-al-qaeda-in-india-explained-10046883>

Al-Zawahiri’s death is a huge setback for Qaeda, which has been trying to establish itself following the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). His death will also impact the group’s position in India, where it has been trying to spread its wings.... His killing will affect the morale of Qaeda supporters and cadres in India... An imminent concern for India is the fact that disenchanted Al-Qaeda cadres must shift their allegiance to the Islamic State and its regional affiliate Islamic State–Khorasan (ISKP).

Source: Adedamola Quasiam, “Nigeria Rewards Terrorists Instead of Killing Them, Fani-Kayode Reacts to Death of Al-Qaeda Leader,” *Daily Trust* (private Nigerian daily), 2 August 2022. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202208030105.html>

A former Minister of Aviation, Chief Femi Fani-Kayode, has reacted to the killing of Al-Qaeda leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, by a United States drone strike. However, he alleged that terror kingpins in Nigeria are rewarded instead of being killed.

“The Americans killed Osama Bin Ladin, Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi & now Ayman Al Zawahiri. Kudos! In Nigeria we do not kill terrorists: we beg them, pay them, appease them, reward them, bow before them, give them chieftaincy titles & let them break into prison to free their brothers,” he tweeted.

Source: James Karuhanga, “Open Letter to Blinken: Scholars call for partnerships ‘free of condescending positions,’” *New Times* (private Rwandan English language daily), 9 August 2022. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/open-letter-blinken-scholars-call-partnership-free-condescending-positions>

When announcing his visit to Rwanda, the signatories remind Blinken that he referred to “the wrongful detention of the U.S. Lawful Permanent Resident Paul Rusesabagina.”

Rusesabagina created the National Liberation Front (FLN), a criminal organization that served as an armed wing of his Rwandan Movement for Democratic Change (MRDC). On September 20, 2021, the High Court Chamber for International and Cross Border Crimes handed a 25-year sentence to Rusesabagina, for terrorism. The FLN orchestrated murders in south-western Rwanda between 2018 and 2019.

The authors of the open letter note that on August 2, Blinken celebrated the death of Al-Zawahiri with the following words: “We have delivered on our commitment to act against terrorist threats emanating from Afghanistan. The world is safer following the death of al-Qa’ida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri. The U.S. will continue to act against those who threaten our country, our people, or our allies.”

If the US has the right to kill a foreign national using “transnational repression,” then Rwanda certainly has the right to bring to justice Rusesabagina, a Rwandan citizen, at the root of an armed group responsible for the deaths of Rwandan civilians in Rwanda, they pointed out.

India Draws Lessons on Cyber and Electronic Effects From the War in Ukraine

By Matthew Stein
OE Watch Commentary



GSVL-Mk III-D1 being moved from Vehicle Assembly Building to second launch pad

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:GSVL-Mk_III-D1_being_moved_from_Vehicle_Assembly_Building_to_second_launch_pad.jpg Attribution: Government Open Data License - India (GODL)

The Indian Army has been focused on a possible conflict with China since the border incidents on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in 2017 and 2020. While Indian officials have been improving the army's combat and logistic capabilities on the LAC, the accompanying excerpted article reports on an Indian Army exercise involving satellite communications that drew lessons from the war in Ukraine and that officials are hoping will guide further development of army capabilities. The article from the independent English-language newspaper *The Hindu* reports on the scenario of the exercise, which involved using all satellite communications in the Indian Army in different technical and operational situations. The article notes that the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) also took part in the exercise and that it included the eastern regions and northern border areas of India, which includes the LAC. The articles go on to mention how the Indian Army has been studying electronic warfare in the war in Ukraine at multiple levels and that India believes this further established the importance of satellite communications. The article notes that the army is currently using ISRO satellites but is set to have its own by December 2025 as India's Acquisition Council approved the new satellite back in March during the early weeks of the war in Ukraine. It also points out that the Indian Army is closely watching the advancements made by its adversaries and that this is an effort to stay ahead of them. Overall, the exercise and satellite acquisition show how India continues to respond to China and that it is closely watching what is happening in Ukraine.

While national R&D is focused in this field, the Indian Army is closely watching the advancements made by our adversaries, to ensure that these vital capabilities are inducted into our armed forces well ahead of times.

Source: Dinakar Peri, "Indian Army conducts Exercise Skylight to test resilience of its satellite communications," *The Hindu* (independent English-language newspaper), 6 August 2022. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indian-army-conducts-exercise-skylight-to-testresilience-of-itssatellite-communications/article65733174.ece>

To test the operational readiness of satellite systems and personnel manning them, the Indian Army last week carried out Exercise Skylight validating and showcasing the resilience of its communication capabilities in case terrestrial connectivity is disrupted in future conflicts, officials in the security establishment said.

"During the two-week long exercise, all satellite communication assets in the Army were activated and various technical and operational scenarios in space domain were simulated. Various agencies responsible for space and ground segments, as also the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) participated in the exercise," a source in the security establishment said. This includes over 200 static platforms and over 80 vehicle based and man portable systems that were incorporated...

"...the exercise covered the eastern part of the country, northern borders and the island territories. "This will be done regularly," the source said.

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Continued: India Draws Lessons on Cyber and Electronic Effects From the War in Ukraine

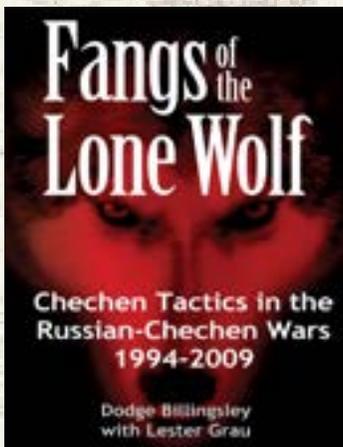
Source Continued: Dinakar Peri, “Indian Army conducts Exercise Skylight to test resilience of its satellite communications,” *The Hindu* (independent English-language newspaper), 6 August 2022. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indian-army-conducts-exercise-skylight-to-test-resilience-of-its-satellite-communications/article65733174.ece>

The Army has carried out detailed studies of cyber and electromagnetic effects in the war in Ukraine. Electronic warfare has played a major role in Ukraine, sources said, “We had multiple iterations on how this conflict has panned out, at various levels.”

The studies established efficacy of reliable satellite communication like the one afforded by ‘Starlink’, officials said... (the) Indian Army is utilizing the services of a number of ISRO satellites as it does not have a dedicated satellite. In March, The Defence Acquisition Council cleared a proposal for a GSAT-7B communications satellite. The army is on course to get its own satellite by December 2025.

...To train its personnel on all aspects of satellite communication, the Army recently published Request for Information for its own student satellite, for training engineering students in Military College of Telecommunication Engineering on satellite technology.

...While national R&D is focused in this field, the Indian Army is closely watching the advancements made by our adversaries, to ensure that these vital capabilities are inducted into our armed forces well ahead of times, officials added.



FANGS OF THE LONE WOLF

by Dodge Billingsley with Lester Grau

Fangs of the Lone Wolf is about combat experience in urban, mountain and fairly open terrain. It is not a comprehensive history of conflict. This book is a series of snapshots — of vignettes — describing the difficulty, the hardship, the victories and the defeats of the participants. It is an examination of the raw data of combat in a foreign land, and is aimed to advance the professional military study of conflict.

Venezuela Plays Host to China, Russia, and Iran in International Military Games



Venezuelan tanks during a military parade

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BTR-80A_VEN.jpg, Attribution: CCA-SA2.0

By Ryan Berg

OE Watch Commentary

For the first time, the Nicolás Maduro regime in Venezuela played host to Russia's International Army Games. The event, held in the city of Barquisimeto in Lara state, was a kind of "Olympics" of war games, according to an article

in U.S. government-operated Spanish-language *Voz de América*. While the Venezuelan armed forces have participated six times in Russia's International Army Games, the list of participating countries coupled with the location in the Western Hemisphere presents a direct challenge to the United States, according to the article. Furthermore, an article in left-leaning Argentine daily *Clarín* notes that the International Army Games began just one day after annual military exercises sponsored by the U.S. Southern Command. The newspaper highlights Russia's traditional role as a security provider to Venezuela, as well as its desire to show strength in the Western Hemisphere. The International Army Games demonstrate Venezuela's continuing desire to be considered a serious power and U.S. adversary in the Western Hemisphere. They also demonstrate Russia's enduring interest in projecting power in Latin America and the Caribbean and to blunt diplomatic isolation on the world stage. Lastly, these military exercises are likely to further the interoperability of participating militaries with principal adversaries such as Russia, China, and Iran.

This week, Venezuela will become the first country in the Americas to host military competitions organized by Russia, known as the Army Games.

Source: "Olimpiadas de la Guerra' en Venezuela pueden generar 'celo y vigilancia' en la region (War Olympics' in Venezuela can generate 'zeal and vigilance' in the region)," *Voz de América* (the Spanish-language version of the state-owned media outlet), 9 August 2022. <https://www.vozdeamerica.com/a/olimpiadas-guerra-venezuela-ce-lo-vigilancia-region/6694410.html>

This week, Venezuela will become the first country in the Americas to host military competitions organized by Russia, known as the Army Games... The Russian Ministry of Defense... has organized these military sports annually since August 2015. They usually last a couple of weeks and spokesmen close to the Kremlin refer them as the "Olympics of War"...The Army Games 2022 are being held in a context of worldwide condemnation of the Vladimir Putin government for its armed attack on Ukraine.

Source: "Rusia, China e Irán lanzan sus 'juegos de guerra' para desafiar a Estados Unidos en Venezuela (Russia, China and Iran launch their 'war games' to challenge the United States in Venezuela)," *Clarín* (left leaning daily in Argentina), 10 August 2022. https://www.clarin.com/mundo/rusia-china-iran-lanzan-juegos-guerra-desafiar-estados-venezuela_0_HyifirkIYK.html

The war and hunger games come together in Venezuela. Live and direct military competitions with Russia, China, and Iran will be held from August 13 to 27 to challenge the United States in the city of Barquisimeto, Lara state, in the northwest of the country, while the streets have been heating up with the protests of the teachers affected by "starvation wages"...Vladimir Putin, whose armed invasion of Ukraine is in its sixth month, aims to demonstrate Russia's military strength in the Latin America and Caribbean area.

African Stances on the Russia-Ukraine War Demonstrate Reliance on, Antipathy Toward West

By Jason Warner
OE Watch Commentary

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, official reactions from African nations have varied. For instance, the March 2022 UN vote to condemn Russian aggression showed that 27 African states voted for the resolution, one state (Eritrea) voted against, 17 abstained, and nine more were absent for the vote. As commentary from the respected Pan-African *Institute for Security Studies* lays out, the range of African reactions to the war is guided by logics not always appreciated from the outside.

First, and most important, the authors underscore that the continent's 54 states are in no way a monolithic bloc and would not share a singular, unified viewpoint of the war given their varying goals, positions in international society, and international alliances. Second, the authors note that African states are not affected by the war in the same ways. While extreme food shortages were felt in certain states throughout the continent as a result of Russian blockades of grain and fertilizer, for many African countries, these

issues “[don’t] compare with the Western aid that enables African countries to function.” Third, the authors note that the war has been a litmus test bringing to light variations in African states’ interpretations of the international system. Certain African states seek to maintain the Western “rules-based” order, and thus find more sympathy with Ukraine. Conversely, other African states, with lingering antipathy to a global order in which they view themselves to be marginalized, are thus more sympathetic with revisionist, non-rule-abiding states like Russia. The authors sum up their assessments, saying: “Western surprise at most African countries’ limited emotion towards Russia’s invasion, and Africa’s neutral stance, point to a self-centeredness on both sides. The West wants its African partners to share its condemnation of Russia. African states meanwhile cling to their monopoly on victimhood and historical resentment of Western domination in world affairs.”

Source: Paul-Simon Handy and Félicité Djilo, “Unpacking Africa’s Divided Stance on the Ukraine War,” *Institute for Security Studies* (pan-African think tank), 12 August 2022. <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/unpacking-africas-divided-stance-on-the-ukraine-war>

“African votes in the United Nations (UN) on the war revealed sharp divisions between countries... The high number of abstentions was widely interpreted as a sign of Russian influence or evidence of the growing anti-Westernism of African governments and citizens. This view wrongly assumes that Africa is a political monolith. It also suggests an underlying expectation by the West that states on the continent should align with them because of the West’s pre-eminence in development and humanitarian aid, and their shared historical past.

Western surprise at most African countries’ limited emotion towards Russia’s invasion, and Africa’s neutral stance, point to a self-centredness on both sides. The West wants its African partners to share its condemnation of Russia. African states meanwhile cling to their monopoly on victimhood and historical resentment of Western domination in world affairs.

How do African states benefit from proclaiming non-alignment? Although the conflict reveals the extent of the continent’s dependence on grain and fertiliser from Ukraine and Russia, it doesn’t compare with the Western aid that enables African countries to function. The increasing price of hydrocarbons is affecting Africa’s most fragile states. While European countries imposed sanctions against Russia despite the costs to their energy supplies, many African countries feel less able to adopt a principled and values-based foreign policy.

The divide, however, runs deeper—extending to perceptions about the international order itself. Western states defend a rules-based system in which they are pre-eminent. African states have a more cynical view of a global order whose rules seem to be determined by the West. This difference in outlook may explain Africa’s leniency towards Russia, even though the latter has violated a cardinal AU principle on territorial integrity.

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Continued: African Stances on the Russia-Ukraine War Demonstrate Reliance on, Antipathy Toward West

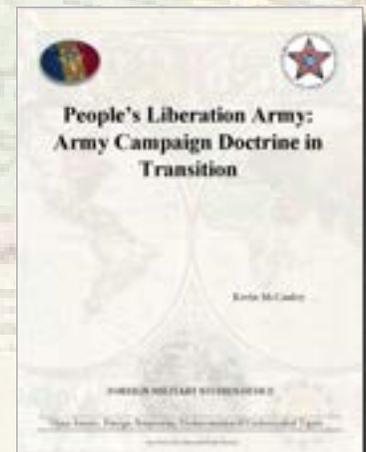
Source Continued: Paul-Simon Handy and Félicité Djilo, “Unpacking Africa’s Divided Stance on the Ukraine War,” *Institute for Security Studies* (pan-African think tank), 12 August 2022. <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/unpacking-africas-divided-stance-on-the-ukraine-war>

African states’ position is not without contradictions – which isn’t surprising given the many norms and values on a continent of 54 states. They aspire to an international order based on rules, not force, while at the same time sympathizing with Russia and China, which challenge this order for different reasons.”

PEOPLE’S LIBERATION ARMY: ARMY CAMPAIGN DOCTRINE IN TRANSITION

Kevin McCauley
September 2020

This monograph examines current People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Army campaign doctrine, with a discussion of PLA theorists’ vision of the evolutionary development of warfare to provide context for current doctrine as well as potential future direction. The PLA develops doctrinal joint and service campaign scenarios for possible offensive and defensive operations. PLA campaigns represent the operational level of war between strategic operations and tactical combat. The PLA’s current focus on specific campaigns provides insight into Beijing’s perception of potential conflict scenarios. The campaign scenarios provide commanders and staff data on command and control, coordination, combat actions, support, and other critical campaign elements for specific operational environments. The description of each campaign’s operational environment and combat actions provides valuable support to operational planning and a context for staff and unit training for their specific operational mission. The Army campaigns are executed as components of a joint campaign, or as a primarily independent Army campaign with support from other services.



Algerian Media Dismissive of Morocco-Israel Security Cooperation



IAI Harop UAV at Paris Air Show 2013

Source: Julian Herzog, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:IAI_Harop_PAS_2013_02.jpg
Attribution: CC 4.0

By Lucas Winter
OE Watch Commentary

Security cooperation between Morocco and Israel has expanded rapidly since the two countries formalized relations as part of the 2020 Abraham Accords. As reported in the Saudi daily *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, the two militaries will institutionalize regular joint training and education programs. In addition, Morocco has agreed to purchase Israeli weapons systems, including the BARAK MX Integrated Air & Missile Defense System, Heron unmanned aerial vehicles, and **Harop loitering munitions**. Seeking to bolster its domestic defense industry with Israeli know-how, Morocco is set to eventually manufacture Harop munitions domestically.

Against this backdrop, Algerian media outlets have been dismissive of the extent to which deepening Israeli-Moroccan security links will shift the balance of military power in North Africa. A recent opinion article in the Algerian daily *El Chorouk* interprets Moroccan outreach to Israel as a sign of desperation and insecurity within Morocco's ruling elite, due to both regional strategic challenges and uncertainty over royal succession. In this view, Israel is the only party willing to "rescue Morocco from Algeria's military power," something that in the author's view it will not accomplish. Algerian pundits may be dismissive of Morocco's growing power, but Algerian military leaders are undoubtedly paying attention to the challenge of the Israel-Morocco security partnership.

Source: "كيف يستفيد المغرب من التجربة الإسرائيلية؟" (How does Morocco benefit from the Israeli experience?)" *al-Sharq al-Awsat* (influential Saudi daily), 22 July 2022. <https://tinyurl.com/n5ntt67x>

Kochavi's visit to Morocco resulted in a series of technical and strategic agreements between the two armies and the two governments. At the core of them is cooperation in various security fields, as well as an active and persistent exchange of experiences, including study exchanges and joint training of combat units throughout the year... Morocco also agreed to buy a set of [Harop kamikaze drones] and to start manufacturing them domestically...

Source: "الصهاينة لنجدة المخزن ضدّ قوة الجزائر العسكرية" (Zionism to rescue the Makhzen from Algeria's military force)," *El Chorouk* (Algerian daily), 9 August 2022. <https://tinyurl.com/4k6ew5zb>

As for its dispute with Algeria, it led Morocco to an accelerating arms race in which it was difficult to keep pace with its eastern neighbor, leaving it far behind due to the strength of the latter's resources, in contrast to the scarcity of Moroccan resources... [Morocco] has found no refuge except in the Zionist entity, which cannot provide what Rabat is looking for.

China controls 80 to 90 percent of global capacity. This is an extremely dominant position for a country at a time when everyone is trying to expand.