



OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT WATCH ("OE WATCH") SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Foreign Military Studies Office
7 May 2018



“OE Watch” Guidance for Contributors

Background: The Foreign Military Studies Office is a US Army Training and Doctrine Command G2 (Intelligence) organization. Its electronically-produced Operational Environment Watch (“*OE Watch*”) journal presents non-American perspectives regarding unique aspects of defense and security issues. *OE Watch* is a forum for experts like yourself to call special attention to non-US media and issues that you believe would be useful and interesting to senior leaders in the defense, security, and academic communities. This document provides you with general guidelines and a simple submission format, an example of how it all comes together, and a more detailed style manual.

The OE Watch Audience: The *OE Watch* audience includes three groups:

- Civilian or military area experts who may share your depth of career and regional expertise.
- Civilian and military security affairs specialists who may not be experts in your particular area or topic.
- Informed and intelligent readers, including busy policy-makers and senior military leaders, who will take a genuine but general interest in your topic.

As a contributor to OE Watch, your topic and material selection, writing style, and accompanying visual aids should be clear, informative, and compelling to this combined audience.

Guidance

1. Choose unclassified, non-American sources that reflect a unique aspect of a security or defense-related topic.
2. Translate and provide only a short, representative portion(s) of the key part(s) of the article(s). Provide all relevant source reference data, including publication information, titles and references using non-American language scripts/fonts if possible (Cyrillic, Arabic, etc.). Also identify a key quote from the article.
3. Provide about three brief paragraphs of your own commentary that present a short background of the topic and your explanation of why these articles are interesting and valuable. Also make up an interesting title for your submission. *Your short commentary is **not** designed to be deep analysis, rather it is a short piece to orient intelligent readers and convince them that the article and topic are interesting and important.*
4. If possible, include a picture or other visual material that helps to illustrate your topic. This material needs to be in .jpeg or .gif format; 100-300kb. Make sure that this material is copyright free! (See FMSO Image Attribution Guidelines.)
5. Check out the Example on the next page. Also look at past issues at <https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmsop/oe-watch-issues>
6. Send your submissions to matthew.d.stein.ctr@mail.mil, including the following submission responsibility statement: "Regarding my OE Watch submissions, I understand that I am responsible for the veracity, accuracy, and source documentation of the material, including no use of classified material and conformity to copyright and usage permissions."

Do:

- Provide the non-American perspective.
- Provide aspects of an enduring security issue or current event that will be interesting but not widely known.
- Provide crisp, clear and brief commentary for the audience described above.
- Reference the article or author’s opinions in your commentary; establish your view from a neutral position (“The accompanying article suggests that...,” “As the author states...,” etc.)

Do Not:

- Provide subjective or vague analysis, critique or criticism, polemical or inflammatory editorial.
- Pontificate, recommend, or advise on national policy issues (particularly US policy).
- Imply, insinuate, or infer references to anything about US policies and activities. (The foreign perspective may be about US activities and policies, but other than quoting that from the foreign source, you should not comment.)
- Provide an ‘answer’ when the original article is ambiguous.
- Use first person (“I think that...”).

A Note on Editing: FMSO will try to work with the authors to edit their submissions, but *ultimately FMSO reserves the right to publish submissions without the contributor’s approval of editing adjustments in order to meet organizational standards and publication deadlines. Similarly, FMSO may reject or defer articles.*

Style Manual for *OE Watch* Commentaries

1. You should review previous issues of the *OE Watch* to get a taste for the format and content: (<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/p/oe-watch-issues>). Please use Word format (.doc or .docx) and provide the precise citation where the reader can find the selected article.
2. Avoid using inflammatory editorial characterizations, unless these come from the article(s) upon which you are commenting. For example, do not refer to the leader of a country as “the evil leader of the country” unless the author of the article has done so, in which case you need to make that clear (“The author of the article, referring to the leader of the country as evil,...”)
3. Because this is a commentary and **not** an analytical study, footnotes/endnotes should be kept to a minimum, if used at all. Notes should be indicated by Arabic numerals, not Roman.
4. When referring to articles, maps, pictures, etc. that are optionally included with your commentary, avoid using “spatially specific” phrases such as “the article below,” “the adjacent map,” etc. Since we do not know what the final formatted *OE Watch* will look like, such phrases can be misleading. Instead, use “spatially neutral” phrases such as “the accompanying map shows...”
5. Avoid using acronyms. These commentaries are short pieces and really do not require them. However, if you do use them, make sure the first time they appear you give the full form as well. Do not use an acronym if it is going to appear only once in your commentary.
6. If your entry is sent back because of problems dealing with clarity, please address those questions in the edited version, but do not attempt to completely rewrite the analysis or submit different material.
7. Quotation marks combined with other punctuation marks: commas and periods are placed inside the end quote; colons and semi-colons are placed outside the end quote.
8. Footnote/endnote numbers: these numbers are placed after punctuation marks. They are also placed outside quotation marks.
9. There is a difference between the abbreviations “i.e.,” and “e.g.”: i.e. (Latin *id est*), literally “that is” is used when the phrase after i.e. is equivalent to the phrase before the i.e. For example: “Ivan was brought up in the Soviet Union, i.e., his formative years were spent under Communist rule.” On the other hand, e.g. (Latin *exempli gratia*) means for example, and is used when the phrase after e.g. is a subset (an example) that illustrates the phrase before e.g. For example, “The Arctic region is rich in many natural resources, e.g., hydrocarbons, natural gas, etc.” Note: both these abbreviations are always preceded and followed by commas.
10. Ranks or official positions are capitalized when accompanied by the name of the person to whom the rank/position refers, but are lower case when not accompanied by such. For example, “US Secretary of State Kerry recently visited Turkey,” but “The US secretary of state recently visited Turkey.” “Lieutenant Colonel Petrosian, Commander of 153rd Motorized Rifle Battalion, was born in Armenia” but “The commander of 153rd Motorized Rifle Battalion is traditionally a lieutenant colonel.”
11. Numbers from 1-10 are spelled out; Arabic numerals are used for the rest. There are two exceptions:
 - a. If the number is part of a hyphenated adjective, the Arabic numeral is used (e.g., a 5-km section of pipeline)
 - b. If there are a series of numbers in a sentence, then they are all either spelled out or given as Arabic numerals (e.g., 5 tons of corn, 15 tons of wheat, and 20 tons of rye; or five tons of corn, fifteen tons of wheat, and twenty tons of rye).
12. For each foreign source used, use a few descriptive words to give the reader an idea of the source and where it is from.
13. Proof-read your submissions and fix all typos, consistency of names, etc. When the draft is sent re-proof your pieces again.
14. The key quote must be included in the excerpted passage.
15. Submit each entry as a separate Word document.

Example entry (ALSO CHECK OUT PAST ISSUES OF OE WATCH TO GET AN IDEA)

Revolutionary Guards Take Part in Russian Military Games (you come up with title for your entry; keep it short)

Source: "Avalin Tasavir az Hazur Takavuran-e Artesh va Sepah dar Rusiya (The First Photos from the Presence of Army and IRGC Rangers in Russia)," *Tasnim.ir*, 27 July 2016. <https://www.tasnim.ir/2016/27/07//1259779/یب-عش-ل-ادش-حل-ا-ع-م-ن-واع-ن-ن> *آداک-ن-ی-ی-ب-ا-هر-ا-ل-ا-م-د-خ-ت-س-ی-ب-ر-غ-ل-ا* (note use of foreign language title; provide detailed citation)

OE Watch Commentary: In Western policy circles, Iran's relationship with Russia is often discussed in terms of arms purchases or Russia's willingness to give diplomatic cover at the United Nations for Iranian ambitions. However, even as the Russo-Iranian diplomatic relationship has achieved a warmth not seen in more than 500 years, many Iranians retain their historical distrust of Russia, arguing that Russia will drop its support for Iran in an instant should it become in Moscow's interest to do so.

Perhaps this is one reason why Russia is sponsoring—and the Iranian military participating fully in—the International Army Games, a sort of military Olympics. While almost a couple dozen countries are participating, Iran's participation is relatively broad and not simply symbolic. Indeed, Iran is competing in more events than any other country beside Russia, China, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Venezuela. In the excerpted article, the hardline Tasnim online portal close to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps outlines seven competitions. While some—like the sniper competition might be self-evident, other events are less clear: The tank biathlon involves individual and relay races in T-72 tanks over obstacles courses and with requirements to fire on targets along the way. Suvorov attacks involve similar exercises, but in BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles. The Airborne Platoon competition involved BMD-2 airborne fighting vehicles or BTR-82A armored personnel carriers, D-10 series parachute systems, and Arbalet parachute systems and requires parachute landings, races, target competition with small arms and grenade launchers, overcoming water obstacles, and relays. The Depth competition tests swimming, underwater orientation, and underwater search and rescue, and the Elbrus Ring competition is a mountaineering and climbing competition.

Soft power is important, and Russia's International Army Games seem a means to promote personal relations between elite troops not only between Russia and Iran, but also among a broader array of countries which increasingly form a pro-Russian even if informal axis in opposition to the United States. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

Key Quote: "Forces drawn from the best of the best of the army, Revolutionary Guard, and Basij...will participate in Russia's International Army Games" (provide a brief quote from excerpted article)

Iranian Military in Russia's 'Military Olympics' (provide short, pertinent excerpt from article)

The exercises of our country's premier armed forces in an international military competition in Russia have begun. From our country, seven teams will participate in the tournament: frontier snipers, tank biathlon, Suvorov attacks, airborne platoon, Elbrus ring (mountain unit), Seaborne assault, and depth. It was declared that these forces were drawn from the best of the best from the army, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and Basij. The members of the teams dispatched by Iran trained for six months to achieve physical fitness, and for ten days before they departed, they also boarded in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Imam Hussein University. The International Army Games for the leading countries of the world held in Russia and Kazakhstan are now in their second iteration. The games were previously held in 2015. Until now, 23 countries have confirmed that they will participate... These games will begin on August 1 and conclude on August 14, and will take place in several cities in Russia and Kazakhstan.



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"A Russian soldier checks an Iranian participant's weapon"
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MIDDLE EAST

Top



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