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FOREIGN NEWS & PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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Contact FMSO at:
usarmy.leavenworth.tradoc.mbx.fmso-web@mail.mil

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Regional Analysts and Expert Contributors

Middle East	Tara Beeny Karen Kaya Michael Rubin Lucas Winter
Africa	Jason Warner Jacob Zenn
Latin America	Geoff Demarest Brenda Fiegel
Indo-Pacific Asia	Cindy Hurst Jacob Zenn
China, Korea, Japan	Steven Galluzzi Tim Thomas Jacob Zenn
Central Asia, Caucasus	Matthew Stein
Russia, Ukraine	Chuck Bartles Ray Finch Tyler Gartner Les Grau Joseph McConnell Tim Thomas

Editor-in-Chief	Tom Wilhelm
Editors	Ray Finch Karen Kaya
Design Editor	Keith French



Jordan and Kenya Hold Joint Military Exercise

OE Watch Commentary: In late September, the Jordanian Armed Forces conducted a joint training exercise with the Kenyan Defense Forces at Embakasi Garrison in Nairobi, Kenya. The exercise occurred alongside meetings between Jordanian and Kenyan officials aimed at strengthening diplomatic, economic, and military ties between the two countries. The accompanying excerpted article from Jordanian government-owned *Petra News Agency* discusses Jordan's outreach to Kenya. It notes that this outreach aims to build on the "Aqaba meetings," a series of high-level diplomatic meetings held in Aqaba, Jordan in spring of 2015 and early 2016 which focused on consolidating international efforts against terrorism.

The "Swift Eagle" exercise focused on counterterrorism and improving military interoperability. Jordan's Quick Reaction Force, an element of the Jordanian Special Forces, along with elements of the Kenyan Special Forces took part in the exercise. Jordan's Quick Reaction Force was established to provide a rapid-response capability to confront emerging crises, particularly along Jordan's vulnerable desert borders. The Kenyan military's interest in training with this force reflects the similarity between the challenges Jordan faces in securing itself against the Islamic State and Al Qaeda, and those that Kenya faces with confronting Al Shabaab along its northern border. The exercise received broad coverage by the Jordanian media. *Al-Ghad* and state-run *JRTV* carried video of portions of the exercise, including footage of an MD-530F multi-role helicopter, one of half a dozen in service with the Jordanian Special Forces. Jordan's King Abdullah II and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta both attended the joint military training exercise.

As mentioned in the excerpted article, Swift Eagle marks the first exercise implemented by the Quick Reaction Force outside of Jordan, depending entirely upon its own resources, capabilities, weapons, and equipment. These developments indicate the growing capabilities of Jordan's military, and Jordan's growing influence outside the Arab world. **End OE Watch Commentary (Beeny)**



Jordan and Kenya hold joint-military training exercises.
Source: *Al-Ghad TV*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lijrKic7wTM>

"...this exercise is the first military exercise implemented by the Quick Reaction Force outside the kingdom, depending entirely upon its own resources, capabilities, as well as its own weapons and equipment."



King Abdullah II of Jordan and President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya watch Exercise Swift Eagle at the Embakasi Garrison, Kenya.

Source: Jordan Armed Forces, <http://www.jaf.mil.jo/NewsView.aspx?NewsId=2359#.WAZZ8HowCI5>

Source: الملك يجري مباحثات مع الرئيس الكيني في نيروبي
"King holds talks with Kenyan president in Nairobi." *Petra News Agency*, 27 September 2016. http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=1&site_id=2&NewsID=270263&Type=P

Quick Reaction Force implements first self-sufficient exercise outside Jordan

With regard to the regional situation, His Majesty stressed enhancing joint coordination, cooperation, and continuing consultation on priority issues, especially to address the threat of terrorism and terrorist groups, which threaten the security and stability of the Middle East, the countries of the Horn of Africa, and the world.

Also discussed were efforts to enhance security and stability for the peoples of the Middle East and Africa and cooperation between their countries to face common challenges, and to emphasize the importance of building on the results of last year's Aqaba meetings, where His Majesty the King gathered a number of heads of state and dignitaries, including President of Kenya and the heads of several African countries, as part of a comprehensive participatory approach to coordinate international efforts in the war on terrorism.

His Majesty the King and President Kenyatta attended a joint military exercise carried out by the Quick Reaction Force of the Jordanian Armed Forces-Arab Army and Kenyan military Special Forces.

It is noteworthy that this exercise is the first military exercise implemented by the Quick Reaction Force outside the kingdom, depending entirely upon its own resources, capabilities, as well as its own weapons and equipment, as this force was formed to be a flexible and self-sufficient force, able to carry out tasks assigned to it in various circumstances.



Who Wants What in Mosul?

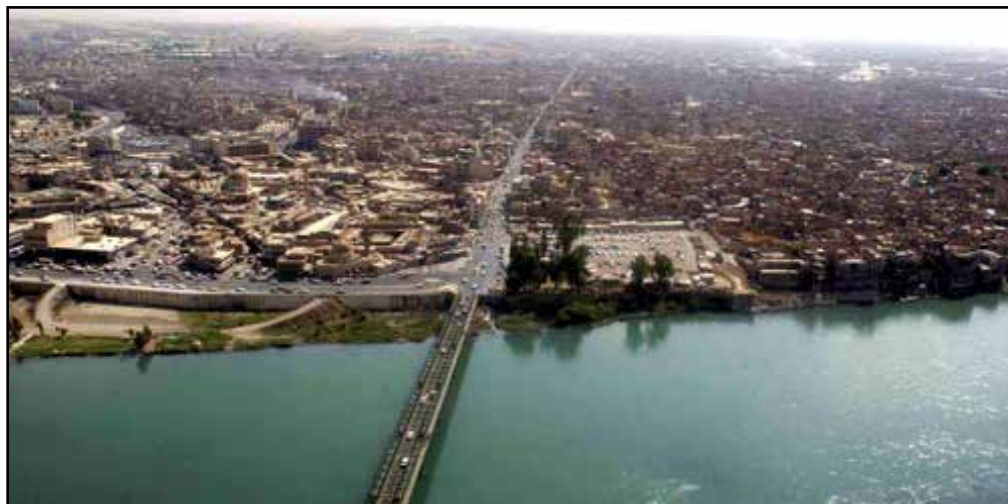
OE Watch Commentary: The battle for Mosul, the last ISIS stronghold in Iraq, has begun. On 17 October, Iraqi forces and Kurdish forces (*peshmerga*), backed by coalition air-power, launched what is expected to be a long and complex operation to re-take the city. However, there are various other groups with competing interests who also want to take part in the operation, with hopes of having a role in the future of Mosul. The accompanying passages help decipher each of these groups and their interests in this critical operation.

The question of who would take part in the effort to liberate Mosul has been a complicated one. As the accompanying passages show, there are six competing forces, with competing interests for the future of the city:

- The Iraqi security forces of the central Iraqi government in Baghdad; whose goal is to ensure Iraqi unity and territorial integrity;
- The Kurdish *peshmerga*-- the forces controlled by Masoud Barzani, President of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region; who would like to expand their autonomous region to include disputed lands in Ninevah province;
- The Shia Popular Mobilization Units (“Hashd al-Shaabi”-- an umbrella military organization composed of some 40 predominantly Shia militia groups); whose goal is to push the Kurdish *peshmerga* from disputed areas inside Ninevah province;
- The Sunni militia (2000-3000 militias, formerly known as “Hashd al-Watani”; and who recently changed their name to the “Nineveh Guard”); most of whom are trained by Turkey and located around Bashiqa-- 13 miles east of Mosul; and want a future role in Mosul as a police force;
- The Turkish Army; whose goal is to ensure that the PKK does not take part in the operation; to contain Kurdish expansion and to protect Turkish interests post-IS;
- The PKK, who are based in Sinjar and Qandil, and want to play a role in Mosul in order to link up with Syrian Kurds, across the border.

As the country’s second largest city, Mosul has high symbolic and strategic value for ISIS. It was here that the group’s chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi proclaimed a caliphate two years ago. The operation entails many tactical challenges including booby-trapped buildings, human shields, and the prospect of a huge refugee crisis. Further complicating the issue is Iraq’s internal divisions, as discussed. Thus, the battle for Mosul is exposing fractures that will threaten Iraq even after IS is cleared. (For more information, see: “Iraq: The Tactical and Political Challenges of the Mosul Offensive,” *OE Watch*, Sept 2016).
End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)

“[An] Iraqi military, which should be a national actor, does not really exist. There are Shia militia forces, Sunni Arab tribes, and Kurdish forces in Iraq.”



The Tigris River as it flows through Mosul, Iraq, as seen from a UH-60 Blackhawk from the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), 9th Aviation Battalion, A Company, June 16, 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Source: US Army photo by Sgt. Michael Bracken. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/ca/Tigris_river_Mosul.jpg

Source: Ceyda Karan, “‘Türkiye’nin stratejisinin bumeranga dönme riski var’” *Sputnik News in Turkish*, 5 October 2016, https://tr.sputniknews.com/ceyda_karan_eksen/201610051025156676-turkiye-irak-musul-operasyonu/

“As far as we can see, an Iraqi military, which should be a national actor, does not really exist. There are Shiite militia forces, Sunni Arab tribes, and Kurdish forces in Iraq. All of these armed actors are sub-national actors.”

Source: “Musul PKK için ‘meşruiyet’ kapısı mı? (Is Mosul a door to Legitimacy for the PKK?),” *Al Monitor*, 12 April 2016, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/originals/2016/04/turkey-iraq-syria-pkk-interest-in-mosul.html>

“Why is [the PKK]... an whose main area of interest is Turkey’s Kurdish regions, so interested in Mosul? ...by creating an area it can control in Mosul, the PKK will be protecting both Sinjar and the Kurdish region in Syria.”

Source: Tolga Tanış, “Musul Parametreleri (Mosul Parameters),” *Hurriyet.com.tr*, 9 October 2016, http://sosyal.hurriyet.com.tr/yazar/tolga-tanis_322/musul-parametreleri_40243557

“[For Turkey] there is the PKK issue. There is a PKK presence in Sinjar-- 100 miles east of Mosul, and in Mahmur--60 miles south of Mosul.... They are a force of about 1500-2000... Their participation in the Mosul operation is a red-line for Turkey.... “

Source: Amberin Zaman, “Iraqi Kurds step into Ankara-Baghdad row,” *Al Monitor*, 6 October 2016, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/10/turkey-iraq-row-deepens-mosul-krk-kurds-isis.html>

*“The Iraqi Kurds view the Turkish presence as insurance against the predominantly Shiite Popular Mobilization Units possibly trying to seize upon the Mosul campaign to push KRG *peshmerga* from disputed areas inside Ninevah province that had been abandoned by the Iraqi army when IS struck in summer 2014.”*



Crisis in Turkey-Iraq Relations

OE Watch Commentary: On 1 October, the Turkish parliament extended the mandate for military operations in Iraq and Syria by one year. Iraq's parliament responded by branding Turkish troops in Iraq (in the Bashiqa training camp near Mosul) as "occupiers" and demanded their withdrawal. The situation has raised tensions between Ankara and Baghdad, amid the important operation to retake Mosul from ISIS. The accompanying passages from the Turkish press discusses Turkey's perspective on the situation and why it insists on having a role to play in the Mosul offensive.

The first passage highlights comments by Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım on 7 October, summarizing Turkey's stance. Yıldırım notes that Turkish troops will stay in Bashiqa to train local forces to fight ISIS, and to prevent Mosul from losing its [Sunni] identity. As the second passage explains, Turkey considers Mosul to be a Sunni city and sees a plot aimed at ridding it of its Sunni population in favor of Shias. The passage notes Turkish President Erdoğan's comments that Turkey will prevent an effort to alter Mosul's demographic composition. Mainly, Turkey does not want Iraqi Shia militia who Turkey believes are under Iranian influence, to enter Mosul during the operation.

The third passage notes that Ankara wants to prevent the outlawed terrorist group PKK from taking advantage of the Mosul operation to expand its influence in the region. To this end, Turkey trained 3,000 Sunni Muslim and allied Kurdish peshmerga units at the Bashiqa camp near Mosul, and has secured a role for around half of them to take part in the operation.

Turkish troops have been present at a number of bases in northern Iraq, since the early 1990's to respond to terrorist threats from the PKK. However, tensions between Turkey and Iraq arose in late 2015, when Ankara augmented its forces in the Bashiqa training camp. In December 2015, Ankara sent a battalion-size force from the 3rd Commando Brigade, supported by some twenty-five M-60A3 tanks fighters to train Sunni forces and Kurds to fight ISIS during the Mosul operation. Iraq views Turkey's military presence there as an open violation of its sovereignty, and wants Turkish troops to withdraw. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya).**

"Whatever the Iraqi government in Baghdad says, the Turkish presence will continue to be there to fight ISIS and to prevent the demographic structure from being changed by force. Saying such things about Turkey, who has been present in the region with its historical depth, when a number of countries who are not local [to the region] are present there, is not up to the Iraqi government."

— Turkish Prime Minister
Binali Yıldırım



Turkish Altay tank.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Turkish_Altay_tank.png

Source: "Türk askeri Başika'da kalacak! (Turkish troops will stay in Bashiqa!)," *Gazetevatan.com*, 7 October 2016, <http://www.gazetevatan.com/turk-askeri-basika-da-kalacak--992883-gundem/>

"Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım made harsh statements about the Bashiqa crisis. Yıldırım responded to the Baghdad government, who called the Turkish troops in Bashiqa 'invaders' and who asked them to withdraw, as follows: "Whatever the Iraqi government in Baghdad says, the Turkish presence will continue to be there to fight ISIS and to prevent the demographic structure from being changed by force. Saying such things about Turkey, who has been present in the region with its historical depth, when a number of countries who are not local [to the region] are present there, is not up to the Iraqi government."

Source: Semih Idiz, "Turks blame US, Iran for encouraging Baghdad against Ankara," *Al Monitor*, 11 October 2016, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/10/turkey-iraq-bashiqa-ankara-blame-united-states-and-iran.html#ixzz4NIhRi5UN>

Islamist Turks... consider Mosul to be a Sunni city and see a plot aimed at ridding it of its Sunni population in favor of Shias. In his address to parliament recently, Erdoğan referred to an effort to alter Mosul's demographic composition and said Turkey would do its utmost to prevent this...

During an interview with the Saudi Rotana TV two days later, Erdoğan spelled it out more clearly and said Mosul should remain a Sunni city after being cleared of the Islamic State (IS)...

Source: Tolga Tanış, "Musul Parametreleri (Mosul Parameters)," *Hurriyet.com.tr*, 9 October 2016, http://sosyal.hurriyet.com.tr/yazar/tolga-tanis_322/musul-parametreleri_40243557

"There is the PKK issue. There is a PKK presence in Sinjar-- 100 miles east of Mosul, and ...60 miles south of Mosul.... Their participation in the Mosul operation is a red-line for Turkey...."



Turkey-EU Refugee Deal on the Rocks

OE Watch Commentary: In March 2016, Turkey and the European Union (EU) signed a complicated agreement aimed to curb the flood of refugees into Europe. The accompanying passages discuss that this deal now appears to be on the verge of collapse.

As the first passage discusses, according to the agreement, Turkey would reaccept all illegal migrants (including Syrian refugees) who entered Greece from Turkey as of 20 March 2016. In exchange, Turkey would get visa-free travel for its citizens to the Schengen zone of Europe as of June 2016; and financial support of three billion euros to improve the lives of the three million Syrians living in Turkey. The sides had also agreed to renew negotiations for Turkey to join the EU.

While there are many problematic issues surrounding the agreement, with both sides claiming that the other has not met its obligations, one of the key sticking points is the status of legal and political conditions in Turkey, particularly after July 2016. This is key because European law stipulates that migrants can only be returned to 'safe countries'. The second passage notes Greece's refusal to comply with the agreement due to their refusal to accept Turkey as a 'safe country of origin'. The third passage highlights Italian concerns on the same issue.

The final passage includes comments by Gerald Knaus, the head of the European Stability Initiative, that if the deal with Turkey collapses, hundreds of thousands of refugees would reach the shores of Greece from the sea and its northern land borders, turning the Balkans into "a war zone for refugees, traffickers, border guards and troops." **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya).**

"...if the deal with Turkey collapses, hundreds of thousands of refugees would reach the shores of Greece from the sea and its northern land borders, turning the Balkans into "a war zone for refugees, traffickers, border guards and troops."

Source: "Türkiye ile AB arasında kriz artık sadece zaman meselesi (A crisis between Turkey and the EU is just a matter of time)," *Al Monitor*, 15 August 2016, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/originals/2016/08/turkey-european-union-crisis-matter-of-time.html>

"The refugee deal [between Turkey and the EU] entailed Turkey's reacceptance of all illegal migrants who entered Greece from Turkey as of 20 March 2016; in exchange for visa-free travel for Turkish citizens to Europe as of June 2016. This has not happened. All signs are pointing to the reality that visa-free travel will not happen in 2016."

Source: "EU-Turkey Refugee Deal Dying in the Greek Islands," *Der Spiegel*, 18 October 2016. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/refugee-situation-in-greece-a-threat-to-turkey-eu-deal-a-1117013.html>

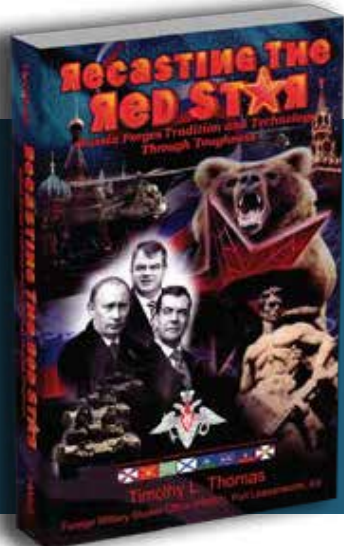
"According to the agreement, migrants should actually be held in the Greek island camps, registered and then sent back to Turkey after accelerated proceedings. Greek authorities, however, have not acceded to Brussels' demand to recognize Turkey as a "safe country of origin." Instead, they are examining each case individually to determine if the applicant has the right to protection in Europe."

Source: "İtalya'da 'AB-Türkiye mülteci anlaşması durdurulsun' çağrısı (Italians call for 'stopping the EU-Turkey refugee deal')," *BBC in Turkish*, 21 July 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-36855355>

Following the events in Turkey after the coup attempt, there are calls from Italy to end the refugee deal between Turkey and the EU... The Head of the [Italian] House of Representatives Laura Boldrini said that Turkey does not meet the legal and political standards that the agreement requires and thus cannot be considered a safe country, calling for the EU to halt the agreement. Boldrini argued that the management of refugees should be done directly by the EU, and that otherwise 'the EU would lose its authority'.

Source: "Türkiye ile mülteci anlaşması çökerse kaos yaşanacak (If the refugee deal with Turkey collapses, there will be chaos)," *Sabah*, 19 October 2016, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/dunya/2016/10/19/turkiye-ile-multeci-anlasmasi-cokerse-kaos-yasanacak>

Gerald Knaus [the head of the European Stability Initiative], said that if the deal with Turkey collapses, hundreds of thousands of refugees would reach the shores of Greece from the sea and its northern land borders, turning the Balkans into "a war zone for refugees, traffickers, border guards and troops."



Tim Thomas's *Recasting the Red Star* describes Russia's culture of military thought through its modernization effort. Adding to his robust library of work on the subject, Tim Thomas illuminates Russia's Defense Ministry reform efforts, the Russian national security strategy take on the operational environment, and a relevant review of the Russian military doctrine.



Iran: New Heavy Engines on the Drawing Board

OE Watch Commentary: The Iranian government appears to be doubling down on its indigenous military aircraft industry. This is interesting given that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (and corollary UN Security Council Resolution 2231) enables it to import defensive weaponry immediately, and offensive weaponry in seven years. The latest announcement of military advances—excerpted from an article from *Fars News* but which appeared in similar forms in many other Iranian defense outlets—notes that the Iranian government has unveiled a new jet engine manufacturing capability.

According to the piece, the first Iranian national turbojet aircraft will be a spring board for the development of heavy turbojet and turbofan engines. While jet engines may be standard for aircraft, the turbofan enables greater thrust. However, in terms of aerodynamics, it can obstruct the supersonic flight needed for military jet fighters. The turbojet, meanwhile, could potentially enable Iran to build military craft that exceed the speed of sound; the Concorde used turbojet engines to reach speeds of Mach 2.0. Photos indicate a similarity to the General Electric J85.

The Iranian indigenous military industry appears to be reverse engineering jet airplane parts. This may complicate issues relating to the potential sale of 100 Boeing aircraft to Iran, especially since the seating capacity for such a sale exceeds the current total of Iranian civilian air traffic by a factor of at least three. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“The next step in heavy engine design is expected within two years.”

Source: “Tarahi va Sakht-e Motorha-ye Sangin-e Turbojet va Turbofan Zarif 2 Ayandeh, (Design and Construction of Heavy Turbojet and Turbofan Engines within Two Years),” *Fars News*, 13 September 2016, <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13950623000873>

New Jet Engines to be Constructed within Two Years

Gen. Hossein Dehghan, minister of Defense and Armed Force Logistics, celebrating those who designed and built the first national turbojet aircraft, dubbed the ‘Owj,’ and speaking about the design and construction of the engine, talked about national pride and the development as a spring board for the development of heavy turbojet and turbofan engines. Dehghan said these outstanding achievements are the result of a collective effort, jihad, and the sincere cooperation of all sectors of the aviation agency toward a common goal, and he added, “This is for the honor, value, and pleasure of all the nation of Iran.” He said that the Owj motor was the result of the cooperation and collaboration of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army Air Force, 30 specialist companies, and ten universities with the Defense Ministry’s Aviation Industries Organization and he said the next step in this heavy engine turbojet and turbofan design and construction is expected to be concluded within the next two years.



President Rouhani unveils the Owj (“Zenith”) turbojet, August 2016.
Source: Tasnim News, goo.gl/QliVdF



Iran: Russia Desperate for Our UAV Technology

OE Watch Commentary: The Iranian unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) program may have its origins in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War, but it has become perhaps the most rapidly expanding element of Iran's indigenous military industry. In recent months, the Iranian government has announced breakthroughs in GPS-guidance for UAVs as well as new models of long-range surveillance, attack, and even a line of supposedly stealth drones modeled after the captured US RQ-170 Sentinel.

While the Iranian government has, in the past, exaggerated its military industrial accomplishments, its willingness to export UAV technology is plausible. It appears to have sold its Mohajer-2 drone to Venezuela, and the Ababil-3 to Sudan. It has also reportedly provided drones to Armenia. Iranian officials have acknowledged manufacturing drones abroad and bragged not only about sending the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to operate drones in Syria and Iraq, but also proliferating directly to Shi'ite militias in Iraq and Lebanese Hezbollah.

It is against this backdrop that the excerpted article from a news portal close to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is interesting. The piece notes the Iranian Chief of Staff's statement that Russia has sought Iranian help on the science of long-range drones. On the sidelines of the 2015 Mags Air Show, the Head of Iran's Aviation Industries Organization Manouchehr Manteghi had said that Russia had sought out Iranian drone technology. While at the time that appeared to be an exaggeration, the fact that the chief-of-staff for the Iranian armed forces is repeating the technology-sharing claim suggests that the relationship between the Iranian UAV industry and Russia may be deeper. Part of this may relate to the RQ-170, the exploitation of whose technology Iranian officials reportedly allowed Russian and Chinese engineers to participate.

Also interesting is the open acknowledgment that Iranian military industries are using the conflicts in Syria and Iraq as laboratories to test new platforms and weaponry. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“The Russians have sought our help on the science of long-range drones”

Source: “Rusiya Shadidan Donbal Komak-e Iran baraye Dastyabe beh ‘Ilm-e Pehpadha-ye Durbarad Ast (Russia Strongly Seeking Iran’s Help on Achieving Long-Range Drone Technology),” *Tasnim News*, 25 September 2016. www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1395/07/04/1195227/ - روسیه شدیداً دنبال کمک ایران برای دستیابی به علم پهپادهای دوربرد است

Iran Says Russia Desperate for Iranian UAV Technology

Major General Mohammad Bagheri, chief of staff for the Armed Forces, this morning at a ceremony at the Supreme National Defense University, said the Holy Defense can be studied from different aspects, and one aspect of that was knowledge and the creation of knowledge for the future. The Sacred Defense can be viewed from this heroic aspect, but it can also be examined from the scientific aspect. After the Sacred Defense, I entered a geography program and I studied and I realized the depth that we achieved with Operation Valfajr-8, and about 15 battalions crossed the river which until now has not been experienced anywhere in the world, and knowledge of that doesn't exist.

The chief of staff of the armed forces said that so much knowledge came out of wars, and pointed out that knowledge can come from such basic things, and even today with Syria and Iraq in combat against terrorists, can also be a competition for the production of knowledge.

Gen. Bagheri said, today long-range drones are able to identify and target a base of one square meter, and the knowledge of these are at the disposal of one of two countries. He stated, the Russians have sought our help on the science of long-range drones. The Americans have this knowledge and, certainly because of them, the Israelis do too.



Iran's New "Saegheh" (Thunderbolt) UAV
Source: Alalam.ir, <http://goo.gl/ck9lcb>



Iran: Launch of New Zulfiqar Ballistic Missile

OE Watch Commentary: Many claim that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the so-called nuclear deal, does not lift sanctions on Iran's ballistic missile program. In March 2016, several UN ambassadors sent a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon saying that Iran's multiple ballistic tests involving nuclear-warhead capable missiles were "inconsistent with" and "in defiance of" UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

Nevertheless, Iran's ballistic missile program remains increasingly public. While some are most concerned with the potential for long-range ballistic missiles (the development of which the Iranian government conducts under the guise of a satellite launch program), the Iranians conduct significantly more work in shorter-range missiles. In the article excerpted here from an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps portal, the minister of defense discusses the successful launch of a new Zulfiqar missile with a range of 435-miles. (The missile is named for the sword which the Prophet Muhammad gave to the Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib ahead of the 625 AD Battle of Uhud). The new missile was included in a military parade in Bandar Abbas, Iran's main Persian Gulf port.

While Israel remains outside the range of the new Zulfiqar missile, other potential targets—Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Manama, Bahraini; Ankara, Turkey; and Karachi, Pakistan—are well within its range. This represents a significant upgrade from the SCUD-C's which Iran acquired from North Korea. Thus, Iran's ballistic missile advancements will spark greater regional concern and potentially catalyze a missile race between Gulf Cooperation Council states and Iran.

Minister of Defense Hossein Dehghan has also suggested that the Zulfiqar may only be the first of several new announcements relating to Iran's ballistic missile arsenal. He stated that Iran would unveil the "Ghadir solid-fuel missile," the "Sejjil precision-guided missile," and the "Khoramshahr" missile before the end of the Persian year in March 2017. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

"The rocket has significantly increased the strength of the armed forces."

Source: "Avalin Tasavir az Lahzeh-e Shalik-e Mushak-e Balistik Zulfiqar (The First Images from the Moment the Zulfiqar Ballistic Missile was Launched)," *Mashregh News*, 25 September 2016, www.mashreghnews.ir/fa/news/635137/ - اولین تصویر از لحظه شلیک موشک بالستیک ذوالفقار

The Zulfiqar Ballistic Missile Unveiled

The first images from the moment of firing the Zulfiqar ballistic missiles have been published. The production line of this missile was opened to coincide with Sacred Defense week and in the presence of Gen. Dehghan, Minister of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics. The Zulfiqar missile is a ground-to-ground, single-stage solid fuel missile which is able to hit and destroy targets at a range of 700 kilometers [435 miles]. Its mobile and self-propelled launch pad, stealth, precision, and tactical style, are other special features of the Zulfiqar. With its incorporation into the armed forces, the rocket has significantly increased their strength and combat power. The Zulfiqar missile was unveiled for the first time in the military parade in Bandar Abbas.



Zulfiqar missile on display, unveiled for the first time in a Bandar Abbas, September 26, 2016.
Source: *Mashregh News*, <http://goo.gl/3UuJZ3>



The Return of Yemen's Republican Guard

OE Watch Commentary: When Ali Abdullah Saleh resigned from Yemen's presidency in late 2011, he did not relinquish control over the country's best-equipped forces, most importantly the Yemeni Republican Guard (YRG). Nearly five turbulent years later and after attempts by both the transitional government and the Huthis to bring the YRG into their own chain of command, Saleh loyalists continue to hold the most sway in the YRG.

The post-Saleh transitional period (2012-2014) sought to tame the YRG by dismissing Saleh family members from top YRG command posts and replacing them with career officers from the conventional forces. The YRG was merged with other units and became the "Reserve Forces." Major General Ali al-Jaifi, a veteran of North Yemen's Army, was nominally put in charge of the Reserve Forces.

The restructuring was successful on paper, but its limits were laid bare when in September 2014 the Huthis overran Sana'a and expelled the Saudi-backed interim government, with little to no resistance from the Reserve Forces. In the ensuing months, the Huthi Movement sought to bring the Reserve Forces into its own chain of command by courting al-Jaifi, appointing Huthi loyalists to key military positions, and incorporating hundreds of their followers into Reserve Forces ranks.

As the first accompanying excerpt notes, in August 2016 the Reserve Forces went back to being called the Republican Guard. A few weeks later, rumors emerged that Saleh's nephew Tariq, former commander of an elite YRG brigade, would replace al-Jaifi. He later denied this in a Tweet, which is translated alongside this commentary. Ali al-Jaifi was killed in the Saudi coalition's 8 October bombing of a funeral ceremony in Sana'a. The following day, Ali Abdullah Saleh called on military units to head to fronts on the border with Saudi Arabia, in particular addressing units that had been restructured during the transitional period. According to the fourth accompanying article, al-Jaifi will be replaced by Lt. Gen. Murad al-Awbali, a staunch loyalist from Saleh's Sanhan tribe. Al-Awbali has been in charge of the YRG 62d Brigade in Arhab since 2012. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

"... I call...on the armed and security forces that were included in the restructuring... to head to the fighting fronts on the border to exact revenge ..." — Ali Abdullah Saleh



Source: الحوثي يوجه بإعادة تسمية قوات الاحتياط الموالية لصالح إلى قوات الحرس الجمهوري "Al-Huthi Calls for pro-Saleh Reserve Forces to be Called Republican Guard Again." *Yemen Press*. 3 August 2016. <http://yemen-press.com/news78904.html>

The head of the Supreme Revolutionary Council Mohammed Ali al-Huthi, called on Wednesday for the Reserve Forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh to once again be called the Republican Guard, which is the name they used before restructuring.

Source: Tariq Mohammed Saleh @tarikyemen, Twitter Feed (Arabic). 26 August 2016. <https://twitter.com/tarikyemen/status/769293237165187072>

"There has been no change in the leadership of the Republican Guard. Brig. Gen. Ali al-Jaifi remains in his position. The political leadership will find no one better suited to lead the Republican Guard."

Source: نص كلمة الزعيم علي عبدالله صالح عن جريمة القاعة الكبرى "Text from the Speech by Leader Ali Abdullah Saleh on the Great Hall Crime." *al-Motamar*. 9 October 2016. <http://www.almotamar.net/news/132653.htm>

The time has come and I call on all members of the armed forces, security service and popular committees, and in particular on the armed and security forces that were included in the restructuring by the fugitive Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi, to head to the fighting fronts on the border to exact revenge...

Source: أنباء عن تكليف العوبلي قائد للحرس الجمهوري خلفا لالجايفي "Report that al-Awbali Replaces al-Jaifi as Republican Guard Leader," *Yemen Press*. 11 October 2016. <http://yemen-press.com/news83024.html>

A military source claimed that the pro-coup defense ministry appointed Lt. Gen. Murad al-Awbali, commander of the Republican Guard's 62d Brigade, as the Republican Guard's new commander in place of the martyred Brig. Gen. Ali bin Ali al-Jaifi, who was killed in the Great Hall in Sana'a.



Aistenok 1L271: Little Storks in Aleppo

OE Watch Commentary: On 12 September, the Russian Defense Ministry hosted a press briefing to mark the start of the US-Russia backed ceasefire in Syria. At the briefing and speaking via videoconference from Aleppo, Syrian Brig. Gen. Nizar Mohammed Sayid requested that the Russians provide his forces with artillery monitoring systems to help identify ceasefire violations. Russian Lt. Gen. Sergei Rudskoy responded that the request would be considered. Three days later, the Syrian military officially thanked the Russians for providing them with the Russian Aistenok 1L271 Portable Artillery Reconnaissance Radar System, as the first accompanying article notes.



Syrian Commander (upper left corner) thanking Russian military for providing Aistenok radar system (9/15/16).
Source: https://twitter.com/C_Military1/status/776480650148900864

The Aistenok 1L271 (Little Stork) system can be used to monitor artillery fire, as the second accompanying excerpt explains. In the context of a truce, Syrian forces would use it to pinpoint the location of violations so as to inform the ceasefire monitoring body. More importantly, the system can be used to convey targeting information for quick and precise counter-battery fire. With the collapse of the ceasefire, Syrian units will presumably begin employing the Aistenok system in this manner.

Improvised rocket-assisted munitions fired from rebel-held areas have been an ongoing concern in government-held parts of both Aleppo and Damascus. The 1L271 radar system, combined with advanced Russian artillery systems, would greatly boost the Syrian military's ability to suppress rebel shelling. Though the Aistenok has a fairly limited range, it is mobile and can be quickly deployed by small teams, making it ideal for contested urban environments with static fronts like Aleppo, Syria or Donetsk, Ukraine. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**



“... The Russian armed forces have more powerful reconnaissance radar systems in service, but it is “Aistenok” that is most mobile and significantly increases the firepower of artillery...”

Aistenok Portable Reconnaissance Radar System

Source: By Allocator (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) or GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>)], via Wikimedia Commons

Source:

دمشق تتوجه بالشكر لوزارة الدفاع الروسية

“Damascus Thanks the Russian Defense Ministry,”
Sputnik News. 15 September 2016. https://arabic.sputniknews.com/arab_world/20160915/1020155895.html

Over a videoconference with the Russian Defense Ministry's National Center for Coordinating Operations, the Syrian government's spokesman said: “Allow me to thank you for providing us with the Aistenok Artillery Monitoring System, which has made the ability to monitoring the ceasefire regime much more effective.”

Source: “New Portable Radar to Help Reduce Battlefield ‘Accidents’,” *Russia & India Report*. 31 March 2015. https://in.rbth.com/economics/2015/03/31/new_portable_radar_to_help_reduce_battlefield_accidents_42295

The system weighs 135 kg and is modular. This enables reconnaissance units to relocate “Aistenok” by car and even manually, with 3-4 people... At very short distances it can track mortar rounds from 81 to 120 mm during flight. Additionally, the system calculates the mortar flight parameters and determines its launching or landing point. Calculating the launching point allows accurate retaliatory strikes against enemy mortar, calculating and adjusting the landing point... It is effective to control the firing of artillery from 122 to 152 mm caliber. The radar pinpoints explosions of projectiles and calculates their location at a distance of 10 km, accordingly adjusting the fire... The Russian armed forces have more powerful reconnaissance radar systems in service, but it is “Aistenok” that is most mobile and significantly increases the firepower of artillery.



Egypt: Rumors Fuel Rift with Saudi, Rapprochement with Russia

OE Watch Commentary: There has been an uptick in speculation that Egypt is realigning its regional policies away from Saudi Arabia and toward Russia. The latest development backing this claim was a joint Russian-Egyptian military exercise called “Defenders of Friendship 2016,” announced in early October and held two weeks later. According to the first accompanying excerpt, this was the first time that Russian paratroopers trained on African territory with their own weapons and equipment. Citing the Russian Defense Ministry, the excerpt adds that the drills aim to give Russian paratroopers experience in the desert, and test new uniforms and parachutes in a hot environment. Further evidence for those noticing a Cairo-Moscow rapprochement came a few days after the exercises were announced, when the Russian newspaper *Izvestia* claimed that Russia was negotiating to rehabilitate and lease a former Soviet naval base in Sidi Barrani, on Egypt’s Mediterranean coast near the border with Libya. Egyptian authorities denied the rumor the following day.

Growing cooperation with Russia is straining Egypt’s relations with Saudi Arabia. In late August, for instance, hundreds of Sunni Muslim scholars met in Grozny to discuss Sunni identity. Egypt sent a high-level delegation that included the country’s Mufti and the head of al-Azhar, Egypt’s main center of Islamic teaching. Saudi Arabia’s religious authorities were absent, and the final communiqué excluded Saudi Arabia’s Salafi-Wahhabism from its definition of conventional Sunni practice.

In October, Egypt voted in favor of a Russian-sponsored United Nations Security Council Resolution regarding Syria. Egypt also voted for a competing French- and Spanish-sponsored resolution that was backed by Saudi Arabia. The pro-Russian vote, though, was seen as an affront given the massive Saudi transfers of cash and fuel to Egypt over the past three years. Shortly after the vote, Saudi Arabia threatened to halt monthly fuel subsidies to the Egyptian government.

Although the Saudi and Egyptian governments have been keen to minimize the alleged rift, there are limits to their control over the rumor mill. As noted in the second accompanying article from the news website *al-Rai al-Youm*, President Sisi of Egypt recently instructed Egypt’s main dailies to tone down their rhetoric toward Saudi Arabia. At the same time, he acknowledged the limits of state control over privately owned outlets and social media exchanges, which are where the rift is being enflamed and risks reverberating out of control.

One of the Egyptian government’s most strident and influential media opponents is the independent daily *al-Araby al-Jadid*, which recently published an article claiming that Egyptian navy officers have supported the anti-Saudi forces in Yemen for several months, even providing them with “a dozen advanced military boats.” At the time of writing, a rumor that Egypt had dropped out of the Saudi coalition in Yemen was making the rounds in social media. Relations between Egypt and Saudi Arabia may be “clear as a cloudless sky” beneath the surface, as President Sisi claims, but they are looking increasingly stormy from above. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

“... Egypt is changing, playing all of its cards and exerting pressure however it can...”

Source: “New Uniforms & Parachutes: Russian Forces in Egypt Decked Out With Latest Gear,” *Sputnik*. 8 October 2016. <https://sputniknews.com/military/201610081046134583-russian-equipment-egypt-drills/>

The drills, meant to simulate the destruction of terrorist groups in a desert environment, will be the first-ever deployment of Russian Airborne Troops stocked with their own weapons and equipment on the African continent. Late last week, the Defense Ministry said that Russian Airborne Forces’ troops would be equipped with brand new uniforms, developed specifically for hot climates and featuring high capacity thermoregulation and humidity resistance. On Saturday, the Defense Ministry said that Russian forces will also be using the latest parachutes – the Arbalet (‘Crossbow’) series of steerable parachutes... The Arbalet series of parachutes is used by special forces and reconnaissance units of the Russian Airborne Forces, and was successfully tested in the Arctic earlier this year...

Source: السيسى يستخدم الاعلام نفسه الذي اجج الازمة مع السعودية للتهينة “Sisi Uses the Same Media Outlets that Inflamed the Crisis with Saudi Arabia to Calm it,” *al-Rai al-Youm*. 16 October 2016. <http://www.raialyoum.com/?p=543330>

... This became clear after President Sisi’s meeting with Egypt’s three main newspapers, in which he said “media treatment and social media discussions are what have created this picture (of a crisis); relations between Saudi and Egypt, however, are clear as a cloudless sky”... Egypt has decided to return to Russian tutelage by rehabilitating the Russian Naval Base in Sidi Barrani and participating in major exercises with Russian forces... it has not to this date publicly condemned the missile shot from Yemeni territory controlled by the Huthis which struck and destroyed a UAE ship... Egypt is changing, playing all of its cards and exerting pressure however it can. The problem is Saudi leadership has not understood these and other changes in the region...

Source: أسلحة مصرية للحوثيين وقنوات اتصال مع الاستخبارات “Egyptian Weapons for the Huthis and Communications Channels with Intelligence Agencies,” *al-Araby al-Jadid*. 15 October 2016. <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2016/10/16/yemens-houthi-rebels-receiving-egyptian-military-hardware>

Houthi rebels have received a dozen advanced military boats and other supplies from Egypt, a senior Yemeni official has told The New Arab. The official who works directly with the Houthis and their allies on Yemen’s western coast alleges that the Egyptian navy delivered the hardware to the rebels in the past two months. The anonymous official said that the boats were supplied by the Egyptian navy... despite Egypt’s government having close ties with Saudi Arabia, Cairo also established good relations with the Yemeni rebels after the start of the Saudi-led military intervention in the country.



African Union's Plans to Fund Peacekeeping

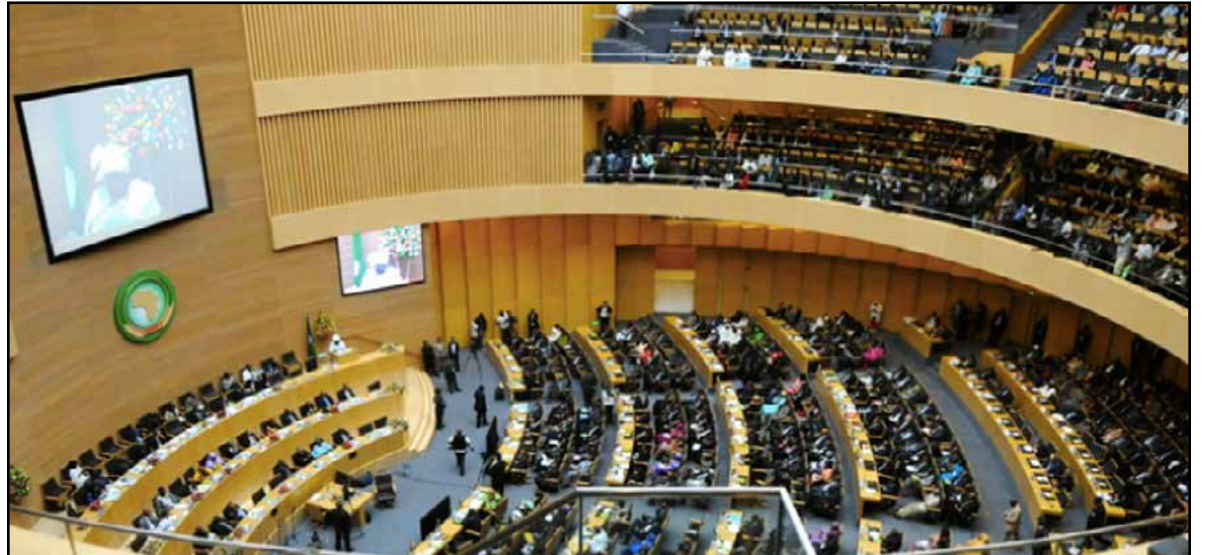
OE Watch Commentary: Proposed in July 2016, the African Union's (AU) plan to fund its peace support operations more robustly is getting increased scrutiny, and could have profound impacts on the peace and security of the continent. Yet, as the below interview with one of the African Union's most prominent insiders, Dr. Mehari Maru, articulates, the plan itself might be worthwhile, but member states' willingness to implement it could be its downfall.

Called the "Kaberuka Plan" after its proposer, Dr. Donald Kaberuka, the AU's High Representative for its Peace Fund, the new plan is meant to encourage African states to take greater ownership over AU peace support operations by contributing a greater portion of the costs. Currently, outside funders - especially the UN and the European Union - fund about 98% of the AU's peace support operations, which means that African states have little ownership or latitude. In contrast, the Kaberuka plan envisages the AU contributing 25% for all AU peace support operations, a total of around \$1.2 billion, with the UN contributing the remaining 75%. The AU's jump from 2% to 25% of AU peacekeeping contributions would be facilitated by a 0.2% tax on all eligible imports to AU member countries.

If the plan actually materializes, it could have profound impacts on the way that African states undertake peacekeeping efforts. Due to the AU's current inability to self-fund, missions that begin under the auspices of the AU almost always become UN missions, which are deemed largely ineffective due to the nature of UN peacekeeping mandates. These mandates demand that peacekeepers cannot fire unless fired upon; that they will only be deployed if there is actually a peace to keep; and that conflicting parties consent to their presence. In contrast, the AU, and its African Peace and Security Architecture do allow for an offensive stance towards fighting sources of instability: namely, using force in an offensive manner to fight terrorism, and do not necessarily demand that parties consent to their presence.

Yet, as described in the interview with Maru, questions still remain as to how states will collect the 0.2% tax, and whether they will actually render that money to the AU. In short, the Kaberuka plan may well have tangible impacts on the peace and security of the African continent, but whether or not states will successfully institute the 0.2% tax required for it to work, and then transfer that money to the AU, is yet to be seen. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)**

“[The most problematic assumption with the Kaberuka plan is] that member states will effectively collect the money; that they have the capability to collect, the willingness to collect, and the determination to transfer the money that they collect from importers to the AU.”



The so-called "Kaberuka Plan" to finance the African Union's peacekeeping operations could improve the AU's efficacy and ownership in ensuring peace and security on the continent. However, some experts are skeptical that states will follow through as the plan demands.

Source: <http://www.afribar.org/2016/01/14/au-executive-council-concerned-about-illegal-occupation-of-western-sahara/>

Source: Kwibuka, Eugena and Mukamurenzi, Ritah. "Political Will to Determine Success of New African Union Funding Model, Says Expert." *The New Times* (Kigali, Rwanda). 12 September 2016. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201609120024.html>

What's your overall view about the new funding model for the AU?

That [is] an assumption. That member states will effectively collect the money; that they have the capability to collect, the willingness to collect, and the determination to transfer the money that they collect from importers to the AU. This is the biggest assumption that this formula has.

The second assumption is that indeed member states know how much they import and have the system and the database to determine how much they get and that means if they know they have to inform how much they are importing and then at the same time they have to transfer what they collect...

Its economic merits and advantages are to take this contribution as also encouraging import substitution by increasing the taxation but it doesn't take serious consideration on what I call the fundamental flaws of the AU contribution system, [which is] that is dependent on member states.

So, you don't think it's feasible?

The biggest and key question I have is: "what is different in this proposal than the others on the issue of member states' determination to contribute?" Previously, it's not because of the lack of money that member states were not contributing but the lack of determination, capability, propensity, willingness, energy and commitment of the leadership to contribute to the African Union so that it can stand on its own feet. So, that is lacking.

Do you think some countries collect this money and not hand it to AU?

Even in the discussions and decisions of AU, it is indicated that some member states default as they used to do before.



Ethiopia's State of Emergency

OE Watch Commentary: Protests in the city of Bishoftu, some 50 km from Addis Ababa, turned deadly on 2 October as protestors fled from riot police, with a stampede ensuing. 52 were killed. As a result, protests against the government resumed. In response, the ruling EPDRF party of Ethiopia - in power since 1991 - announced on 9 October that the country would henceforth be under a six-month state of emergency. The accompanying article describes from an Ethiopian perspective, the causes and political logic of the declaration of the state of emergency.

To recall, the early October protests that preceded the state of emergency were precipitated by the announcement in 2015 of plans to expand the federal capital territory of Addis Ababa further south, taking up farm lands owned by ethnic Oromos. Despite comprising around 40% of the total Ethiopian population, ethnic Oromos have been largely excluded from powerful seats in the government and military. Instead, the domination of Ethiopian government by members of the Tigray ethnic group (comprising only about 4% of the country's total population) is a well-worn complaint of citizens. Indeed, there is an extremely disproportionate percentage of Tigray, especially in the country's military. (For more information, see: "The Ethno-Military Dimensions of Current Ethiopian Instability," *OE Watch*, October 2016). The Amharas, the second-largest ethnic group in the country, have joined the Oromo in the protests. Since the protests began in November 2015, hundreds of dissidents have been killed, and tens of thousands have been jailed.

What are the implications of the new state of emergency? First, it puts the world on watch that the government of Ethiopia might be on the brink of wider violence. Second, observers should expect communication both within and outside the country to be heavily monitored. The author's private communications have revealed that Facebook Messenger has been shut down in the country, as has Ethiopia's 3G cellular network. Third, with new trepidations at home, Ethiopia will likely divert some of its resources devoted to fighting terrorism in the Horn of Africa - especially in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) - back home to deal with domestic insecurity. Thus, how the state of emergency plays out domestically could have wider-ranging impacts internationally.

End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)

“The state of emergency was needed to repulse... ‘the danger posed by anti-peace elements and foreign enemies on the peace, security and stability of the nation.’”



The ruling government of Ethiopia has declared a state of emergency after ethnic protests against it have broken out around the country. Various military and security implications will likely follow.
Source: <http://ethsat.com/ethiopian-declares-state-emergency/>

Source: “Destabilized regime declares state of emergency in Ethiopia.” *EthioSatelliteNews* (Ethiopian Diaspora), 9 October 2016. <http://ethsat.com/ethiopian-declares-state-emergency/>

The [Tigray]-led government, shaken by widespread protests, declared Sunday a six-month long state of emergency.

The titular Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn said in a televised address to the nation that the state of emergency was needed to repulse what he called “the danger posed by anti-peace elements and foreign enemies on the peace, security and stability of the nation.”...

Protests were reignited this week after the death of hundreds of festival goers the Oromos celebrated Ireecha, an annual thanksgiving and a festival to welcome spring. Security forces were accused of causing the mayhem by shooting into the massive crowd and throwing gas canisters. The actions taken by security forces triggered a stampede which reportedly caused the death of nearly 700 people.

The Prime Minister said the state of emergency “would not infringe human rights enshrined in the Ethiopian constitution and diplomatic rights listed in the Vienna Convention.” But the minority regime has been widely accused of committing gross human rights violations since it came to power in 1991.



Refugee Camp Attack in Niger

OE Watch Commentary: Militants in the remote Tahoma region of central-west Niger have attacked the Tazalit refugee camp in Niger, in what was largely considered to be an off-limit attack. The accompanying article from the Nigerien media describes the nature and purposes of the attack, and suggests the involvement of criminals or terrorists engaged in drug and arms trafficking.

The camp that was attacked was harboring refugees from neighboring Mali, which has been thrown into chaos since the 2012 collapse of the Malian government. As of this writing, the affiliations of the assailants have yet to be determined. However, many observers, including the author of the accompanying article, believe that the militants are likely from the Kidal region of Mali. Indeed, many of those in the camp had been fleeing a number of often overlapping extremist groups in Mali, and especially Kidal, including elements of al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Ansar Dine.

Niger also hosts another substantial refugee camp in the southeastern town of Bosso, for Nigerian refugees fleeing Boko Haram. It also worries about the infiltration of ISIS fighters from its northern borders with Libya. In addition to the political turmoil engulfing its western neighbor, Niger is also beset, like the rest of the Swahilian west African countries, with rampant arms, drug, and human trafficking markets, exacerbated by the region's harsh desert geography and vast size. While the French counter-terrorism efforts 'la Barkhane' have slowed down such illicit activity, the attacks on refugee camps like that of Tazalit show that substantial work is yet to be done. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)**

“The inflow of arms from Libya [after the fall of Qaddafi in 2011] has declined with the intervention of the French anti-terrorist force. Therefore, ‘Today, everyone needs arms and ammo.’”



Source: <http://www.actuniger.com/societe/12144-l%E2%80%99attaque-de-tazalit-men%C3%A9e-par-des-%C2%ABgroupes-de-narcoterroristes%C2%BB.html>

Source: “L’attaque de Tazalit men par des ‘groupes de narcoterrorists’ (Tazalit attack led by ‘narcoterrorist group’),” *ActuNiger* (Niamey, Niger), 7 October 2016. <http://www.actuniger.com/societe/12144-l%E2%80%99attaque-de-tazalit-men%C3%A9e-par-des-%C2%ABgroupes-de-narcoterroristes%C2%BB.html>

Having arrived from the Malian border by the grand valley of Azawad, the assailants, who seemingly prepared their attacks, chose the lunch hour to launch their deadly attack.

22 Nigerien soldiers were gunned down with little resistance. “A band of non-identified criminals” was how the minister of defense described them...

The assailants lingered at the site for several hours after the attacks, giving them time to loot empty stores, take pharmaceutical supplies from the refugee camp, the arms of the fallen soldiers, as well as an army vehicle and one from the UN’s Commissioner for Refugees. They also burned the refugee camp’s only ambulance.

“It’s a transit point,” confirmed an African diplomat based in Niamey...He explained that the inflow of arms from Libya [after the fall of Qaddafi in 2011] has declined with the intervention of the French anti-terrorist force. Therefore, “Today, everyone needs arms and ammo.”

When a River Runs Through It: Riverine Operations in Contemporary Conflict

By LTC (R) Lester Grau, LTC (R) Leroy Denniston

Waterways and population centers will be factors in future war. Frequently they will be collocated and will become operational key terrain. Riverine operations will be a part of future military actions and will be an Army problem. The best way to prepare for a future problem is through study, training, and equipment design and development.

http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/20150609_Grau_RiverineOpsInContempConflict.pdf



Does Boko Haram's Alliance with ISIS Rely on Taxing Migrant Traffickers?

OE Watch Commentary: The adjacent article from *Africanews* dated 13 September provides an overview of the ongoing and increasing migrant traffic from sub-Saharan Africa to Libya, where migrants take boats to get to Europe. While the number of migrants passing the Niger-Libya route was 120,000 in 2015, it is set to top 300,000 in 2016. Each migrant pays traffickers at least \$500 to make the trip, with success anything but a guarantee and death a possibility.

One key issue from a security perspective is whether terrorist groups are profiting from migrant trafficking. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), for example, has infiltrated local communities in the Sahel and either taxed or extorted clan and village leaders who run the migrant trafficking and smuggling routes. The Islamic State (ISIS) is likely also playing, or trying to play, a similar role in taxing or extorting the Toubou and Tuareg clans in southern Libya who run the trade, since having transferred sub-Saharan African fighters from Sirte in northern Libya to southern Libya in the wake of a government offensive in Sirte.

ISIS's recent appointment of Abu Musab al-Barnawi—the son of Boko Haram's founder and an operative with close ties to AQIM and a strong base of support in Niger—as the leader of its West Africa Province could also be tied to migration trafficking. If ISIS can control both the southern Libya and the southern Niger routes, it could generate key funds at a time when it is losing territory and resources. An economic arrangement binding ISIS and al-Barnawi seems more plausible in light of the ideological differences between the two. Al-Barnawi had condemned the excessive brutality that characterizes ISIS and the former West Africa Province leader, Abubakar Shekau, who ISIS dropped from that position in favor of al-Barnawi. Thus economics more than ideology may be the driving factor in al-Barnawi's relationship with ISIS¹

The article rightly points out that European countries are attempting to curb migrant trafficking, while African nations should do more to open up economic opportunities at home so migrants do not feel a need to leave. Yet, concerns about the relationship between migrant trafficking and terrorism financing are likely to become prominent, in which case the migration issue will evolve from one about development and economic policy to one of security policy, if not already also domestic politics of European nations. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

“Although home to some of the continent's fastest growing economies, with the collapse of foreign tourism due to the rise of armed Islamist groups in the Sahara, West Africa is struggling to generate enough jobs for its mushrooming young population.”

Source: “Agadez town is meeting point for Europe-bound West African migrants,” *Africanews.com*, 13 September 2016. <http://www.africanews.com/2016/09/13/niger-agadez-town-is-meeting-point-for-europe-bound-west-african-migrants/>

Thousands pay smugglers to make the dangerous journey across the Sahara to Libya. From there, they take their chances with smugglers across the Mediterranean. You have to survive the security situation in Libya, which is clearly not easy, not even for the Libyans themselves. And then, you have to cross the Mediterranean, so it's a very dangerous journey.

There is an established path by bus through countries like Mali and Burkina Faso to Agadez, where migrants buy passage from people-smugglers towards Algeria or across the Sahara to Libya. From there, they take their chances with smugglers across the Mediterranean. Smugglers who ferry migrants across the Sahara take up to \$500 a time.

Although home to some of the continent's fastest growing economies, with the collapse of foreign tourism due to the rise of armed Islamist groups in the Sahara, West Africa is struggling to generate enough jobs for its mushrooming young population. Today, Libya, still lawless, remains the only viable route to Europe after Algeria, Morocco and the Canary Islands successfully blocked the way. Europe is searching for new ways to close the route. Africa should work on developing more work opportunities for its citizens to encourage them to build themselves at home instead of making the perilous crossing.

1 An article on Abu Musab al-Barnawi's activities in Niger can be found at <https://jamestown.org/program/boko-haram-abu-musab-al-barnawis-leadership-coup-and-offensive-in-niger/#!>



Thousands of migrants from sub-Saharan African are being trafficked from Niger to ports in Libya, with various terrorist groups and traffickers trying to profit from this industry along the way. Source: <http://www.voanews.com/a/iom-18migrants-found-dead-in-niger-desert/2825771.html>



Ignoring the 'No' in Colombia?

“What we are into now, is....facing the non-recognition of the popular will.”

OE Watch Commentary: On 2 October, Colombians held a plebiscite in which they could vote YES or NO to the accords at which the administration of Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos and leaders of the FARC had arrived. Details of the proposed accord were published in a 297-page document. Much debate revolved around what the consequences might be of a NO vote, were that improbable result to occur. The Santos administration insisted that a NO vote would require an entirely new effort, that the peace process and the accord would be nullified and wasted. It was, in effect, an argument for YES on the basis of sunken costs and lost opportunity. In their argumentation and publicity, the Santos administration, as well as the FARC and an array of national and international institutions, paired a YES vote with peace and a NO vote with continued violent conflict. The NO won. As the referenced editorial exemplifies, many of the NO persuasion are highly dismayed at the attitude of the YES proponents, who claim that the vote was an aberration, perhaps caused by bad weather, and should be ignored. The YES people, according to the NO people, are stepping into the dangerous ground of ignoring the value of a democratic electoral process, in this case a process the YES people themselves designed. To the NO people, the YES people are not only trying to discredit and ignore the plebiscite, they are endangering all future Colombian votes. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

Source: Javier Contreras, “Desconocer el ‘No’” (Ignoring the ‘No’), *Libreta de Apuntes*, 12 October 2016, <http://libretadeapuntes.com/2016/10/desconocer-el-no/>.

“What we are into now, is, nothing more or less, facing the non-recognition of the popular will. The victory of the ‘NO’ that received 6,431,376 votes is being ignored. Many are speaking of a Pyrrhic victory because the difference was ‘merely’ 53,534 votes (the YES obtained 6,377, 482. But had it been by only one single vote, the results would have been the same, NO beat the YES....

A Pandora’s box has been opened that we do not know where ignoring some electoral results will lead. We are left exposed to having participatory democracy treated as no more than a statement, and that the popular will is not truly reflected in the ballot box.”

FARC Leader Comments on the Peace Process

“...it seemed to us impossible that the citizens would contemplate the option of rejecting what we had been constructing...”

OE Watch Commentary: The aftermath of the plebiscite, in which voters rejected the heralded FARC-Government accords, is an odd time politically in Colombia. The outcome was very unexpected by the accords’ proponents, including the leaders of the FARC. Now the whole population is wondering what the next steps are going to be. Will the government try to tinker with the accords and set up a re-vote? Will the FARC or the government go back on a military offensive?

The accords were perceived to give the FARC leaders near total impunity, and that may have been a salient objection. In the interview referenced here, FARC leader Pablo Catatumbo asserts that any notion they should be punished (at least with anything substantive such as jail time) is total nonsense. At the same time, he notes that FARC leaders thought that the accords enjoyed popular will. The juxtaposition of categorizing any punishment against them as non-sensical on the one hand, and their thinking that the accords enjoyed popular will on the other, suggests that perhaps their assessment was not an objective one. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

Source: Olga Lucía Criollo, “Pretender que la dirigencia de las Farc vaya a la cárcel es un despropósito”: ‘Pablo Catatumbo’ (Expecting [hoping, suggesting, supposing?] that the leadership of the FARC is going to jail is a piece of nonsense), *El Pais*, 16 October 2016, <http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/colombia/proceso-paz/noticias/prender-dirigencia-farc-vaya-carcel-desproposito-pablo-catatumbo>



FARC Emblem.
Source: Wikimedia Commons

“What we have laid out, the Government as much as the FARC-EP, is that we want to listen to the voices of the NO and those of the YES, but we require concrete, realistic proposals, not impossibilities. Expecting that an organization sign an agreement so that the senior leadership go to jail is the greatest of nonsense: no guerrilla in the world would do it. ...

We moved in such a positive a context for the construction of peace, surrounded by the whole International community, building face-to-face reconciliation with the victims, that it seemed to us impossible that the citizens would contemplate the option of rejecting what we had been constructing.”



A Spaniard Opines about Colombia

OE Watch Commentary: The huge news this month out of Latin America continues to be the NO result of the Colombian plebiscite that on 2 October rejected the accords written by the FARC and the administration of Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos. The result has left pundits, analysts, diplomats and politicians wondering how it came about, what the consequences will be, and how to proceed. Many are making claims and explanations to suit, so *OE Watch* went back to the week before the plebiscite to look at the arguments and propaganda at that moment. We found a huge array of disparate observations and assertions. The editorial cited here stands out as perhaps curiously but impressively representative.

The editorial comes from Spain, and it is written by a Spaniard, not a Colombian. However, it gives us an insight into or a feel for the international connections of the Colombian's drama. It also tells us something of how that drama was perceived from within a portion of a foreign population with great intellectual and interpersonal influence in Colombia. The essay was a forward-looking lament of what was feared about to happen. Federico Jiménez' presentation of a horrible future was a powerful way of framing what many among the Colombian NO vote apparently felt. The essay is as good a representative as any among the many concerns about the accords, reported here in *OE Watch*, concerns that seemed to carry the day on 2 October. The extracts presented here from the 1,700-word article do not do it full justice, and analysts are encouraged to go back to the original. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

“...Seven thousand guerrillas have put forty-six million Colombians to their knees...”

Source: Federico Jiménez Losantos, “Nace Narco Colombia, capital Tarifa (Narcocolombia is born, capital Tarifa), *Libertad Digital*, Madrid, 25 September 2016, <http://www.libertaddigital.com/opinion/federico-jimenez-losantos/nace-narcolombia-capital-tarifa-80098/>

“The inevitable war among cartels and the dirty war of the paramilitaries will provoke the social decomposition [in Colombia] that suffers Venezuela and that the FARC seeks...This Sunday [meaning October 2]...will see the assisted birth of the first narco-state in history, whose cradle will be the sepulcher of that formerly known as the Republic of Colombia. The mother will die in labor, because there is no republic able to survive a constitution that cannot even be reformed...and that establishes a judicial power that is not Colombian that can absolve narcoguerrillas and condemn, without right to appeal, military officers and police against whom they have so long combated.

It is true that [Pablo] Escobar killed many people, but far fewer than the FARC. Nevertheless, unlike the visionary of Medellín...the current chief of the FARC, Timochenko, can aspire, narco-constitution in hand, to have the staggering gilded jail in the [TV] series Narcos be the very same Casa de Nariño [the Colombian White House]. Seven thousand guerrillas have put forty-six million Colombians to their knees, due to the infinite cowardliness of their government, without doubt, but also because of the collaboration that the birth of Narcocolombia has in Havana, Caracas, Washington, The Vatican, Brussels, and, yes, Madrid....

With the fortune that Narcocolombia will bring in daily, I doubt that a country like Spain can resist. It is the natural place for entering Europe, by land and by sea, by air and on mule. It will come in at all points, but logically Tarifa and Vigo will be the principal ports of the narco-colombian penetration in Europe. The narcotrafficking will assault Europe through Spain, from the top down and bottom up. And Narcocolombia, capital Tarifa, will end up moving its headquarters to Madrid....”

Venezuela Referendum to Revoke

OE Watch Commentary: In Venezuela, the constitutional process for removing a president ahead of scheduled elections requires, as one of its steps, the formal collection and presentation of a petition signed by 20% of the electorate requesting a determinative vote on removal. The 20% threshold signature collection will be conducted 27, 28, 29 October, against a number of obstacles that have been erected by the current administration to include a greatly reduced number of polling places and voting machines being made available for the vote. Nevertheless, opponents of the Bolivarian government seem confident that the 20% threshold will be greatly surpassed, if the government actually allows the signature collection to proceed. If so, the National Election Commission would then, supposedly, be obliged to set a date for a final revocation vote. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

“...the number of citizens who will actually participate to put their finger print in order to require the RR could find itself between 9 and 11 million...”

Source: Editors, “MUD: Estamos a diez días de lo que será una amplia y contundente victoria popular (MUD: We are ten days away from what will be an ample and overwhelming popular victory),” *El Nacional Web*, 16 October 2016, http://www.el-nacional.com/politica/MUD-amplia-contundente-victoria-popular_0_940705954.html

“The Table of Democratic Unity published a communique a few days before the beginning of the collecting of the 20%, the phase [of the revocation process] that allows the activation of the revocation referendum....”

All of the polls (those conducted by the Unity [opposition to the government], those ordered done by the government and those carried out independently) reveal that the quantity of Venezuelans inclined to participate in the events of 26, 27, 28 October sets between 12 and 14 million people, depending on the pollster and the methodology used. Since it is not the same to ‘want to participate’ and actually doing so, on the basis of these surveys all of the experts coincide in indicating that the number of citizens who will actually participate to put their finger print in order to require the RR [Referendum for Revocation] could find itself between 9 and 11 million’, it detailed.



Narco Genetics, Marijuana, and the New Generation Cartel of Jalisco in Mexico

OE Watch Commentary: Marijuana production in Mexico has been a steady income generator for many groups for decades. However, in the last year, the New Generation Cartel of Jalisco (CJNG) began producing the first of its kind genetically modified marijuana in greenhouses. The accompanying excerpts discuss why this should raise red flags.

As the passages note, what is truly interesting about the genetically modified marijuana (apart from the fact that it has never been produced in Mexico before) is that it signals that the CJNG may be attempting to compete at the global level and with legal producers. Legally produced marijuana is often times of higher quality and potency than the kind produced in open fields. Furthermore, it is typically grown in greenhouses under the care of skilled caretakers to provide a superior product and far surpasses the “brick weed” Mexico is famous for. The production of genetically modified marijuana may also signal that the CJNG is looking to get ahead of other cartels in Mexico by cornering a new market which perhaps suggests a new level of sophistication in the group. Whatever the reasons, it is likely that production of this nature will continue as the global demand for genetically superior marijuana remains high.

As the passages also note, marijuana greenhouses are a rarity with only seven seized in Mexico since 2010. In contrast, authorities have destroyed more than 13,341 hectares of marijuana fields since the start of 2013, indicating the prevalence of this production method. The greenhouses used to grow the new genetically modified marijuana were seized in July 2015 by Federal Police in Guadalajara, Jalisco. Until now, authorities had not released details regarding the affiliation of the detained group members which have been identified as CJNG operators. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

“Genetically modified marijuana produced by the CJNG is a sign that this group is becoming more sophisticated.”

Source: “Narco-genética (Narco Genetics),” *Reporte Indigo*, 28 September 2016. Accessed from <http://www.reporteindigo.com/reportes/guadalajara/narco-genetica>

“Marijuana greenhouses are a rarity in Mexico with only 7 seized since 2010. In fact, almost all marijuana produced in the country is grown in open fields as evidenced by eradication statistics. Rarer still is the fact that a Mexican cartel is producing genetically modified marijuana.

...

It is possible that the CJNG is producing genetically modified marijuana in order to compete with legal producers at the global level”

...

Genetically modified marijuana produced by the CJNG is a sign that this group is becoming more sophisticated.”

Organized Crime Violence in Mexico and Mass Displacement of Communities

OE Watch Commentary: Violence, extortion, forced recruitment and misappropriation of property are all factors associated with organized crime activity in Mexico. It seems almost surreal, as laws would prohibit these activities in most places, but in organized-crime-controlled regions of Mexico, impunity reigns and is a driving force behind massive numbers of internally displaced persons (IDP). Entire families flee their hometowns in search of safety each year. It is so common, in fact, that the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center reported more than 281,000 IDP cases since 2006. This source further cited that internal displacement continues to affect families in at least 12 Mexican states, with the highest prevalence in drug cartel-controlled states, including Chihuahua, Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, Sinaloa, Durango, Michoacán, Guerrero, Mexico State, and Veracruz.

As the accompanying passages discuss, more interesting still is how IDP movement has changed in the last decade. Prior to 2007, almost all internal displacement could be attributed to land disputes, communal conflict, guerilla conflict (think Zapatistas) and economic opportunity. Today, in addition to these reasons, open source channels are suggesting a strong correlation between IDPs and cartel armed conflict in the form of violence, extortion, forced recruitment, and misappropriation of land. Specifically the first passage focuses on violence which has created virtual ghost towns in certain geographic areas of the country. The second passage focuses on the misappropriation of land as control of territory is central to successful drug cartel operations in Mexico. The final piece discusses forced recruitment which is directly related to rapid cartel expansion. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

“...gunmen came to our property one day and started demanding a percentage of our earnings. Later, the earnings were not enough and they threatened to kill my entire family if we did not hand over the ranch.

To demonstrate their seriousness, they killed two of our employees and shortly after my family abandoned the ranch in fear of their safety.”

(continued)



Continued: Organized Crime Violence in Mexico and Mass Displacement of Communities

Source: “Pueblos fantasmas en Tierra Caliente: escapan por la delincuencia (Ghost Towns in Tierra Caliente: Families Flee from Excessive Violence),” *Quadratin*, 5 September 2016. Accessed from <https://guerrero.quadratin.com.mx/Pueblos-fantasmas-en-Tierra-Caliente-escapan-por-la-delincuencia/>

“The Tierra Caliente Region of Mexico lies along the Central Pacific Coast and comprises ten municipalities in Michoacán, Guerrero, and Mexico State. This region is known for high levels of organized crime presence and violence, as three criminal groups—La Familia Michoacana, Los Caballeros Templarios, and the New Generation Cartel of Jalisco—continue to fight for control of it. Communities throughout these municipalities have fallen victim to organized crime-related injustices, and in some areas entire families have simply abandoned their homes, as was the case in Tlanipoatlan de las Limas, Guerrero, where an estimated 386 of the community’s 400 residents have fled since May 2015. Valladares Salgado, the Municipal President of Limas, cited organized crime factors, including excessive violence, fear of kidnapping, and widespread theft, as driving factors behind the mass migration of this particular community.”

Source: “La ley de crimen organizado en zonas rurales (Organized Crime Law in Rural Areas),” *Jornada*, 18 August 2014. <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2014/08/18/politica/008n1pol>

“My family has owned a 60-hectare ranch in Ciudad Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua, for generations. We initially started an apple orchard as a hobby, but the hobby evolved into a family business over time as our product improved. That all changed when gunmen came to our property one day and started demanding a percentage of our earnings. Later, the earnings were not enough and they threatened to kill my entire family if we did not hand over the ranch. To demonstrate their seriousness, they killed two of our employees and shortly after my family abandoned the ranch in fear of their safety. Some of us relocated to Quintana Roo to restart the business, while others decided to restart their lives in the United States. We may be one of the only families willing to talk about what happened to us, but we are not alone.”

Source: “Los reclutados por el crimen, una realidad (Organized Crime Recruitment is a Reality),” *Televisa*, 13 April 2015. <http://noticieros.televisa.com/mexico/1504/reclutados-crimen-realidad-parte-1/>

“Juan was kidnapped in broad daylight at a bus station in Tampico, Tamaulipas, in September 2011. He was seen entering the station at 12:17 PM, at which time he got into line with his luggage to purchase a ticket to Veracruz. With ticket in hand, he walked towards the stop and waited for the bus. At 12:48 PM two men pulled up outside the terminal in a black SUV, parked, and entered the boarding area without tickets. They then grabbed Juan and virtually dragged him out of the station. Outside security footage shows him being pushed into the SUV, never to be heard from again. Follow-on investigations into this incident confirmed that he had indeed been kidnapped by an organized crime group in Tamaulipas. This is one isolated case, but, unfortunately, it represents just one of many forced recruitment cases in Mexico, as reported by Mexican news source Televisa.”



China’s cyber policy has become partly visible to foreign nations through observation, tracking, and inference. The policy appears to have three vectors. These three aspects—peace activist, espionage activist, and attack planner—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.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/E-Pubs/Epubs/3Faces%20of%20the%20Dragon.pdf>



Trends in Mexico's Drug Cartel Landscape

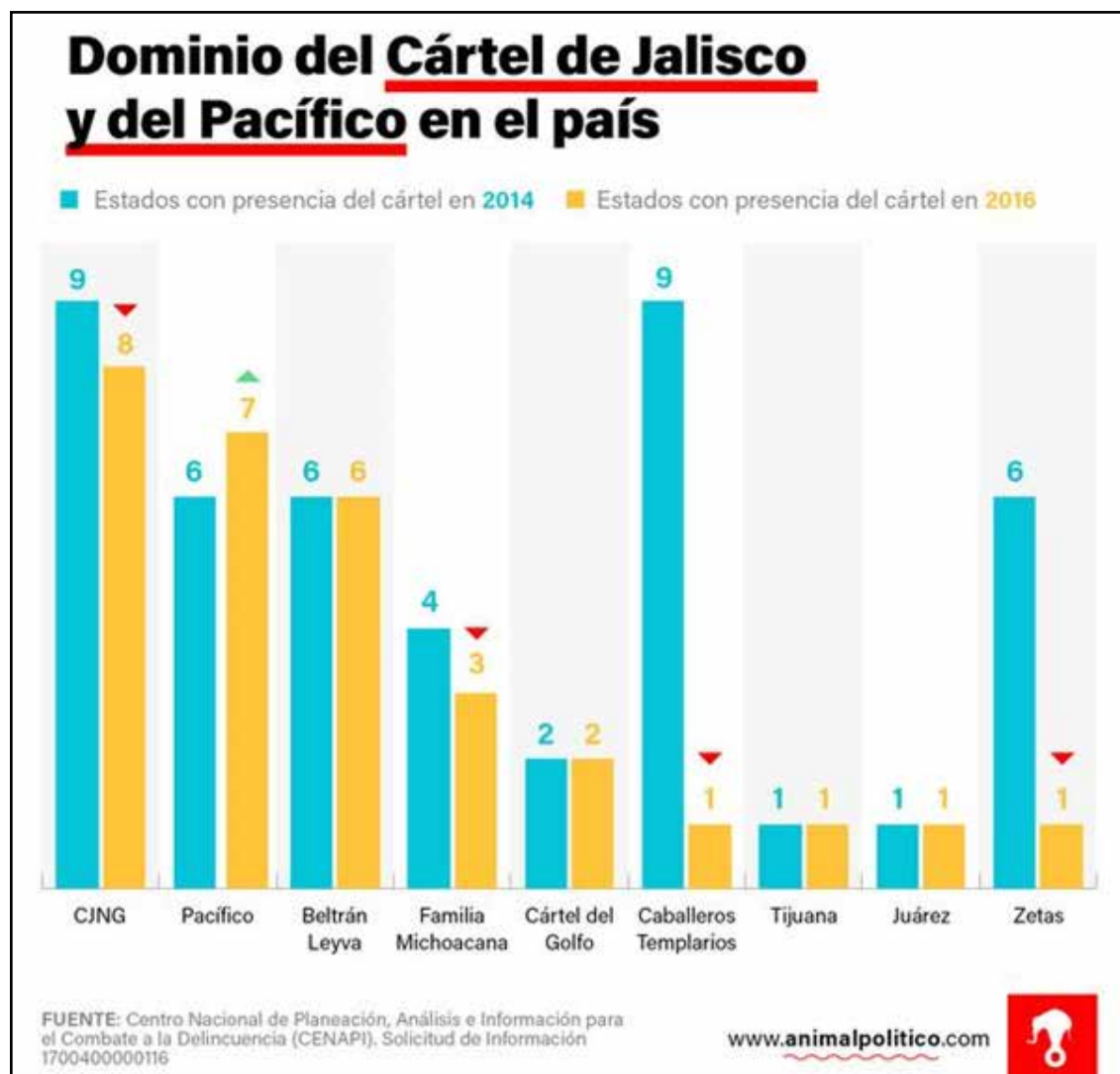
OE Watch Commentary: The last two years have been significant for major Mexican drug cartels. Some of the biggest organizations have virtually disappeared from the map while others have evolved and/or maintained dominance. Organizations such as the Sinaloa Cartel and the New Generation Cartel of Jalisco (CJNG) have evolved or at least maintained all national territories; while organizations such as Los Zetas and Los Caballeros Templarios have been so severely compromised that each is now operational only one Mexican state. The accompanying passages discuss this changing landscape.

As the first excerpt notes, the Attorney General of Mexico (PGR) claims that organizations such as the Sinaloa Cartel have consolidated and gained territory while others have lost nearly all operational bases in the last two years. The Sinaloa Cartel arguably remains the most stable and even continues to grow despite the fact that its key leader, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman was arrested in February 2014. As the second excerpt notes, the organization remains strong for multiple reasons such as strong decentralized leadership that has allowed it to withstand arrests of key leaders and alliances with major cocaine distributors. Within Mexico, this organization is fully operational in seven states including Coahuila, Durango, Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Baja California, Baja California Sur, and Sonora.

Usually the success of one group means the demise of others and this is the case with the rise of both Sinaloa and CJNG. In expanding territorial control within Coahuila, the Sinaloa Cartel played a key role in further debilitating Los Zetas although other factors have played into their downward spiral (war with Gulf Cartel, internal fragmentation). Finally, the fall of Los Caballeros Templarios was not really a surprise to the drug trafficking world and has been in the works since 2012. The CJNG rose from the ashes of Los Caballeros after it facilitated the emergence of self-defense organizations and made pacts with powerful groups such as the Sinaloa Cartel to ensure their success.

Based on the updated PGR report from Mexico, it becomes clear that Los Zetas and Los Caballeros Templarios will soon vanish and that the front-runners in Mexico's drug war will be the Sinaloa Cartel and the CJNG. However, as evidenced by the last 24 months, major shifts can occur in very short time periods. What seems to remain true is that the most established organizations have the best chances of surviving in Mexico's tumultuous cartel landscape. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

"...organizations such as the Sinaloa Cartel have consolidated and gained territory while others have lost nearly all operational bases in the last 24 months."



Source: "Radiografía del narco: cárteles del Pacífico y Jalisco, dominan; Templarios y Zetas se repliegan (Taking a Closer Look: Pacific and Jalisco Cartels Dominate; Templars and Zetas Losing Territory)." *Animal Politico*. Accessed from <http://www.animalpolitico.com/2016/07/asi-se-reparten-carteles-de-la-droga-en-mexico/>

Source: "Radiografía del narco: cárteles del Pacífico y Jalisco, dominan; Templarios y Zetas se repliegan (Taking a Closer Look: Pacific and Jalisco Cartels Dominate; Templars and Zetas Losing Territory)." *Animal Politico*, 12 July 2016. <http://www.animalpolitico.com/2016/07/asi-se-reparten-carteles-de-la-droga-en-mexico/>

According to a report released by the Attorney General of Mexico (PGR), organized crime groups are present in approximately 60% of all national territory. When compared with statistics and analysis gathered in 2014, it can be concluded that the nine cartels present at that time are still operational but individual operating cells reduced from 45 to 37. When talking about individual criminal organizations, there have been significant changes within them. For example, organizations such as the Sinaloa Cartel have consolidated and gained territory while others have lost nearly all operational bases in the last 24 months.

Source: El cartel de Sinaloa sigue poderoso, con las FARC como aliado (The Sinaloa Cartel Remains Strong with the FARC as an Ally)," *La Vanguardia*, 22 January 2016. <http://www.vanguardia.com.mx/articulo/el-cartel-de-sinaloa-sigue-poderoso-con-las-farc-como-aliado>

Despite the arrest of Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, the Sinaloa Cartel has maintained its power base in Mexico and around the world. Proof of this is that the organization currently has presence in at least 54 countries and has established strong alliances with different criminal organizations such as the FARC to procure and move large-scale cocaine shipments around the world.



El Salvador Sees a Rise in Gangs' Use of Automatic Weapons

OE Watch Commentary: Statistics indicate that the use of automatic weapons by gangs in El Salvador is on the rise. This raises two questions: How do gangs have so many weapons of war and from where are they acquiring them? The accompanying excerpts provide some answers to these questions, and suggest that many of the weapons currently utilized by gangs date back to El Salvador's Civil War.

National Civil Police confiscated an average of one automatic weapon per week between 2011 and 2014. In the first five months of 2016, authorities began seizing one automatic weapon every three days, and these are just official figures which do not include unreported weapons that security forces confiscated from criminals. This information confirms that seizure of automatic weapons is on the rise, but why?

El Salvador's FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) government passed a zero tolerance policy against gangs and more specifically, the Mara Salvatrucha, in January 2015. Before this policy passed, MS-13 and Barrio 18 factions were primarily using knives and handguns to defend their territories against rival gangs as these weapons were small and easily portable/concealable. What has changed since the implementation of the zero tolerance policy is that gangs are now using what the government classifies as "weapons of war" with increased frequency. Gangs are now using what the government classifies as "weapons of war" with increased frequency as they are now defending themselves against state security forces; which requires them to possess similar or identical firepower for survival. El Salvador is classifying weapons of war as automatic weapons including the AK-47 and M-16 as they are strictly prohibited for use outside the law enforcement sector.

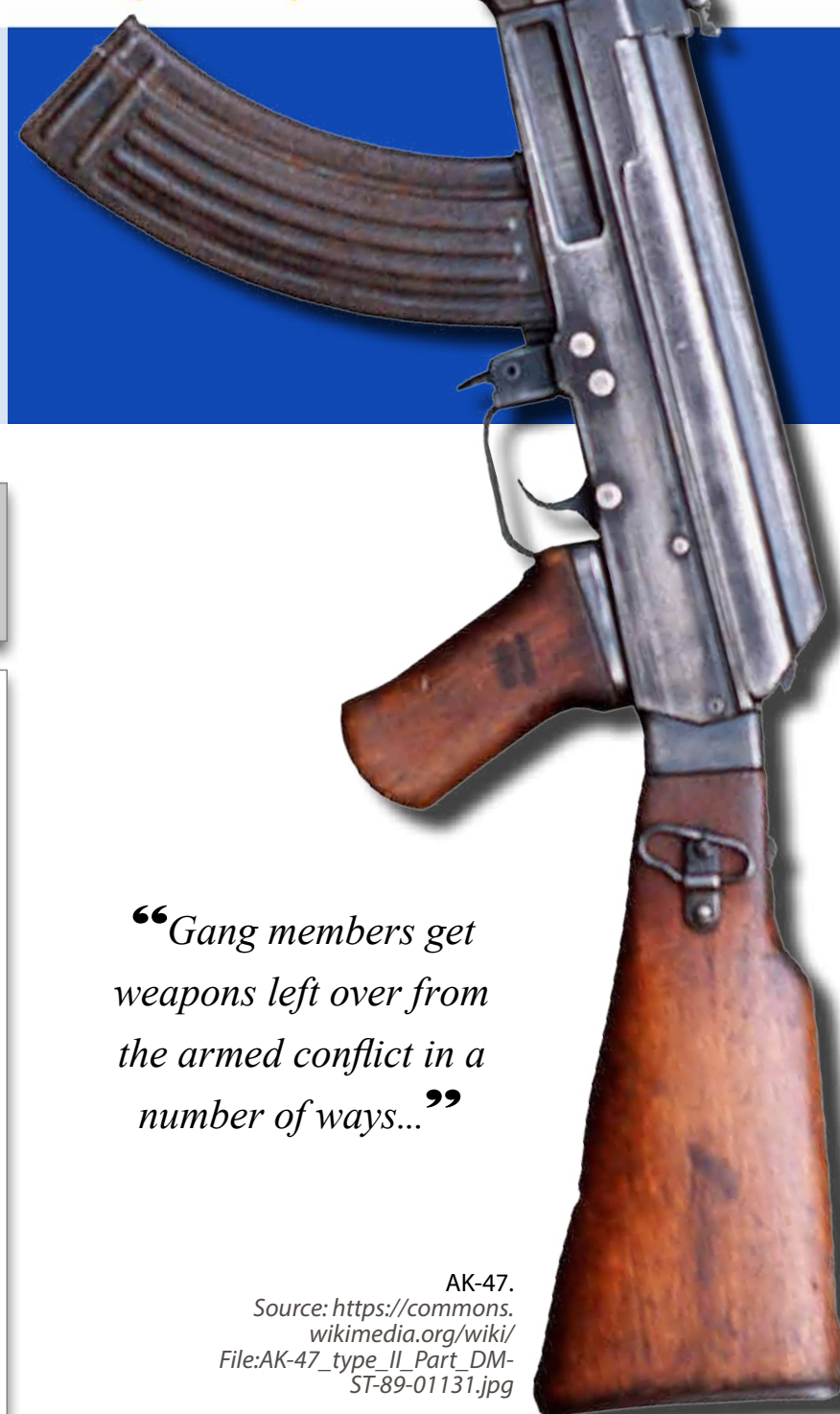
End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)

Source: "Las maras se arman con fusiles de la guerra civil (Maras Use Weapons from Civil War in El Salvador)," *El Faro*, 7 September 2016. <https://www.elfaro.net/es/201609/salanegra/19208/Las-maras-se-arman-con-fusiles-de-la-guerra-civil.htm>

There are four reasons why the gangs have so many weapons of war. For one, the FMLN hid some of its weapons in case the peace process did not pan out, and those guns eventually made their way onto the black market. Another reason is that middle- and high-ranking commanders of both the armed forces and the guerrillas kept their guns to make money off of them. A third reason is the underground weapons caches that were kept secret from all but a few individuals. And lastly, there were ex-combatants who held on to a weapon or two as souvenirs of the war.

...

Gang members get weapons left over from the armed conflict in a number of ways: conventional arms traffickers with ready inventories; a former guerrilla fighter who was put in charge of guarding a weapons cache during the war and decides it is time to sell them to the highest bidder; members of the police and military who steal confiscated weapons during the different links in the chain of custody, selling them back into the black market; or the gang member who is the son of a former combatant and brings the family weapon to the gang.



“Gang members get weapons left over from the armed conflict in a number of ways...”

AK-47.
Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AK-47_type_II_Part_DM-ST-89-01131.jpg



Aerial Fumigation of Cocaine No Longer an Option in Colombia

OE Watch Commentary: Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos recently announced that aerial fumigation of coca plants will not resume in the country even though this method has been used consistently since the early 90s. The government initially halted aerial spraying back in May 2015 due to claims that the herbicide used to kill coca plants may cause cancer. During a conference held in Bogota in September 2015, Santos reiterated his resolve on this decision by stating that aerial fumigation has never really been successful and that despite its use, Colombia continues to be the world's top cocaine producer. In response to his decision, open source channels began reporting on supporting/opposing views. The accompanying passages provide insight into this debate.

As the first passage discusses, supporters claim that other methods including arresting major drug lords, attacking the supply chain, and targeting the actual labs where drugs are processed are considerably more effective than fumigation efforts. On the other hand, the second passage indicates an opposition to halting spraying. This is because some believe that stopping the spraying may actually empower traffickers to grow their coca fields without concern of it being sprayed. There is also concern regarding the welfare of those tasked to manually spray or pull plants from the ground one by one as it would require them to enter into dangerous territories and would further expose them to chemicals. Regardless of the pros and cons, Colombia seems to have taken a strong stance and will not likely reinstate their fumigation policy anytime soon. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

“... spraying is inefficient and counterproductive...”

Source: “El glifosato es ‘probablemente cancerígeno (Glyphosate is Likely Carcinogenic),” *El Espectador*, 2 May 2015. <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/nacional/el-glifosato-probablemente-cancerigeno-articulo-558264>

Daniel Mejía, the director of the Center for Security and Drug Studies, a research group in Bogotá, claims that spraying is inefficient and counterproductive. As an alternative, he recommends attacking the links in the chain of drug trafficking, the labs where cocaine is processed, and the large shipments of chemicals. These areas encompass where hard drug trafficking and organized crime is. He further stated that evidence proves that attacking the farmers doesn't work.

Source: “Pros y contras de la fumigación aérea para frenar los narcocultivos (Pros and Cons to Aerial Fumigation of Coca Fields),” *El Tiempo*, 6 September 2016. <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/justicia/fumigacion-aerea-contra-cultivos-ilicitos/16693172>

Rafael Nieto, a former vice-minister of justice, questioned the rationale behind halting spraying, saying that more eradication workers would be put at risk. He also claimed that if spraying is stopped, the income of the drug traffickers, the criminal gangs and the guerrillas will go up substantially as will actual coca and cocaine production.

“... if spraying is stopped, the income of the drug traffickers, the criminal gangs and the guerrillas will go up substantially as will actual coca and cocaine production.”



Cessna 188 AGwagon spraying.
Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cessna188AGWagonZKCSE.jpg>



Abu Sayyaf Growing Power Through Ransom Money: Can It Be Stopped?

OE Watch Commentary: Abu Sayyaf is a small, yet extremely violent, jihadist group in the southern Philippines. The group splintered off from the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1991 after it disagreed with the MNLF's push to pursue autonomy, as opposed to establishing an outright independent Islamic State in southern Philippines. It has received millions of dollars through the kidnapping and ransoming of civilians. The following article discusses some of the repercussions of their funding efforts.

According to the article, Abu Sayyaf poses a security threat to the Philippines as well as neighbors Malaysia, Indonesia, and Australia because it is using the ransom funds to acquire more arms, hire new recruits, and offer bribes to ensure community leaders turn a blind eye to their actions. The group has made \$10 million from its kidnapping and extortion activities since 2012. They also have been using their financial resources to mislead the Philippine military. Finally, because they have mastered the terrain and are paying residents to keep quiet, it is easier to remain more elusive. In an interesting twist, however, the Philippine military is turning to the MNLF to help in its fight against Abu Sayyaf.

End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)

“Duterte’s policy to eradicate the ASG [Abu Sayyaf Group] in their hometown is not an easy task despite the deployment of 10,000 trained soldiers as the group has been using their financial resources to mislead the military in their counter intelligence measures.”

Source: Noel Tarrazona, “Abu Sayyaf’s Kidnapping Enterprise Poses Bigger Threat to Philippines’ Neighbors,” *Asia Times*, 25 September 2016, http://atimes.com/2016/09/abu-sayyafs-kidnapping-enterprise-poses-bigger-threat-to-philippines-neighbors/#disqus_thread.

Since 2012, the group [Abu Sayyaf] has made \$10 million from kidnapping and extortion activities. This is more than enough to ensure a luxurious life for the 400-odd armed members of the group operating in the island provinces of Basilan and Sulu.

Mindanao residents believe kidnappings have made ASG members instant millionaires.

Duterte’s policy to eradicate the ASG in their hometown is not an easy task despite the deployment of 10,000 trained soldiers as the group has been using their financial resources to mislead the military in their counter intelligence measures.

Analyst Rommel Banloi, executive director of Terrorism and Violence think tank agency in Manila, says ransom payments are used by the group to buy arms, pay off members, hire new recruits and bribe community elders to make them keep quiet.

Philippines military has finally found a new ally, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), in their fight against ASG. The MNLF, through the sub leadership of Commander Abraham Joel, is collaborating with the military with which it had signed a peace agreement in September 1996.

ISIS Infiltration in the Malaysian Military?

OE Watch Commentary: The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has been pushing its influence worldwide. The group is of increasing concern to Southeast Asia. The following article claims that, according to a special investigation, less than one percent of the “Malaysian Armed Forces personnel are found to be involved in the Daesh (another name for ISIS) militant group.” This is not likely accurate. A later report by *International Business Times*, offered some different types of statistics. According to the second article, “Malaysia’s Defense Ministry has admitted that about 1% of the total number of people in the country currently under investigation by the police for suspected links to militant Islamist groups are from the armed forces.” This paints a less grim picture and the numbers are likely far lower. However, any infiltration of ISIS influence in the armed forces can be devastating. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

Source: “Less than One Percent of Military Personnel Involved in Daesh – Hishammuddin,” *The Borneo Post*, 27 September 2016, <http://www.theborneopost.com/2016/09/27/less-than-one-per-cent-of-military-personnel-involved-in-daesh-hishammuddin/>.

Bukit Aman Special Branch Investigation has revealed that less than one per cent of the Malaysian Armed Forces personnel are found to be involved in the Daesh militant group.

Without disclosing the number of military personnel involved in the militant group, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the ministry would not protect any officers ... in the armed forces involved in such activities because the Daesh threat was a global threat.

Source: Rachel Middleton, “Malaysia Says Only 1% Under Police Probe for Links to Militant Groups are from the Armed Forces,” *International Business Times*, 27 September 2016, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/malaysia-defence-ministry-says-1-under-police-probe-links-militant-groups-armed-forces-1583444>.

The Ministry earlier clarified a news report quoting Hishammuddin as saying that 1% of the national armed forces are involved with Daesh. In a statement, the Ministry said: “One per cent of all the suspects’ and ‘one percent of all ATM (Malaysian Armed Forces) members’ are two different things.”



Thai Military to Use UAVs to Patrol Southern Thailand

OE Watch Commentary: In July 2016 rebels detonated a bomb in southern Thailand, severely damaging a rail track between Rueso station in Narathiwat and Balo station in the province of Yala. Then, in early September a railway track in Pattani, another province in southern Thailand, was bombed. Following the September bombing, Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwon announced the military's intention to begin using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) to patrol railway tracks in the far south of the country. The accompanying articles discuss this development.

In late September, the Defense Technology Institute, the Thai Ministry of Defense's research and development agency, began delivering Siam UAV drones to the Thai army, the Royal Thai Police, the Department of Special Investigation, and the Department of Corrections. These drones, which cost 500,000 baht (Approximately \$14,000) per unit, can reportedly fly 500 feet in the air for up to 40 minutes and be controlled from two kilometers away. They are equipped with an automatic flight system, a conventional camera, and a thermal imaging camera. The drones are just another step that the government of Thailand is taking to control some of the violence plaguing the country's southern region, such as the railways. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

“They [drones] can be applied for warfare and non-warfare missions including intelligence, patrols, surveillance and situation monitoring to reduce the risk to personnel... They suit security, commercial and environmental operations.”

Source: Wassana Nanuam, “B500,000 Drone Available from Defense Institute,” *Bangkok Post*, 23 September 2016, <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/general/1093244/thai-made-drones-available-for-b500-000>.

“They [drones] can be applied for warfare and non-warfare missions including intelligence, patrols, surveillance and situation monitoring to reduce the risk to personnel... They suit security, commercial and environmental operations.”

Source: “Drones to be Used in Restive South,” *Pattaya Mail*, 25 September 2016, <http://www.pattayamail.com/thailandnews/drones-used-restive-south-149854>.

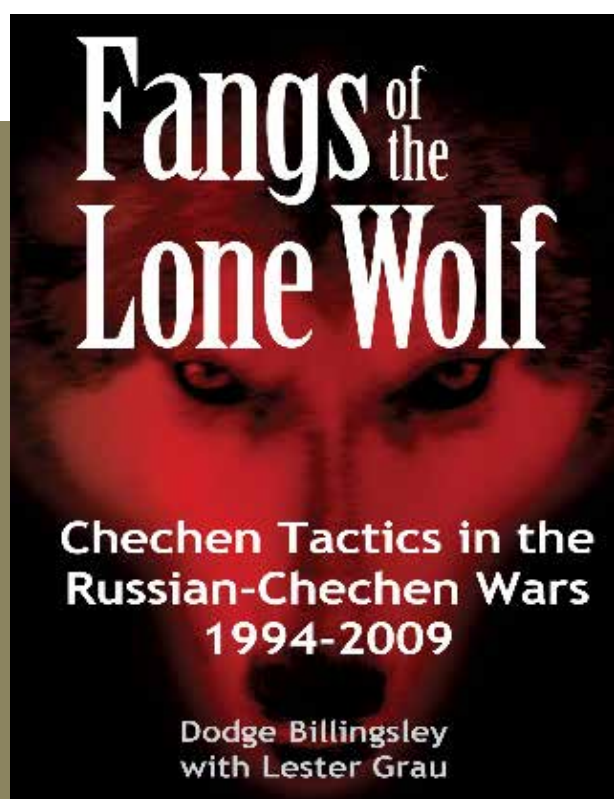
The Defense Technology Institute has given the military drone prototypes to be used in the violence-torn southern region of the kingdom.

Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Gen Prawit Wongsuwan, on behalf of the Defense Technology Institute, handed out unmanned aerial vehicles to the Thai army, the Royal Thai Police, the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) and the Department of Corrections.

Source: Wassana Nanuam and Amornrat Mahitthirook, “Drones to Help Protect Southern Railway Tracks,” *Bangkok Post*, 5 September 2016, <http://www.bangkokpost.com/print/1078945/>.

Drones will be used to patrol railway tracks in the far South after Saturday's bombing in Pattani, Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwon said on Monday.

The unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) would be deployed while soldiers, police and railway staff would work together more closely to ensure safety of train services between Hat Yai and Sungai Kolok train stations, said Gen Prawit, who is also the defence minister.



Books on guerrilla war are seldom written from the tactical perspective and from the guerrilla's perspective. *Fangs of the Lone Wolf* is an exception. These are the stories of low-level guerrilla combat as told by the survivors. They cover fighting from the cities of Grozny and Argun to the villages of Bamut and Serzhen-yurt, and finally the hills, river valleys and mountains that make up so much of Chechnya. Dodge Billingsley, the primary author was embedded with Chechen guerrilla forces after the first war, so he knows the country, the culture, the key actors and the conflict. Yet, as a Western outsider, he is able to maintain perspective and objectivity. *Fangs of the Lone Wolf* provides a unique insight into what is becoming modern and future war.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/E-Pubs/Epubs/Fangs-of-the-Lone-Wolf.pdf>



Indonesia's Arrest of Chinese Uighurs Reveals New Terrorism Trends in Asia

OE Watch Commentary: Despite having one of the most unusual names for a jihadist group, Katibah Gonggong Rebus (KGR), meaning Boiled Snails Brigade (after Batam Island's famous seafood), has gained notoriety in Indonesia for hosting Uighur militants from China. The KGR is based in Batam, an Indonesian island close to Singapore. Its leader was arrested in August 2016 for planning a rocket attack on Singapore's Marina Bay from Batam and for receiving funding for facilitating Indonesians—and Uighur migrants—to fight with the Islamic State (ISIS) in Syria. Despite originally being associated with Indonesian and Syrian ISIS networks, now KGR appears to be interacting with al-Qaeda networks. This may be because KGR is at the end of the day committed to opportunity more than ideology and ISIS's loss of territory and resources in recent months has made it less appealing to KGR.

According to the adjacent Indonesian language article from *Sindonews*, Indonesian security forces broke up a cell of KGR in Batam in August and arrested two Uighurs. The Uighurs had received funding from the al-Qaeda-affiliated Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) in Syria (in the article the TIP is referred to as the East Turkistan Islamic Movement). These funds were not intended to support the militants' travel to Syria but only their needs while in Batam. This suggests that al-Qaeda may be interested in using Uighurs to attack Chinese or other targets in Southeast Asia rather than using them to support the struggle in Aleppo, Syria, where the TIP and other al-Qaeda affiliates are engaged. A targeting strategy in or close to China would be consistent with recent calls from al-Qaeda ideologues in Syria for Uighurs to stay in Central Asia or Southeast Asia and not fight in Syria. It would also be consistent with a TIP-planned attack on the Chinese embassy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in August 2016. Thus, the idea of Uighur militants targeting China regionally—as opposed to fighting foreign governments abroad—could be a new trend.

These arrests in Batam come at a time when China is in an increasingly adversarial position vis-à-vis Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, because of its territorial claims in the South China Sea. In contrast to the South China Sea issues, counter-terrorism remains an area of cooperation between China and its neighbors. The case in the adjacent article provides the perfect example of this. Indonesia does not want to be the base for a terrorist attack on Singapore by Uighur militants from China, who likely arrived in Indonesia through Thailand and Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries. As there are no regional initiatives to deal with Uighur militancy at the source—in China—regional cooperation on Uighur militants will likely be the most viable alternative for Southeast Asia and China. In turn, China and Southeast Asian neighbors will share intelligence, coordinate expatriations and hold joint exercises to deal with both Uighur militants and other larger terrorist groups as well. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

“Police thought [an Indonesian militant] has facilitated two foreign nationals into Batam of Uighur origin. He and his group received funding from the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) to finance the needs of the Uighurs living in Batam.”



As seen in the adjacent image, Indonesian forces arrested a cell linked to al-Qaeda that was hosting Uighur militants from China
Source: <http://www.voanews.com/a/is-presence-in-indonesia-growing/3146369.html>

Source: “Tersangka Teroris Katibah Gonggong Rebus Ditangkap di Batam (Suspected Terrorists of Katibah Gonggong Rebus Arrested in Batam),” *Sindonews.com*, 3 September 2016. <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/news/2016/09/03/058801403/tersangka-teroris-katibah-gonggong-rebus-ditangkap-di-batam>

Public Information Bureau Chief of Indonesian National Police... said police arrested a suspect who allegedly helped members of the terrorist group Katibah Gonggong Rebus. The arrests occurred in Batam.

According to police, the suspect known as LH, is 24-years old, and did not have a job. When arrested, police seized a cell phone, a motorcycle, and a wallet. LH also allegedly came to facilitate the departure of Indonesian citizens to Syria, Middle East.

Police thought LH has facilitated two foreign nationals into Batam of Uighur origin. He and his group received funding from the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) to finance the needs of the Uighurs living in Batam. Together with a group from Katibah Gonggong Rebus, LH was plotting an attack on Marina Bay (Singapore).

The name [Katibah Gonggong Rebus] was inspired by the seafood in Batam. According to police, they are connected to the network of Santoso alias Abu Wardah [a pro-ISIS Indonesian militant] and the network of Bahrin Naim [an Indonesian ISIS member in Syria].



Disrupting the DPRK's Illicit Trade Activity

OE Watch Commentary: In the wake of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) fifth nuclear test, many questioned the efficacy of UN Security Council Resolution 2270. Passed in March 2016, the resolution failed to prevent the DPRK's 9 September nuclear test despite its strong rhetoric, additional trade and financial sanctions, and many other new measures. How has the DPRK been able to circumvent these measures and what can be done about it? After six months of analysis, the Seoul-based Asan Institute for Policy Studies and the Washington D.C.-based Center for Advanced Defense Studies identified the structure and methods that the DPRK may be using to evade sanctions imposed by resolutions like UNSCR 2270.

The report claims that the DPRK's consistent structural trade deficit of over one billion dollars, coupled with limited access to foreign debt markets, suggests a large volume of illicit trade activities. The accompanying passage from the report discusses that DPRK agents and businesses depend on overseas networks and third-party facilitators to conduct their business operations. The passage notes that this dependence can be leveraged to disrupt their methods.

A more thorough understanding of the DPRK's trade patterns and methods for evading sanctions makes the development of more efficient multilateral sanctions possible. **End OE Watch Commentary (Galluzzi)**

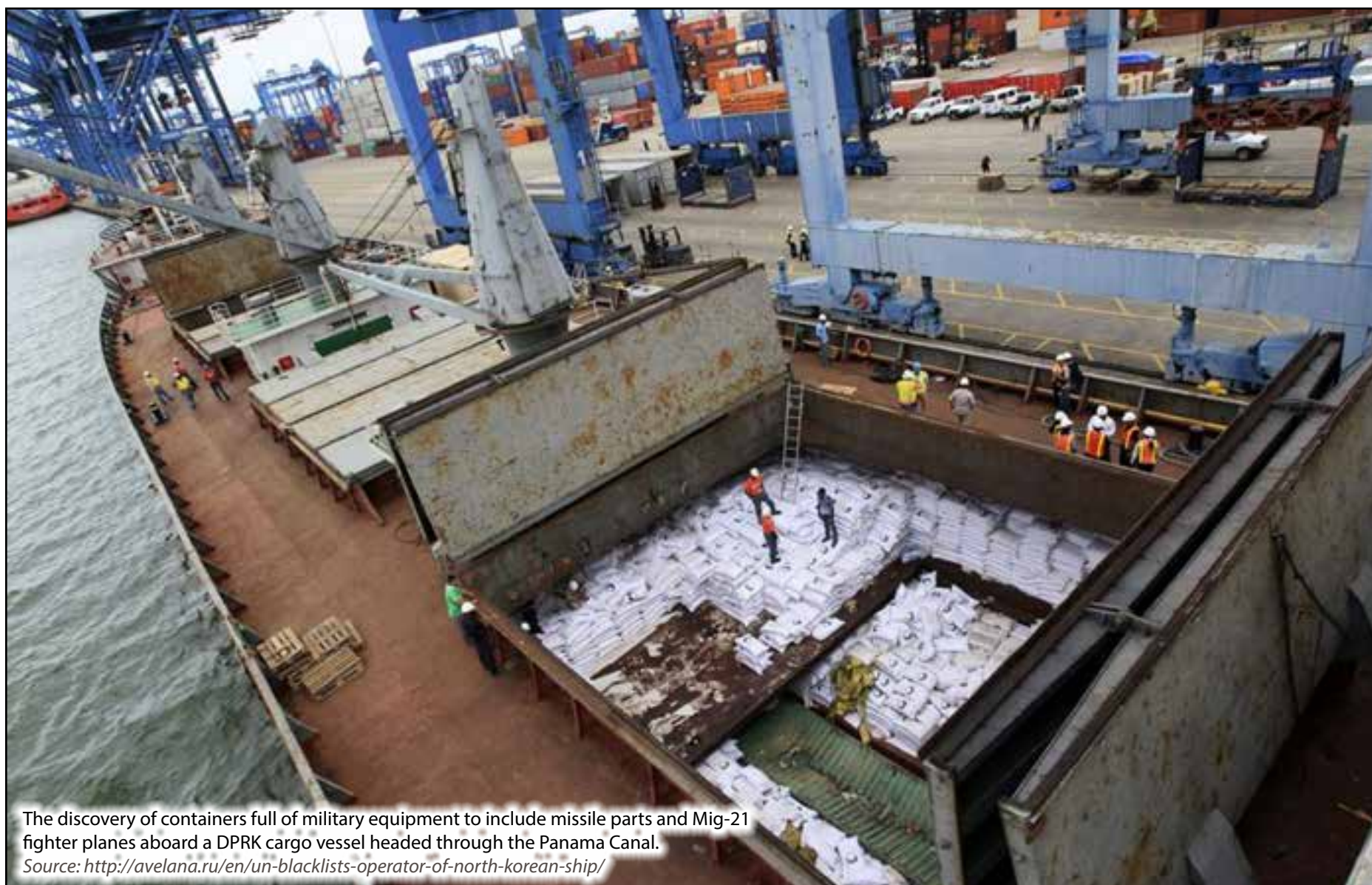
“As the DPRK grows increasingly dependent on its overseas networks, it creates an opportunity for the international community to leverage their financial intelligence tools to squeeze the regime's illicit activity.”

Source: Woo Jung-Yeop and Go Myong-Hyun “In China's Shadow: Exposing North Korean Overseas Networks.” Center for Advanced Defense Studies and The Asan Institute for Policy Studies, August 2016. <http://en.asaninst.org/contents/in-chinas-shadow/>

“Overseas networks are vital conduits of hard currency for the North Korean regime that remain exposed and vulnerable. Overseas North Korean agents and entities depend on a range of third-party facilitators for core business operations. We assess that this dependence can be leveraged and disrupted if more detailed information on the size, personnel, and modus operandi of such networks, especially the methods employed to circumvent sanctions can be generated.

...

As the DPRK grows increasingly dependent on its overseas networks, it creates an opportunity for the international community to leverage their financial intelligence tools to squeeze the regime's illicit activity.”



The discovery of containers full of military equipment to include missile parts and Mig-21 fighter planes aboard a DPRK cargo vessel headed through the Panama Canal.
Source: <http://avelana.ru/en/un-blacklists-operator-of-north-korean-ship/>



China Places Sensors in the South China Sea

OE Watch Commentary: In the contested South China Sea, where relations are strained between China and many of the nations in the vicinity, China continues to expand its support structure in the region. As reported in the accompanying passage on 13 October 2016, China has deployed eight floating sensors as part of “an international observation network,” and plans to have 20 sensors operating by early next year. The sensors enable China to monitor the “marine environment up to a depth of 2 km using China’s own satellite system.” The sensors are part of an international project known as Argo, a global observation project involving more than 30 countries, according to the article. **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

Source: Viola Zhou, “China Deploys South China Sea Sensors to Boost Scientific Data in Disputed Waters,” *South China Morning Post Online* (in English), 13 October 2016. <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2027687/china-deploys-south-china-sea-sensors-boost-scientific>

All of China’s sensors, including the eight it deployed in September, form part of Argo, a global observation project involving more than 30 different countries, which are managing more than 3,800 real-time sensors dotted across the world’s oceans. The information is shared by all countries involved in the project. “Compared with other [Chinese] coastal seas, we do not have as much knowledge about the South China Sea because it is relatively deeper,” said Xu Jianping, chief scientist of China’s Argo project.

Every five days, the Argo sensors would automatically dive to a depth of 2 km to collect ocean data, which was relayed to China’s Beidou navigation satellites once they had returned to the surface, Xu said.

The first six domestically made sensors were put into the western Pacific just east of the Philippines in 2015. Data collected from the domestically made sensors was first sent to a Beidou receiving center in Hangzhou for processing and then shared with an international database, which was accessible to all, Xu said. At the moment, Chinese government and military did not have privileged access to the data, he said. About 140 of the 3,800 floats currently in operation globally are owned by China, Argo’s latest release shows. About 10 of the 2,000 floats that have been deployed by the US are also collecting data in the South China Sea.

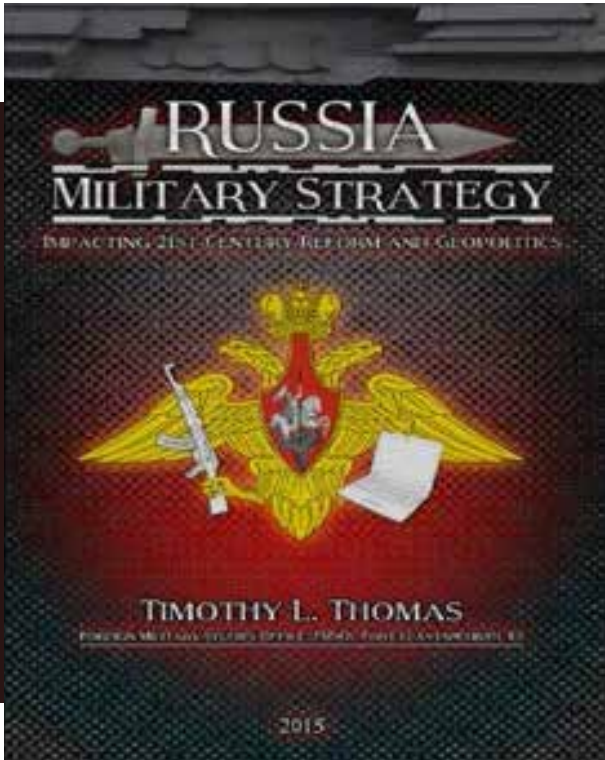
In August, Vice-Premier Zhang Gaoli endorsed the team’s suggestions to replace all imported sensors with ones supported by Beidou and to make the data center in Hangzhou Argo’s third global data center, after the two located in France and the US. Xu said Chinese scientists were also developing technologies to probe sea waters down to depths of 4km to 6km.

The Maritime Silk Road will link China’s east coast to ports, including Colombo in Sri Lanka, Gwadar in Pakistan, across the Indian Ocean, through the Red Sea to Greece’s Piraeus, ending in Venice.

After the completion of the South China Sea observation network next year, the team planned to deploy about 10 new sensors across the area every year to replace those that had depleted batteries. Antony Wong Dong, Macau-based military analyst, said these sensors could benefit China’s People’s Liberation Army and Navy indirectly as the operation of submarines required a large amount of data about water temperatures, pressure and currents. ‘The South China Sea is very big and China still has a lot of blind spots,’ Wong said. “The sea environment changes fast. It will be really dangerous to deploy submersibles if they don’t monitor the waters closely.”

For the past ten years, as Prime Minister and President, Vladimir Putin has led an extensive reorganization and reequipping of his country’s armed forces. Further, he has taken several opportunities to reclaim Russian territory that was taken, from his perspective, illegally. This book describes Putin and the military’s use of various strategic concepts, the Defense Ministry’s new equipment and reform initiatives, and Putin’s geopolitical quest for influence in the Arctic and Ukraine. Included in the discussion are some of the unintended consequences of his actions (negative world opinion, sanctions, NATO responses, etc.).

[http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/E-Pubs/Epubs/Thomas_Russian%20Military%20Strategy_Final_\(2%20May%202016\).pdf](http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/E-Pubs/Epubs/Thomas_Russian%20Military%20Strategy_Final_(2%20May%202016).pdf)





China's Strategic Support Force Must Innovate

OE Watch Commentary: On 29 August 2016 President Xi Jinping inspected the Strategic Support Force (SSF). As the accompanying passage from a Chinese news source discusses, he underscored the importance of developing such an organization, stressing its responsibility for innovating and helping to build a modern military. The SSF is China's response to the development of new initiatives in the military domain, such as the predominance, in the Chinese view, of "system of system" operations under informatized conditions. It is a new-type operational force that specializes in safeguarding national security. The force will be in charge of information and intelligence collection, surveillance, electronic warfare, cyber-attacks and defense technology, and space management. It will be of interest to follow how the force "innovates" in the coming months. **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

Source: Li Xuanliang and Li Guoli, "Xi Jinping Inspects the Strategic Support Force and its Organs, Emphasizes Undertaking Important Historical Responsibilities, Aiming at World's First Rate, Courageously Making Innovations and Leaping Forward and Striving to Build a Powerful Modern Strategic Support Force," *Xinhua Domestic Service*, 29 August 2016. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-08/29/c_135643139.htm

It is necessary to firmly seize preparation against war and preparation to fight, take the needs in fighting as the pulling force, formulate the development strategy and the construction programs and plans for the Strategic Support Force, speed up the building of a new type of training system and comprehensively increase the deterrent and real combat capabilities. It is necessary to firmly seize the work to deepen reform, establish ideas and concepts that are in keeping with the requirements of building a new type of fighting force and of joint operations, establish scientific and highly efficient operation mechanisms, optimize the scale, structure and formation of the troops and raise the scientific level and improve the standard of all work. It is necessary to firmly regard innovation as the driving force, speed up the innovation of military theories, seize the ox nose of science and technology innovation to develop advanced technology and equipment, properly grasp the cultivation of a new type of fighting force and the training of high-level capable personnel for science and technology innovation, improve the management system and increase the accuracy and the benefit-cost ratio of army building.

"What is most needed in the construction of the Strategic Support Force is innovation and its fundamental way out lies in innovation. It is necessary to bravely innovate thinking, innovate modes and innovate development on the basis of mastering the objective laws, implement the strategic guidelines of paying greater attention to focusing on real combat, paying greater attention to using innovation as a driving force, paying greater attention to system construction, paying greater attention to intensiveness and high efficiency and paying greater attention to military-civilian blending, push forward all items of construction with a high standard and at a high starting point and strive to open up a path for building a new type of combat force with Chinese characteristics."

Keeping NBC Relevant Flame Weapons in the Russian Armed Forces

By Charles Bartles

The Russian Nuclear, Biological, And Chemical (NBC) Defense Troops are tasked with identifying NBC threats in the environment, performing decontamination of troops and equipment, and most interestingly, employing aerosols and flame weapons to engage the enemy. In most militaries, flame weapons have traditionally belonged to the NBC Troops. The popularity of such weapons has waned significantly throughout the world, but not so in the Russian Armed Forces. While the utility of NBC Troops in today's asymmetric warfare is questioned in other armies, Russian NBC Troops firm grasp of flame weapons keeps them relevant, engaged, and makes them an important asset in the Russian maneuver commander's toolbox.

http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Flame_2015.pdf



Russia and Chinese Naval Exercises Show Convergence of Interests

OE Watch Commentary: As the adjacent article in the *Times of India* discusses, in September 2016 China and Russia held eight-days of exercises known as “Joint-Sea 2016” in the South China Sea. Although these exercises have taken place annually since 2012, this was the first time they have been held in the South China Sea, although they were not near disputed areas between China and its neighbors. The timing was also significant, according to the article, because the exercises were announced after an arbitration court in The Hague struck down China’s claims on its “nine-dash line” in the South China Sea.

In terms of scale, the Russians contributed 90 marines to the exercise, amphibious landing craft, and two helicopters. The Chinese brought 11 fixed-wing aircraft, eight helicopters and 160 marines. The Chinese forces appeared to train to invade Taiwan or the Japanese Senkaku Islands. Russia, for its part, may be training for future attempts to regain hegemony in the Black Sea.

But more than anything, the exercises serve a political purpose in showing Chinese-Russian political consensus on keeping the US out of East Asia, where Russia and China both have territorial disputes with US-ally Japan, and preventing the US from “meddling” in Ukraine and Syria, where Russia and China have similar foreign policy positions.¹ The article points out that President Putin backed China’s position on the South China Sea at the G20 Summit in Hangzhou, China on September 4-5, 2016, a week before the exercises took place.

Given the converging interests of Russia and China in both Syria, Ukraine and East Asia and opposition to a strong US presence in these regions, more such exercises can be expected between the two countries. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

“Together, Chinese and Russian participants undertake defence, rescue, and anti-submarine operations, in addition to joint island seizing and other activities.”



Chinese and Russian leaders, Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin, as seen in the adjacent image, are likely to approve of future joint naval exercises between their countries.
Source: <http://www.voanews.com/a/3443685.html>

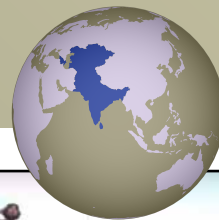
Source: “Russia-China to hold joint naval exercise in South China Sea,” *Times of India*, 11 September 2016. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/china/Russia-China-to-hold-joint-naval-exercise-in-South-China-Sea/articleshow/54276495.cms>

The naval drills, the first by Russia and China in the South China Sea, held off southern China’s Guangdong Province, are reportedly not close to Beijing’s nine-dash line which was struck down by the arbitration court in The Hague in July in a case brought by the Philippines over Beijing’s maritime claims there.

President Vladimir Putin expressed his backing to Beijing’s stand [on the South China Sea] this month while attending the G20 summit in Hangzhou. “We stand in solidarity and support of China’s position on this issue - not to recognize the decision of this court.” He, however, said the dispute should be resolved peacefully by the parties concerned.

The naval drill features navy surface ships, submarines, fixed-wing aircraft, ship-borne helicopters, and marine corps and amphibious armoured equipment from both navies. Most of the Chinese participants will come from the Nanhai (South China Sea) Fleet under the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN). Together, Chinese and Russian participants will undertake defence, rescue, and anti-submarine operations, in addition to joint island seizing and other activities.

¹ For two articles alleging US “meddling” in Ukraine and Syria from the Russian perspective, please see: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/07/world/europe/ukraine.html?_r=0 and <https://www.rt.com/usa/335618-syria-anniversary-obama-meddling/>



Armenia's Acquisition of the Iskander Ballistic Missile System

OE Watch Commentary: Armenia's Independence Day parade on 21 September in Yerevan included a number of the country's weapon systems and equipment, but as the accompanying excerpted articles show, the appearance of the Iskander ballistic missile system received significant attention. The missile systems were first noticed during a rehearsal for the parade and initial reports questioned if they came from the Russian 102nd Military Base in Gyumri, Armenia instead of being a part of the Armenian Armed Forces' inventory. However, the parade confirmed Armenia's acquisition of the system, causing a lot of concern in Azerbaijan. The accompanying passages from Armenian and Azerbaijani sources discuss this development, suggesting that it will likely prompt an arms race between the countries. Ultimately, the only winner of that race may be Russia's arms market, as discussed.

While Armenia is the first recipient of the missile system, Russian military analyst Pavel Felgenhauer notes in the article from Azerbaijani *Haqqin*, that it is likely an export version of the Iskander and that its firing range is considerably less than the version Russia possesses. Regardless, both the Azerbaijani and Armenian sources claim that this will force the government of Azerbaijan into purchasing the Iskander E system or an expensive air defense system.

The article from the Azerbaijani *Musavat* states that Russia sold the Iskander systems to Armenia in order to ultimately maintain sales of weapons and equipment to Azerbaijan. While the government of Azerbaijan in recent years bought unmanned aerial vehicles from Israel and maintains military ties with Turkey, it has also acquired Russian S-300 surface-to-air systems and in a substantial contract with Russia, bought T-90S tanks, BMP-3 armored infantry fighting vehicles and several of the TOS-1 multiple rocket launcher systems. Outside of these acquisitions, the inventory of Azerbaijan's Armed Forces is mostly Russian made equipment. If the appearance of Iskander systems in Armenia causes Azerbaijan to make a large acquisition in kind, who it comes from will be worth watching. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

“It is most likely that Russia did sell it to Armenia, but perhaps, Azerbaijan will be prompted to acquire the system...”



Armenian Armed Forces displayed its Iskander ballistic missile system for the first time at the country's Independence Day parade in Yerevan on 21 September 2016.

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/20/Armenian_Army_OTRK_Iskander.jpg

Source: Павел Фельгенгауэр: «Россия может продать «Искандеры» и Азербайджану» (Pavel Felgenhauer: “Russia can also sell “Iskanders” to Azerbaijan”), *Haqqin*, 23 September 2016. <http://haqqin.az/news/80753>

...Most likely the system sold to Armenia is “Iskander E”...The firing range of it is less than the “Iskander M” at 200 km. “Iskander M” has a range of 500 km....Russia cannot sell “Iskander M” to Armenia because it would be a violation of Moscow’s international obligations. The sale of a missile system with a range of over 300 km to a state that is a belligerent in a conflict is a violation of international obligations.” – Felgenhauer...

...the Russian Defense Ministry has not denied or confirmed that the “Iskander” missile system was sold to Armenia...This increases the suspicion that the “Iskander” at the military parade in Armenia is from the arsenal of the Russian military base. It is most likely that Russia did sell it to Armenia, but perhaps, Azerbaijan will be prompted to acquire the system...Armenia will not be able to use this weapon for short-term military operations in Nagorno-Karabakh. However, if a large-scale war between Azerbaijan and Armenia starts, the use of “Iskander” is likely...Felgenhauer believes that Russia’s main goal is to maintain a balance between Azerbaijan and Armenia...

Source: “Expert: Armenian Iskanders will make Azerbaijan dip into its purse,” *News.am*, 25 September 2016. <http://news.am/eng/news/348207.html>

“...Since the demonstration of Iskander systems at the military parade in Yerevan, the Azerbaijani press began disseminating news on the purchase of weaponry from Turkey and Israel, including purchase of Iron Dome missile defense system.... there is one problem, which the Azerbaijani media keeps silent on: Iron Dome is not designed for counteracting weaponry like Iskander,” the expert noted. In his words, in this case the issue might concern a more developed Israeli system ARROW 2, or Hetz, if, of course, Israel agrees to sell it to Azerbaijan. “Such a system is incredibly expensive, not guaranteeing full security...”

Source: “Rusiyanın “İsgəndər” təxribatının arxasındakı qorxunc motiv - Azərbaycanı təsir altında saxlamaq! (The scary motive behind Russia’s “Iskander” provocation – to keep Azerbaijan under its influence!),” *Musavat*, 24 September 2016. http://musavat.com/news/siyaset/rusiyanin-igender-texribatinin-arxasindaki-qorxunc-motiv-azerbaycani-tesir-altinda-saxlamaq_380068.html

A new phase of subversive politics of the Kremlin; Why does Baku’s military cooperation with Turkey, Israel, and other countries bother the Kremlin?...It is still unknown if the “Iskander” missile systems demonstrated in Yerevan belong to Armenia or Russia...It turns out that Armenia only has “Iskander E” systems and so the same weapons can be sold to Azerbaijan...

...This draws attention to an important nuance. In recent years Baku has been increasingly supplied with weapons from Turkey, Israel, and China. This is an automatic reduction in weapons and equipment from Russia, which means Russia’s importance for Azerbaijan is decreased. The motive behind the “Iskander” provocation is for Russia to maintain its arms market...



Investigating the Bombing at the Chinese Embassy in Bishkek

OE Watch Commentary: The 30 August suicide bombing attack that struck the Chinese Embassy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan came as a major surprise to many in the country and in the region, particularly since the motive and the people responsible for the bombing have not been fully established. While Kyrgyzstan's National Security Committee (GKNB) blamed a Uyghur terrorist group for the attack, the accompanying excerpted articles discuss that important parts of the case remain unclear.

The article from the Kyrgyz *Kloop* provides a summary of what happened. It reports that the GKNB believes the bomber, Zoir Khalilov, was a Uyghur traveling on a Tajikistani passport and belonging to the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM, aka the Turkestan Islamic Party). The GKNB believe that the ETIM also has a connection with Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria.

Coming a few weeks after the attack, the article from the Central Asian *Fergana News* reported more information revealed from the GKNB's investigation. The article notes that a few of the suspects identified by the GKNB said that they were surprised at having been accused of involvement in the attack. The article also mentions that they have not been hiding from authorities and that two of them have even been in contact with the Kyrgyz Consulate in Istanbul, where they have worked for several years. The investigation named a couple of suspects who apparently helped the bomber, but it is worth noting that only the bomber has been identified as an ethnic Uyghur, while the other suspects have not. While the GKNB investigation pointed to a Uyghur terrorist group, the article from the Chinese *Xinhua* points out an important aspect of the incident: no terrorist group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Regardless of who carried out the bombing, this marked the most violent incident against a Chinese target in Kyrgyzstan in over ten years. Two shootings of Chinese government officials have taken place in Bishkek, one in May 2000 when two Chinese officials visiting from the Xinjiang Province were killed and another in June 2002 when a Chinese diplomat was killed. Both incidents allegedly involved a member of a Uyghur terrorist group. Following the 2002 incident, Chinese officials reportedly worked with Kyrgyzstan's security services on the investigation, but there has been no indication that this is taking place following the bombing at the embassy. The Kyrgyz government will likely continue to investigate the bombing and take various security measures to prevent another incident, but it remains to be seen what impact the incident will have for China. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

Source: Titova, Aleksandra. "ГКНБ: Теракт в посольстве Китая совершен по заказу «уйгурских террористических группировок» (GKNB: The attack in the Chinese Embassy was carried out on the order of "Uyghur terrorist groups")," *Kloop*, 6 September 2016. <http://kloop.kg/blog/2016/09/06/gknb-terakt-v-posolstve-kitaya-sovershen-po-zakazu-sirijskih-terroristov/>

The State Committee of National Security reported that the identity of the suicide bomber who committed a terrorist attack in the Chinese Embassy in Bishkek on 30 August...Zoir Khalilov, born in 1983 and a citizen of Tajikistan, is a member of the "East Turkestan Islamic Movement" terrorist organization...The investigation also established that those who ordered the attack are Uyghurs operating in Syria associated with the terrorist organization "Jabhat al-Nusra"...

The explosion took place after the suicide bomber rammed the gate of the Chinese Embassy in a "Mitsubishi Delica" and detonated a "powerful" improvised explosive device...The explosion injured three people, two ... were hospitalized with severe injuries...

Source: Saipov, Shohrukh. "Взрыв в посольстве Китая в Бишкеке: Как нежданно-негаданно стать террористом (The explosion at the Chinese Embassy in Bishkek: How one quite unexpectedly became a terrorist)," *Fergana News*, 19 September 2016. <http://www.fergananews.com/articles/9101>

...Five people were arrested in the framework of the case, another four are wanted. Three of the wanted people have declared their innocence in the attack...Abu Saloh was born Sirozhiddin in the village Kashkar-Kyshtak, Kara-Suu District (Osh Oblast) of Kyrgyzstan – Abu Ahmad is a native of the Suzak District, Jalal-Abad Oblast (born) Burhaniddin Zhantoraev. Both were born in 1971 and are wanted internationally...Izzotillo Sattybaev, a native of Osh, is also wanted...According to the investigation, Sattybaev entered Kyrgyzstan 16 June 2016 on a Tajik passport... He assisted the suicide bomber in the manufacture of the IED and flew to Istanbul a few hours before the attack...

Investigators believe that two Kyrgyz citizens living in Istanbul were involved – Mubarak Turgenbaev, a tour agent for "Adal Tour" who (is accused) of coordinating the financing, and Ilyas Sabirov, allegedly involved in transferring militants to Syria...Turganbaev wrote on his Facebook page of his innocence...He pointed out he was in touch with the Kyrgyz Consulate in Turkey...Ilyas said he was surprised by news that he is suspected of involvement in the attack in Bishkek..."I already gave testimony in the Kyrgyz Consulate..."...Three of the four wanted by authorities in this case – Zhantoraev, Sabirov and Turganbaev – are not hiding and intend to prove their innocence...

Source: "Kyrgyzstan's intelligence agency initiates investigation into attack on Chinese Embassy," *Xinhua*, 31 August 2016. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-08/31/c_135646334.htm

China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying also confirmed at a press conference that three people of the Chinese embassy were injured in the attack... The explosion also caused damage to the Chinese embassy's east door and walls, as well as buildings next to the Chinese embassy...

The Chinese Foreign Ministry immediately expressed shock at the attack. It strongly condemned the car bombing, and required Kyrgyzstan to "take immediate and necessary measures to ensure the safety of Chinese people and institutions," Hua said... So far, no one has claimed responsibility for the attack.



The Afghan Government's Peace Agreement with Gulbiddin Hekmatyar

OE Watch Commentary: The draft peace agreement signed by the government of Afghanistan and the head of the Hezb-i-Islami party, Gulbiddin Hekmatyar, on 22 September has been noted as a major step in resolving the conflict in Afghanistan. The accompanying excerpted articles from Afghani news sources report on the impact of the agreement and point out that there are several issues that have yet to be resolved.

The first article provides an overview of the agreement's provisions for Hekmatyar and members of Hezb-i-Islami. The author notes that Hekmatyar has been granted amnesty for past crimes; that the Afghan government will work to have his name removed from international terrorist blacklists, and that he will eventually be allowed to take part in political activities. The author also notes that there is concern about the peace agreement not stipulating members of Hezb-i-Islami to disarm; regardless of the fact that the current operational capabilities of Hezb-i-Islami have been questioned and the organization has not been involved in significant attacks over the past several years.

The second article points out that removing Hekmatyar's name from blacklists will take time. It also notes a suggestion from the spokesman of the High Peace Council regarding what to do with armed Hezb-i-Islami members: issue them a license to help provide security in Afghanistan. It is not known if Hezb-i-Islami members will fulfill this role or how they will be integrated back into Afghanistan.

One of the provisions of the peace agreement is that the Afghan government will provide Hekmatyar security. Some in Afghanistan view the agreement with skepticism and question why Hekmatyar should be forgiven for what they saw as crimes committed against the Afghan people during the Civil War in the 1990s.

In addition to issues with Hekmatyar's reconciliation, the government of Afghanistan hoped the peace agreement would pave the way for a similar agreement with the Taliban, but the third and fourth articles discuss that only the splinter Taliban group led by Mullah Rasool support the deal. As one of the articles note, earlier this year the Taliban responded to the peace agreement with an announcement of its spring offensive. The Afghan government reached the agreement with Hezb-i-Islami after on and off negotiations that lasted over six years. While negotiations with the Taliban will have a different dynamic, the peace agreement's provisions and the perception of Hekmatyar coming back into Afghanistan show how difficult it could be. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

“The comeback of Hekmatyar may also produce security problems as the agreement does not say anything about the disarmament of the HIA [Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan] fighter...”

Source: Ahmad Hasib Farhan, “The Implications of Peace Deal with Hekmatyar,” *Khaama Press*, 1 October 2016. <http://www.khaama.com/the-implications-of-peace-deal-with-hekmatyar-01986>

The peace deal between the Government of Afghanistan and Gulbadin Hekmatyar is the first noteworthy success of the National Unity Government (NUG) in peace efforts...Based on the agreement, the NUG committed to grant Hekmatyar amnesty for all his past offenses and release certain Hezb-i-Islami (HIA) prisoners. The Afghan government also agreed to press for the lifting of American and UN sanctions on Hekmatyar. The deal also includes provisions for his security at government expense. HIA will agree to cease all military anti-government activity...In addition, the government will officially announce the right of HIA to be active both in the political and the social arenas and participate in all elections...

The peace deal, which unequivocally gives privileges and honor, seems a political compromise rather than an actual peace agreement. Hekmatyar will return to Kabul not to live an isolated life but rejoin politics once again...the comeback of Hekmatyar may also produce security problems as the agreement does not say anything about the disarmament of the HIA fighter... What will be the fate of those armed men, who under the leadership of Hekmatyar fought against the government and people of Afghanistan for the last 15 years?...The deal doesn't specify any measures...

Although HIA announced a ceasefire and ordered its fighters to stop any kind of attacks on Afghan security forces, the Afghan government must remain vigilant... The government must produce a proper strategy for the implementation of the peace agreement with Hekmatyar. Successful implementation of the agreement is as crucial as the signing.

Source: Majidi, Tariq. “Removal of Hekmatyar's Name From UN Blacklist Will ‘Take Time’,” *Tolo News*, 23 September 2016. <http://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/27422-removal-of-hekmatyars-name-from-un-blacklist-will-take-time>

Legal experts said on Friday that removing the name of the Hizb-e-Islami's leader from the UN's blacklist following the signing of the peace agreement will take some time... legal experts have said that in the event of Hizb-e-Islami not upholding their side of the deal, they would again be blacklisted...

Following the al-Qaeda attack on the World Trade Center buildings in the U.S in 2001, the United Nations Security Council announced that the world body would blacklist a number of individuals and organizations for their involvement in terrorism...If the refugees who live in Shamshato camp and they belong to Hizb-e-Islami, if they are armed, the government should issue them licenses so that they can contribute to the security of the country,” said Shahzada Shahid, spokesman to HPC.

(continued)



Continued: The Afghan Government's Peace Agreement with Gulbiddin Hekmatyar

Source: "Hekmatyar committed a major crime by signing peace deal: Taliban," *Khaama Press*, 27 September 2016. <http://www.khaama.com/hekmatyar-committed-a-major-crime-by-signing-peace-deal-taliban-01954>

Source: "Taliban splinter group welcomes signing of peace deal by Hezb-e-Islami," *Khaama Press*, 27 September 2016. <http://www.khaama.com/taliban-splinter-group-welcomes-signing-of-peace-deal-by-hezb-e-islami-01959>

The Taliban militants group in Afghanistan has slammed Gulbuddin Hekmatyar for allowing his party to sign a draft peace agreement with the Afghan government, saying Hekmatyar has committed 'a major crime'... The Taliban group however rejected the plea and announced its spring offensive in April this year forcing the Afghan government to give up peace efforts and respond to Taliban's insurgency with military option.

A splinter group of the Taliban led by Mullah Rasool welcomed the signing of a draft peace agreement between the Afghan government and Hezb-e-Islami led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar... The sources further added that the endorsement by Mullah Rasool faction of the Taliban is based on the stance of Hezb-e-Islami to work for the withdrawal of the foreign forces from the country.



Junior officers in the Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF) undergo training in Kabul as the unit replaced non-diplomatic, private security companies in Afghanistan over the past several years. The government of Afghanistan will provide security for Gulbiddin Hekmatyar as a provision of the peace agreement signed in September.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:120306-F-TA961-040_%286833323600%29.jpg



How Russia Perceives and Responds to Threats

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying passages contain noteworthy comments by Colonel (ret.) Igor Korotchenko, the chief editor of the National Defense journal, and former managing editor of *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer (Military-Industrial Courier)*. Korotchenko describes many of Russia’s security concerns; and discusses Russia’s “fortress” mentality and the causes for some of Russia’s recent defense reforms.

In the first passage, a transcript from the “General Staff” program, Korotchenko points out that geography is a prime concern for Russia, as it sees hostility and instability on all sides: From the West, a hostile NATO; to the north, a growing militarization of the Arctic; to the South, many unstable states and militant Islam; to the East, China, a country which Russia believes will be a great military power in 10-15 years, and an unstable North Korea.

Korotchenko’s comments about Russian air defense capabilities highlight the Russian fear of US precision guided munitions, along with other programs such as the Ballistic Missile Defense System and the threat they pose to Russian strategic deterrent capabilities. Korotchenko also discusses the establishment of the National Guard as an effective means for battling “US-backed political forces” which the Russian leadership has often stated that the US is funding in Russia. This belief echoes other Russian pronouncements that the US is responsible for color revolutions, the Arab Spring, and the Maidan movement by way of US government funded NGOs and social media.

The second accompanying article from *Vzglyad (Newspaper)* includes commentary from Korotchenko about the role of the Airborne Troops (VDV) in the future. On 4 October 2016, Colonel General Andrey Serdyukov was appointed as the new Commander-in-Chief of the VDV. Previously, Colonel Serdyukov was a deputy of the Southern Operational Strategic Command (OSK) during the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Russian media has reported he had a major role in the operation, possibly serving as the senior operational level commander. By most accounts, the operation was a great success, and so it is not surprising that Serdyukov was appointed to this important position, as the Airborne Troops are the General Staff’s Strategic Reserve, that perform many missions that the US would only conduct with special operations forces.

Korotchenko’s comments point out that the VDV will remain as the “go to” organization in the Russian Armed Forces when decisive action is needed expediently. The heavily mechanized VDV will not only be expected to perform the typical “behind enemy lines” missions expected of airborne forces throughout the world, but also as a rapid reaction force to quickly deploy anywhere along Russia’s massive border to repel or delay any would-be invader. Korotchenko believes that the VDV will need to be technically sophisticated to face these threats, but the VDV will also need to be flexible to combat the “hybrid threat,” Russian parlance for Western funded NGOs and social media that induce political opposition, discontent, and protests. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

Source: Yevgeniya Artamonova, “Airborne Brotherhood: Airborne Troops General on The Modern-Day Paratrooper’s Military Training,” transcript of the “General Staff” program, 4 September 2016, <https://life.ru/t/%D0%B7%D0%B2%D1%83%D0%BA/899257/vozdushnoie_bratstvo_ghienieral_vdv_nil_o_voienni_podgotovkie_sovriemiennogho_diesantnika>, accessed 20 October 2016.

[Artamonova] We are beginning the “General Staff” program... Our guests are the military expert Igor Korotchenko, chief editor of the journal “National Defense”...

[Korotchenko]... Present-day wars are becoming mobile, fast-moving, and it is often necessary to resolve the question of reaching a particular geographical point rapidly... We see today that the situation is unfortunately unstable everywhere. This applies to the entire perimeter of the Russian border. Let us go around the main sectors of our borders. The Arctic: An arms race is under way today and the NATO countries are actively interfering in the region. British submarines turn up in the Arctic Ocean on a fairly regular basis. These are multirole submarines and they are rehearsing these tasks together with the Americans. Of course they are not busy with geographical discoveries, they are preparing for operations in Arctic conditions, including potential strikes by cruise missiles against targets in the territory of the Russian Federation. Plus, we are observing very vigorous activity by American submarine forces. All of this obliges us to keep our powder dry. If we look at the western borders -- energetic activity by the North Atlantic Alliance. In Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia troop groupings are being deployed today, and in the future new bases and airfields will appear -- a factor that is really forcing us to strengthen our combat readiness.

The Black Sea, Russia’s southern borders: We see active penetration of the Black Sea by NATO naval forces, despite the Montreux Convention, which limits to 21 days the presence of warships from countries that do not have direct access to the Black Sea. Nonetheless American NATO multirole warships are periodically in the Black Sea and spy planes are active there, and so we are forced to monitor the threats and counter them if necessary. The southern borders: The death of President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov could be the prologue to large-scale destabilization throughout the southern region. Here militants from and other terrorist organizations are active, so the Central Asia salient could become explosive. We are obliged to take account of this probability. The Far East, China: Our relations with China are shaping up well. It is an economic superpower. In somewhere around 10-15 years’ time it will become a military superpower. Although we are bound by friendly relations, we must carefully monitor everything that happens on our Far Eastern borders, especially since an arms race is under way there. This affects practically all the countries without exception, beginning with Singapore and ending with states like North Korea and Japan. The situation on the Korean peninsula remains permanently explosive. The DPRK possesses nuclear weapons. Considering that the Americans and the South Koreans are constantly carrying out combat exercises that are provocative to P’yongyang, everywhere on the perimeter of the Russian border is unquiet, and the guarantee of our present *(continued)*



Continued: How Russia Perceives and Responds to Threats

status, that 22 June [the date Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941] will never be repeated in our century, is powerful and effective Russian Armed Forces.

[Unidentified listener] *Nina Vasilyevna here....At the moment there is war in the air, everyone is saber-rattling. Anyway, capitalism always gets out of a crisis by means of a war. Tell me, what is being done for the people, to protect them? Previously we had bomb shelters, as children we sheltered in our apartment building -- back then, they provided them -- but now the Army might not even fight. Remember Yugoslavia -- it was mainly civilians who suffered there. What is in store for us? The Army is one thing, but nothing is being done -- that is my impression.*

[Korotchenko] *Today no bomb shelter can save you from a precision, penetrating munition. Whereas previously they used to build bomb shelters to protect the population from high-explosive bombs, today penetrating munitions, including concrete-piercing bombs, are capable of overcoming any protection, and therefore an entirely different approach is employed for the protection of the civilian population. By a decision of the president of Russia, an aerospace defense system is being created in the country. This means the echeloned deployment of various systems and means of air and missile defense and of course the information contour for acquisition and tracking. The objective is as follows: No hostile aircraft can operate over the territory of the Russian Federation, it will immediately be shot down at the moment of crossing the state border. This, today, is also the new concept of protection of the civilian population during wars and military conflicts. Our military simply will not let them, the way the Germans broke through to Moscow and bombed us before...*

[Unidentified listener] *...A rather sensitive question about the National Guard. This is of course a large, very costly force. There will be 300,000 guys sitting in barracks. This is not rational. Why was it not possible to create a skeleton National Guard, on the Swiss model...*

[Korotchenko] *Russia, if we look at the map, is very different in size and space from Switzerland. What is good for Switzerland is absolutely not suitable for Russia. The point of the idea of creating the National Guard is first and foremost to combat terrorism and organized crime as well as possible attempts by a number of Western countries to initiate events of the type that happened in Ukraine. They bring out militants who subsequently act like a battering ram, rocking the state power hierarchy. Today we can see that certain US-backed political forces are already declaring their readiness to bring several thousand so-called activists into Moscow on election day, people who in actual fact are trained for possible violent operations. I suggest that activity of this kind -- if it takes place -- should be instantly cut short by the organs of law and order, the law enforcement agencies...*



Colonel (ret) Igor Korotchenko.
Source: https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Коротченко,_Игорь_Юрьевич#/media/File:Igor_Korotchenko-1.jpg

Source: Ruslan Davletshin, "The Mission Is Adaptation of the VDV to New Wars," *Vzglyad Online*, 30 September 2016, <<http://vz.ru/society/2016/9/30/835495.html>>, accessed 20 October 2016.

Sources have named the new commander of Russian Airborne Troops who is coming to replace Colonel-General Vladimir Shamanov. The VDV is not as yet confirming the information. Experts, though, are certain that Colonel-General Andrey Serdyukov, who provided security at the time of the referendum in Crimea in 2014, will be handling the elements of the winged infantry also...

Colonel of the Reserve Igor Korotchenko, chief editor of the journal National Defense and member of the Defense Ministry Public Council, believes that the change of commander is a natural occurrence, considering both the fact that Colonel-General Shamanov could head up the Defense Committee in the new State Duma and the necessary personnel rotation. In addition, the former military officer evaluated the key in which the Airborne Troops would develop....

..."Clearly, so mobile a component of our country's armed forces as the Airborne Troops will have to be employed not only in its traditional operations but also in operations of an all-purpose nature under the conditions of modern hybrid high-tech war. It is preparation for managing such combat operations which will be a task of the new commander," Igor Korotchenko believes.

"Today everything is changing since the nature of a modern future war is influencing the development of the armed forces and combat arms. The formations are becoming more all-purpose. The aims and objectives of the structural changes which will occur in the VDV mean adaptation to the new wars in which Russia will, possibly, have to participate," the analyst added.

The analyst remarked in response to the question: "Is the mass insertion of units in the enemy rear front and center at this time," that the VDV cannot itself take off and that everything here comes down to the possibilities of Military Transport Aviation.

"There is a number of limitations here. But I believe that the VDV has to be ready for any employment scenario. Insertion in the enemy rear included," Igor Korotchenko summed up.



The Two Faces of Russia's Operational Reserve

OE Watch Commentary: Russia's Ministry of Defense has been considering wide-scale reforms of the military reserve system for several years. The current reserve system was inherited from the Soviet Union, and was designed for a doctrine that required maintaining a large strategic reserve of troops that could be mobilized in the event of large-scale warfare. In recent years, there has been some debate about whether Russia needs to maintain such a large strategic reserve or switch to more of an operational reserve. Opinions vary between two major camps. Reformers say that an operational reserve would better enhance security because it would be smaller, better trained, more able to quickly become combat ready in a national emergency, and more likely to be called in an emergency. In contrast, the older, retired senior officers believe that the capability to mass mobilize should be maintained at all costs. The accompanying passages from Russian sources provide insight into this debate, and suggest that Russia is currently experimenting with the two models.

The first article, from the service newspaper *Flag Rodiny* discusses the US style of an operational reserve, with reserves reporting for duty and serving alongside active service members or serving in reserve units that support the active component. Similar to the US reserve system, this system consists of an active reserve component and inactive reserve component (Individual Ready Reserve), with the operational reserve conducting annual training requirements, receiving monthly stipends, and being completely voluntary. The intent is to maintain a cadre of officers and enlisted soldiers who regularly train with particular active units; in the event of their unit's mobilization, the reservist would be called to duty to provide support or backfill as needed.

The second article from the Russian Defense Ministry and the third piece from *Izvestiya* discuss a new way to use reservists, as stand-alone units called territorial-defense battalions (BTO). Russia experimented with these in the Vostok-2014 military exercise. Territorial defense units have appeared elsewhere in Eastern Europe and usually consist of relatively lightly armed infantry who are assigned to secure critical infrastructure in the

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“The 47th Territorial Defense Division numbers several thousand personnel. It seems, on the one hand, that such a number of fighting men is clearly excessive...but one should take into account that they will have to provide 24-hour protection not only for military facilities, but also for bridges, tunnels, roads, electric power stations, and other equally important infrastructure facilities...”



Source: <http://eng.mil.ru/images/kavkaz-2016-900-EN.jpg>

Source: Vladimir Pasyakin, “Reservists: on the Line,” *Flag Rodiny Online*, 13 September 2016, <http://sc.mil.ru/files/morf/military/archive/FR_2016-09-12.pdf>, accessed 20 October 2016.

The Kavkaz-2016 strategic command staff training exercise has concluded successfully. It was so extensive that it embraced not only troops of the Southern Military District and the Black Sea Fleet and Caspian Flotilla belonging to it but also several regions of Russia from which reservists were called up. Sevastopol’ reservists among them, incidentally.

Russia’s Ministry of Defense constituted territorial defense subunits from servicemen of the reserve, Captain 1st Rank Vyacheslav Trukhachev, chief of the Black Sea Fleet’s Information Support Section, announced.

Over 600 citizens in the reserve were assigned to training assemblies organized at the base of the Black Sea Fleet’s Separate Naval Infantry Brigade...They all took part in the military assemblies in military positions corresponding to their occupational specialties in subunits of

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Continued: The Two Faces of Russia's Operational Reserve

rear. These forces are not intended to serve in high-intensity combat operations abroad. The intent of this form of an operational reserve is to unburden the active duty force of these duties, allowing the latter greater freedom of movement to conduct combat operations. The *Izvestiya* article also discusses the establishment of a territorial-defense division in the Crimea, an unsurprising development if recent Russian comments about saboteur infiltration into Crimea from Ukraine are believed.

The current reserve system, which was inherited from the Soviet Union, was composed of conscripts and officers who had completed their mandatory service and had been discharged from active service, with rare call-ups to test mobilization capabilities. A consequence of the Soviet Union's mass mobilization doctrine was the necessity to maintain units and equipment for these mobilized reservists. These units were/are manned by small full-time cadres that would keep the equipment serviceable and maintain enough institutional knowledge to bring the mobilized reserve up to some level of combat readiness before deployment. Many of these "skeleton units" were disbanded after the 2009 "New Look" reforms, as there was a belief that resources were being wasted on maintaining a mass mobilization capability to the detriment of bringing active units up to full levels of operational readiness.

The first talk of an operational reserve was in 2009, when the Defense Ministry announced that 60,000 junior officers were to be dismissed from active service, but would be afforded the opportunity to contract into a reserve status that would pay on average 20,600 rubles (\$870) per month. This idea has gained some traction. All of the accompanying passages discuss that the Kavkaz-2016 exercise has used both types of operational reserve, suggesting that Russia is testing both models. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

the Black Sea Fleet's Naval Infantry and Coastal Defense Troops...

The instruction process was a thorough one. It involved all categories of participants in the assemblies, from private to colonel and captain 1st rank. It dealt with all types of training -- drill, weapon, engineer, physical, tactical, specialized, WMD protection, medical, and others. The reservists were taught to place and to clear mines of different models and functions, they fired small arms of all types, they drove vehicles and armor... In short, the training was both serious and comprehensive. The reservists recalled their knowledge of military affairs, they revived the skills they acquired during their service, they upgraded their professional military proficiency... There were also representatives of the fairer sex, mainly medical personnel, among the more than 600 residents...

Source: "Four Territorial Defense Subunits Manned by Reservists Taking Part in Kavkaz-2016 in the Southern Military District," Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation Online, 6 September 2016, <http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12094815@egNews>, accessed 7 October 2016.

Four territorial defense subunits manned by reservists -- citizens in the reserve and forming part of the mobilization reserve -- are taking part for the first time in the practical operations of mobilization training during the Kavkaz-2016 strategic command staff training exercise (SKShU).

A motorized infantry battalion, two companies, and a reconnaissance platoon have been constituted from military units of the Southern and Central Military Districts and the Northern Fleet. In all over 700 reservists from Rostovskaya, Novosibirskaya, Arkhangel'skaya, and Murmanskaya Oblasts have been drafted into the subunits.

During the Kavkaz-2016 exercise the territorial defense subunits will perform missions to reinforce the security and defense of military installations in the south of Russia. The reservists will participate in missions to detect and destroy a notional adversary's sabotage and reconnaissance groups and illegal armed elements in designated areas. Just prior to the exercise all the reservists underwent individual basic training and combat teamwork training as elements of subunits.

The new manning system stipulates the enlistment for combat training missions of citizens (reservists) in the reserve who, in line with the prescribed procedure, have concluded a contract on remaining in the reserve in a particular military unit in a particular military position for purposes of guaranteeing the Armed Forces' prescribed strength levels both in a period of mobilization and for the resolution of crisis situations.

On completion of the military training assemblies all those involved will receive pay and allowances commensurate with their military rank and the military position held, and will also be given monetary remuneration in the amount of their average salary.

Source: Aleksey Ramm, "A Division Has Been Created in Crimea to Combat Saboteurs," *Izvestiya Online*, 15 September 2016, <<http://izvestia.ru/news/632465>>, accessed 20 October 2016

Several thousand reserve servicemen from various regions of Russia will provide security for the peninsula's military and social facilities. The 47th Territorial Defense Division (DTO) has been formed in Sevastopol', the members of which will be able to help the law-enforcement agencies fight against terrorists and saboteurs, to protect strategic facilities, and, when necessary, to clear up the consequences of natural disasters and catastrophes. The basis of the unique military formation are not regular soldiers and officers, but reservists whom the military department summons to training camps several times each year.

*"The division's formation was completed at the end of August this year. During the 'Kavkaz-2016' exercises, one of the division's battalions was placed on alert and began performing combat tasks," a Defense Ministry representative familiar with the situation told *Izvestiya*. "The soldiers provided security for military and civilian facilities not only in Sevastopol' itself, but also throughout Crimea. They also conducted exercises in intercepting and eliminating enemy (continued)*



Continued: The Two Faces of Russia's Operational Reserve

saboteurs.”

According to Viktor Murakhovskiy, the Arsenal Otechestva military magazine's editor-in-chief, territorial defense tasks (protecting military and civilian facilities, combating reconnaissance and sabotage groups, and preventing acts of sabotage) were, until recently, shared among the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), MVD Internal Troops (now the National Guard), the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Ministry for Affairs of Civil Defense, Emergency Situations, and Elimination of Natural Disasters (MChS), and other security structures. But now, a decision has been made not to disperse the functions among departments, but to transfer the bulk of them to the Defense Ministry...

“The formation of the first territorial defense units and subunits in the Russian Army began back in 2014-2015. The recent ‘Kavkaz-2016’ exercises became a test of the work accomplished. Although there were indeed certain difficulties, the Defense Ministry leadership was, on the whole, satisfied with the result obtained,” Viktor Murakhovskiy said. “In peacetime, a territorial defense division is an ‘empty’ military unit in which only a few regular soldiers perform service. But, in the event of combat operations or natural disasters arising, the required number of reservists is drafted into the division.”

The division's exact organizational and manning structure is unknown but, notionally, it comprises several territorial defense battalions, whose personnel drive around in trucks and are armed with small-arms weapons and several mortars.

It is noteworthy that, in the event of an alert, not only reservists from the Republic of Crimea report for service with the 47th Territorial Defense Division, but also from other regions of Russia. A Black Sea Fleet spokesman explained to Izvestiya that reserve servicemen had been moved to Sevastopol' for the “Kavkaz-2016” exercises by military-transport aviation...

The 47th Territorial Defense Division numbers several thousand personnel. It seems, on the one hand, that such a number of fighting men is clearly excessive,” Dmitriy Boltenkov said. “But one should take it into account that they will have to provide 24-hour protection not only for military facilities, but also for bridges, tunnels, roads, electric power stations, and other equally important infrastructure facilities. The territorial defense division's creation in Crimea is, therefore, completely justified.”

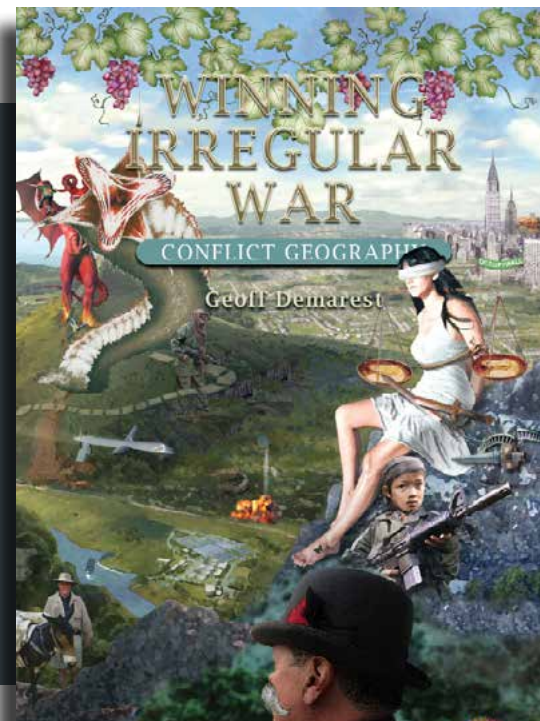
“In peacetime, a territorial defense division is an ‘empty’ military unit in which only a few regular soldiers perform service. But, in the event of combat operations or natural disasters arising, the required number of reservists is drafted into the division.”



Source: <http://eng.mil.ru/en/multimedia/photo.htm?id=9561@egClassification&ra=cmsPhotoGallery>

Geoff Demarest's *Winning Irregular War* is about a broader set of conflicts than just 'insurgency.' In its 144 sections, Geoff Demarest raises new and overlooked concepts related to modern conflict in a provocative manner designed to stir up debate and critical thinking. As Geoff Demarest puts it: "I hope that some of the ideas in it will be contagious."

http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/E-Pubs/Epubs/WIrW_2015.pdf





Russian Personnel Developments

OE Watch Commentary: Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation has made many reforms, but some of these reforms have tied the hands of the military, especially in regard to personnel practices. Most conscripts now serve one year terms, half the term served by conscripts in Soviet times. Furthermore, conscripts are prohibited from being sent to certain areas in the Southern Military District (Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia) and from being deployed abroad and to combat zones. As a result, the Russian military has had to reevaluate the role of conscripts. The accompanying passages from Russian sources discuss the Russian military's personnel needs and a reform that is being considered to address some of them.

In general, the Russian military is attempting to transition most conscripts to combat service support positions which require few skills; providing them militarily useful skills through pre-conscription training programs; and deferring conscription until the conscript has been credentialed through a vocational training program. Despite these efforts, some problems remain. Conscripts are difficult to field in combat operations, and retaining them past the one-year period requires legislative change or national emergency. Considering that most Russian units are manned at 70-80% staffing level, retaining conscripts past the one-year conscription period is likely essential to fully staff most units, and put the country on a war footing.

The accompanying article from *Gazeta.ru* discusses a new personnel reform that would allow the Russian military to offer short-term contracts. These contracts would be available to conscripts whose term is nearing completion, and would enable them to perform military service for up to an additional year. This reform would give the Russian Federation several advantages. The change in the legal status of conscripts would allow extended service durations and more possibilities for deployment. Thus, it would enable the military to avoid the prohibitions involving conscripts, allowing it to flesh out fighting units when needed. If increasing the staffing level of the military is part of Russia's mobilization plan, these short-term contracts would provide a more scalable and discreet way of accomplishing this without the high profile actions of legislative change or declaring a national emergency. This reform would also be used to legalize volunteers fighting in Syria, and presumably other hot spots, if needed. The Russian Federation has struggled with the issue of private military companies and armed volunteers serving outside of Russia's borders. On one hand, these elements can be desirable, as their actions cannot be directly attributed to the Russian Federation. On the other hand, there is concern about armed formations that are not directly controlled by the state, and the consequences when these formations decide to return home. *(continued)*

“At present it is forbidden to send service members performing military service under the draft to hotspots, especially those abroad, and formations and units of the Armed Forces are experiencing difficulties in ensuring the full complement of personnel with the required qualifications...”

— Colonel General Sergey Kizyun

Source: Maksim Solopov, Mikhail Khodarenok, and Inna Sidorkova, “Speedy Service: The Idea of Short-Term Contracts for Participants in Military Operations Abroad Approved,” *Gazeta.ru Online*, 5 October 2016, <https://www.gazeta.ru/army/2016/10/05/10231943.shtml>

The government has approved a Defense Ministry draft law on short-term contracts for members of composite and nonorganic subunits for the duration of antiterrorist operations abroad. The amendments will make it possible to conclude a contract solely for the duration of specific combat tasks, and this will make it possible, among other things, to legalize the volunteer formations that are already operating in Syria, military experts explained to Gazeta.ru.

The Russian government commission on legislative activity has approved amendments concerning short-term contracts with service members for participation in operations abroad to combat international terrorism. The Defense Ministry's proposals consist in the possibility of recruiting soldiers and officers for service for a period of less than a year, solely for the duration of the performance of specific tasks during antiterrorist operations outside Russia and also on long-distance voyages by Navy ships.

“The need has arisen to increase the mobility of troops (forces) and to set up composite and nonorganic subunits and man them in a short space of time with service members performing military service under contract for the purpose of the prompt performance of short-term but important tasks connected with their participation in operations to suppress the activities of terrorist and extremist organizations,” the government website says.

Under existing legislation the first contract to perform military service for soldiers, seamen, and NCOs is concluded for two or three years, and for officers and warrant officers for five years, the announcement says. The conclusion of contracts for a shorter term (from six months to a year) is envisaged solely during a period of exceptional circumstances -- the elimination of the consequences of natural disasters, a state of emergency, or the restoration of constitutional order, or else for the purpose of participation in peacekeeping operations.

The change in the legislation was required “in connection with the increased activity of international terrorist and extremist organizations.”

...The amendments envisage offering citizens who are in the reserve and those whose term of service under the draft is nearing completion (not more than one month before the expiry of their term of military service) the opportunity to participate in an operation to suppress international terrorist activities outside Russian territory and also in voyages by ships by concluding a contract to perform military service for a time lasting until the ending of the circumstances that gave rise to the necessity but for not more than one year... *(continued)*



Continued: Russian Personnel Developments

The accompanying article from *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* discusses officer shortages in the Eastern Military District. Although most units may be manned at a 70-80% staffing level, the officer positions are filled at a higher rate due to the officer corps being the backbone and sole repository for institutional knowledge in the Russian Armed Forces. According to the article, the officer positions in the Eastern Military District are currently manned at a 92% level. This situation was caused by several factors including: reforms of the previous defense minister, pay and allowances, demographic issues, and living conditions for servicemen and their families in the Eastern Military District. Although not mentioned, it is possible that some of the district's personnel problems may be related to Russia's centrally managed officer personnel system. The Western and Southern Military Districts are currently undergoing many changes, and substantially increasing their capabilities. Since these districts are presumably the highest priority due to current tensions with the US and NATO, and are gaining new units, it is likely that personnel management officials are prioritizing manning these districts, to the detriment of the Eastern Military District. In order to fill some of these vacancies, the Russian Armed Forces are instituting policies to more easily allow reserve officers to assess into the active component. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

Legalization of Formations in Syria

"This will make it possible to recruit soldiers and commanding officers to perform strictly specific tasks. Apart from that, this draft law will give the Defense Ministry the opportunity to legalize volunteer formations performing combat tasks in hotspots, including Syria," the independent military expert Anton Lavrov, one of the authors of the book The Syrian Frontier, explained to Gazeta.ru.

Previously Gazeta.ru wrote in detail about soldiers from a private military company training at the Mol'kino training ground in Krasnoyarskiy Kray who took part in combat operations in the territory of Syria and Ukraine.

Colonel General Sergey Kizyun, ex-chief of staff of the Leningrad Military District, also regards the Defense Ministry's draft law as a correct initiative. "At present it is forbidden to send service members performing military service under the draft to hotspots, especially those abroad, and formations and units of the Armed Forces are experiencing difficulties in ensuring the full complement of personnel with the required qualifications," the general explains...

Source: Vladimir Mukhin, "The Troops in the East Are Awaiting Officers of the Reserve," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta Online*, 9 September 2016, http://www.ng.ru/politics/2016-09-09/3_kartblansh.html

Some elements of the Eastern Military District are experiencing a significant officer shortfall, and the personnel arms of the Defense Ministry are evidently not as yet capable of rapidly resolving this problem. Such a conclusion suggests itself from the action taken by Colonel-General Sergey Surovikin, commander of the Eastern MD, who has ordered his subordinates to go to the country's central regions and to recruit officers from the reserve for the district's units and formations there.

It was reported earlier that the Defense Ministry is fielding an entire division on Chukotka. New units and formations are being organized in the Arctic and on the Kurils. Infrastructure and garrisons for them are being built pro-actively, but there are problems, evidently, with the recruitment for the new subunits of skilled military specialists.

In order to tackle them, "field teams organized in the Eastern MD will work in the enlistment and recruitment offices of 26 components of the Russian Federation." This was announced yesterday by Colonel Aleksandr Gordeyev, acting chief of the press service of the Eastern MD. He says that representatives of the Eastern MD will exercise promotional activity in many cities of the Russian Federation. "This is being done to enlist for military service officers of the reserve earlier discharged owing to staffing measures." This action of the command is taking place in the contemporary history of the Far East and the Eastern MD for the first time. It is known that this region is experiencing a shortage of skilled labor, including an absence of young officers in the reserve. This is why reservists are being recruited for Eastern MD subunits throughout Russia. But, as a rule, this effort is being organized in centralized fashion by the Defense Ministry Main Personnel Directorate (GUK). It follows from official Eastern MD information that the GUK performed such work earlier. And, as a result, 564 officers of the reserve from 50 components of the Russian Federation were recruited for the Eastern MD. "They have all been appointed to positions in more than 130 military units of the Eastern MD, including combined-arms formations, the Pacific Fleet, and the Air and Air Defense Formation," Gordeyev observed.

But Nezavisimaya Gazeta sources in Eastern MD headquarters inform us that the centralized activities involving recruitment for the field from officers of the reserve organized earlier have not resolved the district's career-officer problem. A considerable number of official appointments are under strength, particularly in the newly formed units and formations. At the start of 2016 Nikolay Pankov, state secretary-deputy defense minister, announced that manning of the army and navy with officers in 2015 constituted 92 percent. "This is an unprecedented manning level. We have now set the task of reaching 93 percent in 2016," he said. This will be achieved through "the call-up for military service of officers discharged in preceding years."

This is what is now happening, evidently, but with problems. A rough estimate shows that the Russian army is short of approximately 17,000 officers. An 8 percent shortfall is not noticeable in outfits in the field...

Possible Force Structure Changes for Russia’s Combined Arms Armies

OE Watch Commentary: Russia appears to be developing a scalable and affordable mobilization capability that balances light and mobile rapid reaction forces, combat ready elements (BTGs) in all maneuver units, lower readiness brigades and divisions, and an operational and strategic reserve. The accompanying articles from Russian sources discuss these plans and how they are driven by Russia’s perception of the changing nature of threats it faces.

The accompanying article from *Izvestiya* discusses recent plans to transition three Ground Forces’ motorized rifle brigades in the Southern Military District into a singular motorized rifle division, the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division. This development is in addition to Russian plans to place three divisions near the Ukrainian and Belarusian borders. The article points to the changing nature of threat that Russia is now facing as the reason for this transition, mainly that antiterrorist operations are less of a concern (which the brigade is better suited for), while the possibilities of peer-to-peer conflict are on the rise concern (which the division is better suited for). Interestingly, the transition from three brigades to one division will likely result in an overall reduction in net manpower, as motorized rifle brigades typically have 4,500 soldiers per brigade, while a motorized rifle division has approximately 8,500 personnel. These new divisions appear to be smaller than the motorized rifle divisions in Soviet times that were manned with approximately 13,000 soldiers.

The accompanying article from *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* (*Military Industrial Complex*) also discusses the changing nature of threat as the reason for transitioning some brigades to divisions, but also presents another reason that Russia may be doing so. In current Russian Force structure, most combined arms armies consist of a several maneuver brigades and support units. The article points out that in the early 1990s, Russia considered a combined arms army structure that consisted of maneuver divisions, maneuver brigades, and support units. This force structure was intended to provide more options for the scalable projection of combat power. The article suggests that developing this combined arms army force structure may be the path that Russia is now on. Currently, there is no uniform set of capabilities that each combined arms army processes, but there have been several Russian media reports that this is the desired end state. If this system is implemented, the combined arms army (or tank army) could consist of several motorized rifle and tank divisions and brigades; headquarters, artillery, air defense, reconnaissance, and MTO (logistics) brigades; and two regiments, an engineering regiment and a NBC defense regiment.

The accompanying article from *RIA Novosti* discusses Russian plans to have each maneuver regiment and brigade capable of fielding two battalion tactical groups (BTGs) fully staffed with contract serviceman, with each BTG having approximately 700-900 personnel. Russia intends to be able to field 96 BTGs by the end of 2016, 115 BTGs by 2017, and 125 BTGs by 2018. Although the Battalion Tactical Group (BTG) is the instrument of choice for Russian force projection in Eastern Ukraine, the articles from *Izvestiya* and *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* make it very clear that Russia views a combination of divisions and brigades as essential for technologically advanced peer-to-peer combat.

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42nd Motorized Rifle Division Patch “If not us, then who”
Source: https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/42-я_гвардейская_мотострелковая_дивизия#/media/File:%D0%A8%D0%B5%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BD_42-%D1%8F_%D0%B3%D0%B2.%D0%BC%D1%81%D0%B4_.jpg

Approximate Unit Manpower	
Unit Type	Personnel
Motorized Rifle Division	8,500
Motorized Rifle Brigade	4,500
Separate Motorized Rifle Regiment	2,000
Battalion Tactical Group	700-900
Tank Division	6,500
Tank Brigade	3,000
(Iskander) Rocket Brigade	500
Artillery Brigade	1000
MLRS Brigade	500
Air Assault Division	5,500
Airborne Division	5,500
Naval Infantry Brigade	2,500
GRU Spetsnaz Brigade	1,500

(continued)

Continued: Possible Force Structure Changes for Russia’s Combined Arms Armies

Given Russian views, policies and laws on rapid reaction forces, personnel staffing levels, prohibitions on the use conscripts, and past performance, a general idea of a Russian mobilization and deployment to counter a hostile force can be described. During pre-mobilization, conscription tours would be extended to help flesh out units with lower levels of readiness. The first units to deploy would be the rapid reaction forces, the Russian Airborne, Naval Infantry, and/or high readiness conventional units, which would deploy en masse to deter or slow the enemy. Individual BTGs from lower level readiness units may deploy to support the efforts of the rapid reaction forces, or they may wait for their parent brigade or division to come to full strength through the reserve mobilization, and then deploy to the front. Meanwhile, the strategic reserve would be called to replace losses at the front, and reconstitute units in the rear. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

Source: Aleksey Ramm, “The Ministry of Defense Reviving Legendary ‘Chechen Division’: The 42nd Motorized Rifle Division will no Longer Battle Terrorists, but will Protect the State Border,” *Izvestiya Online*, 27 September 2016, <<http://izvestia.ru/news/634572>>, accessed 20 October 2016.

Ministry of Defense of Russia has decided to once more stand up the 42nd Guards Motorized Rifle Division (42 MRD) in Chechnya. In 2009, the legendary military unit, once considered to be “the most fighting” division in Russia’s Armed Forces, was disbanded by former Minister of Defense Anatoliy Serdyukov. To replace the 42 MRD in Chechnya separate motorized rifle brigades were created, which now will again be united in the division and will be engaged in protecting the state border.

“The decision has already been made and work to reform the division has now begun,” an informed source in the military establishment told Izvestiya. “The division will be based on the three motorized rifle brigades now stationed in the Republic of Chechnya. These brigades will be reorganized as motorized rifle regiments of the division.” According to Izvestiya’s data the Russian military establishment plans to complete the formation of the division over the course of next year...

“Previously the three brigades in the Republic of Chechnya were primarily intended to render assistance to local law enforcement organizations conducting counter-terrorist operations,” Izvestiya was told by the chief editor of the trade journal Arsenal of the Fatherland, Viktor Murakhovskiy. “To a great extent these military units had unique personnel and weapons that were primarily designed to resolve antiterrorist missions. But today the main mission of the brigades have changed. They are participating in protecting the state border, and in the event of war they must stop an enemy offensive and then rout it with a counter-offensive. In contrast to the brigades, the more heavily armed and bigger divisions are more suitable for such operations. By virtue of their organic resources they can be more autonomous and can resolve a rather wide range of both defensive as well as offensive missions.



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Continued: Possible Force Structure Changes for Russia's Combined Arms Armies

Source: Pavel Ivanov, "The Marshal's Idea: Why Russia's Ministry of Defense is Restoring Divisions," *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer Online*, 5 October 2016, <<http://vpk-news.ru/articles/32744>>, accessed 20 October 2016.

At the end of September the decision of the Ministry of Defense to restore the 42nd Guards Motorized Rifle Division (MRD) in the Republic of Chechnya became known...The restoration decision was to a great extent unexpected even by these separate motorized rifle brigades, since as recently as last year at an experimental exercise the high command of the Ground Troops reached the conclusion that under present conditions three brigades were better than one division for the North Caucasus region...Meanwhile, the revival of the 42nd motorized rifle division again begged the question: what were the latest reforms of the Ministry of Defense seeking to accomplish?

There are More Serious Threats than the Bandit Underground

...Regarding a second combined arms army, which the leadership of the Ministry of Defense announced would be formed in the Southern Military District, practically nothing is known. It is assumed that the new army would protect the border with Ukraine (which had become unstable) from the south. In this configuration the 20th Combined Arms Army and this unidentified army would replicate the configuration of the two groups of Russian forces deployed along the border with Ukraine in the spring of 2014 and which have remained there, in fact, until the middle of last year.

It can be assumed that the new Southern Military District combined arms army will include the 20th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade... Against the background of the appearance of a new army, the restoration of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division also becomes wholly obvious. Over recent years Chechnya has been transformed from a source of instability into a relatively peaceful and quiet region...In point of fact, the war against terrorism has been assumed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Federal Security Service and the newly created Russian National Guard. During the past five years the three motorized rifle brigades in Chechnya have very rarely engaged in fighting bandit underground units and they have done so with rather small forces. For the most part operations have been limited to the provision of spetsnaz reconnaissance companies from the reconnaissance battalions. Yes, the brigades are well suited for antiterrorist missions, but the priorities of the military establishment have changed...

Therefore the missions of the newly created 42nd Guards Motorized Rifle Division have changed. It will no longer be hunting terrorists, but will be transformed into a reserve force designed to fight a high-technology enemy in the region of the Ukrainian border. In fact, the formation will become a strategic reserve in the southern sector. In addition to defending the Ukrainian sector, the 42nd MRD will protect the state border with Georgia and support the 4th Military Base situated in South Ossetia.

The "Tulpan" as a Sign of Completed Work

Let us see what the modern Russian combined arms (tank) army looks like and what kind of units and formations comprise it. After several years of experiments by the leadership of the Ministry of Defense, the optimal organization and staffing structure of the combined arms armies has finally been defined.

The main strike force of the combined arms army will be the motorized rifle and tank divisions. But the armies will retain tank and motorized rifle brigades (two or three). In point of fact, the idea of Marshal Nikolay Ogarkov, which he proposed to Russia's first Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev, has been implemented... Ogarkov proposed having one or two motorized rifle (tank) brigades in each combined arms army, which would act as operational maneuver groups of the combined arms army, attacking the enemy's main defenses and destroying his logistics support, and in the event of a breakthrough of our own army's defensive positions, act as a mobile and rapid "plug."...The combined arms armies will also consist of: command and control, artillery, air defense, reconnaissance, and logistics brigades, and two regiments, an engineering regiment and a radiation, chemical and biologic defense regiment.

Currently, the 20th and the 58th combined arms armies have practically the entire complement of subordinate units and subunits at their disposal. It is noteworthy that, in addition to the conventional artillery brigades, the southern flank of the Russian group of forces on the border with Ukraine will be reinforced by artillery subunits armed with the super-heavy 2S4 'Tulpan' [240mm self-propelled] mortars, which are the most effective assets for destroying enemy permanent firing positions and fortifications.

In point of fact, over the course of two years the Russian military establishment has rather covertly conducted a unique reform, countering both the NATO threat as well as that of a destabilized Ukraine. Of course, many nuances still remain classified from broad public view and the mass media, but nonetheless the volume of work that has been done to create new units, formations and armies is impressive. And the main thing is that the features of the super "new look" of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation have been thought through and tested.

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Continued: Possible Force Structure Changes for Russia's Combined Arms Armies

Source: "The Armed Forces Will Increase by Twofold the Number of Battalion Tactical Groups with Contract Servicemen," *RIA Novosti Online*, 14 September 2016. <https://ria.ru/defense_safety/20160914/1476912391.html>, accessed 20 October 2016.

Next year the Russian Armed Forces will increase twofold the number of battalion tactical teams, which are completely manned by contract servicemen, Chief of the General Staff General of the Army Valeriy Gerasimov told journalists on Wednesday.

In his words, a battalion tactical group (BTG) is a reinforced battalion, which consists of from 700 to 900 servicemen. As a rule, there are two of these battalion tactical groups in each brigade or regiment, the general pointed out.

"We have created battalion tactical groups, which are completely manned by contract servicemen, in the military districts, including in Southern Military District. Right now there are 66 of those battalion tactical groups, there will be 96 by the end of 2016, 115 – next year, and 125 the year after next," Gerasimov said, while summing up the results of the Kavkaz-2016 Strategic Maneuvers.

Based upon his assessment, the presence of contract servicemen, both in combat subunits and also in the troops logistics support structures, imparts a "totally different quality to combat service."



2S4 'Tulpan' 240-mm self-propelled mortar.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2S4_Tyulpan#/media/File:240-mm_self-propelled_mortar_2B8_%28SAC-2S4%29.JPG



The Material Technical Support Brigade's Role in Logistical Support

OE Watch Commentary:

Perhaps one of the most controversial of the “New Look” reforms was the reform of the Russian logistics system. In the last month, four major articles were published on various aspects of the work of Russian logisticians. The accompanying passages from two of these articles discuss the operations and capabilities of the Material Technical Support (MTO) brigade in logistical support.

Russia inherited its military logistics and combat service support system from the Soviets. The Soviet system was based upon the idea of mobilizing the whole societal and economic potentials of the Soviet Union for the conduct of war. In practice, this meant that all civilian resources could and would be used in the event of war. In particular, civil manufacturing and transportation/infrastructure were designed to also facilitate the conduct of war. In recent years, the Russian Federation has come to the conclusion that mass mobilization, and its required logistics requirements, is no longer desired nor sustainable.

Organizationally, the Soviet logistic system was based upon several “Rear Services,” material support organizations, and a separate armaments branch to sustain the force in war and peace. In order to streamline or right size some this massive logistics capability, the “New Look” reforms merged these various organizations into the Material Technical Support (MTO) structure. Despite the different naming, MTOs have the same function as their Western counterparts, essentially provisioning and maintaining the force to help ensure constant readiness.

The capability of the Russian Federation to project and sustain combat power has long been questioned, especially after the difficulties experienced by the Russian military in the 2008 Russo-Georgian War. But Russia’s recent exploits in the Ukraine and Syria have proved that Russia can successfully project and sustain combat power. Despite the recent MTO successes

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Source: ppt-online.org

Source: Timur Lambayev, “Cohesiveness Was the Basis of Success,” *Suvorovskiy Natisk*, 26 September 2016, accessed 20 October 2016.

A special tactical exercise under the direction of Buryat Combined-Arms Combined Formation Deputy Commander for MTO Colonel Pavel Barinov was held in the separate logistic support brigade commanded by Colonel Andrey Antonov. The exercise objective was to inspect combat readiness units and their ability to execute missions for their intended purpose within prescribed time periods. Special attention was given to an improvement in knowledge and skills of commanders at all levels in exercising command and control of subunits and military units under near-combat conditions.

A field bulk distribution pipeline was deployed in a timely manner and POL was supplied to combat vehicles by personnel of manual installation teams and of the TUM-150V pipelaying vehicle of the separate pipeline battalion...Maintenance battalion personnel were faced with the task of deploying a disabled vehicle collection point with evacuation and restoration of unserviceable armament and military equipment disabled during the exercise...Personnel of the route traffic control battalion...successfully performed tasks of preparation; operation; route and facility repair, security, and defense; and restoration of military motor roads, and the provision of traffic control and regulating service during the exercise...Using mobile bakery equipment...they baked bread in support of units participating in the exercise...

(continued)



Continued: The Material Technical Support Brigade's Role in Logistical Support

of the Russians, there are still significant problems regarding maintenance issues. Russia briefly attempted "outsourcing" the maintenance component of its logistics system, an effort that was unsuccessful. Commanders complained about the level of service and feasibility of contractor-provided maintenance services on the battlefield.

In current practice, operator, unit, and organizational maintenance is provided by uniformed servicemen, while depot-level maintenance is provided by contract labor (usually by way of a state owned company) at a maintenance depot or by the equipment manufacturer. Other logistic problems related to the "New Look" reforms, have not been the result of the logistic system itself, but of the personnel system. In general, most contract NCOs fill "trigger puller" positions, and positions requiring advanced skills and training. This means that combat support and service support roles have a lower percentage of contract NCOs. This is occurring at the same time the Russian Armed Forces are procuring more technologically advanced equipment, which subsequently require more maintenance support. This situation has resulted in maintenance issues being one of the top complaints of Russian maneuver commanders. In order to meet some of these maintenance challenges, the Russian Federation is now standing maintenance regiments at the military district level to support maintenance operations. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

Source: Captain (ret.) Vladimir Pasyakin and Lieutenant Colonel Ivan Mishunin, "Battlefield Toilers," *Sevastopol Flag Rodiny Online*, 2 September 2016, <http://sc.mil.ru/files/morf/military/archive/FR_2016-09-02.pdf>, accessed 20 October 2016.

In accordance with the Russian Federation Armed Forces training plan for the 2016 training year and as part of an integrated special exercise in kinds of comprehensive support, a special exercise was held in the latter half of August under the direction of Russian Federation (RF) Deputy Defense Minister Hero of Russia General of the Army D. Bulgakov where logistic support was provided to operations of forces with a buildup of the threat of aggression on the Southwestern Strategic Axis.

An entire set of practical activities was implemented during the exercise, logistic support entities demonstrated capabilities in using state-of-the-art models of arms and military equipment, and command posts coordinated along the entire vertical chain of command and control using all state-of-the-art information exchange channels operating in the RF Armed Forces. Such a large-scale event was the final phase of preparation by MTO entities for the year's main test -- strategic command and staff exercise Kavkaz-2016.

The high evaluation given by Deputy Defense Minister General of the Army Dmitry Bulgakov of the practical employment in the exercise of Fleet logistic support forces and assets in the interests of a troop grouping being established conditionally on the Southwestern Strategic Axis attests to subsequent readiness to apply all achieved know-how for practical execution of missions in support of troops both during as well as at the conclusion of Kavkaz-2016...

Right on the range, subunits of the separate MTO brigade's separate maintenance battalion showed their proficiency in organizing and conducting technical reconnaissance during the battle to land an amphibious assault force, and actions of repair and recovery teams to evacuate damaged equipment to a disabled vehicle collecting point...Personnel of a logistic support platoon

of a naval infantry brigade assault landing battalion unloaded supplies from Mi-8 helicopters and loaded them on a supply transport. After supplies had been unloaded, the "seriously wounded" were loaded into the helicopter for evacuation.

Actions of the crew of a Mi-26T helicopter with refueling equipment were among vivid exercise episodes. It landed in the vicinity of the mass equipment fueling sector. Helicopters of this type are designed for operational delivery of POL to aircraft basing areas and to armored vehicle armament and equipment assembly areas, with their subsequent refueling on the ground by the open as well as closed method. The helicopter can transport over 16 tons of fuel...a column of five ATs-10.5-53212 tanker trucks with PZP-10A field fueling points is returning to the field fuel storage depot for replenishing stores of fuel after accomplishing the mission of supporting troops in the mass refueling area...

The leadership's interest was drawn by the mockup of an overturned BMP-2 which had tipped over from the explosion of a demolition charge...A BREM-1 and REM-KL were summoned to the site of the explosion to evacuate the BMP to the disabled vehicle collection point (SPPM). On arriving, the vehicles used regulation winch cables installed on the prime movers to hook up to the BMP-2 from opposite sides and began tipping the vehicle back over...

A mobile containerized bakery section was situated at a road intersection. It was designed to bake pan bread under field conditions with a productivity rate of 12 tons a day for units without field bread baking equipment...Next to the mobile bakery is the laboratory of the center for veterinary-sanitary expertise and laboratory diagnostics for expert appraisal of food to discover a change in food product properties and establish the presence of harmful impurities, toxic and radioactive substances, and adulterated food...

A bath and laundry combine intended for personnel baths and laundry in military units without their own bath and laundry service equipment...The combined productivity rate is 1,000 kg of dry laundry and 800 personnel baths in 10 hours of operation...

Fuel is the blood of war, exercises, and the military organism. The PSG-600 field fuel storage depot was deployed at the shoreline beyond the road intersection with the objective of establishing fuel reserves along the forward movement of troops...The depot deployment site was chosen for the possibility of receiving fuel in depot storage reservoirs from sea transport under austere beach conditions. The VTN-73 integrated port service vessel transfers fuel to the depot. A unit for refueling a ship without mooring is connected to the field fuel storage depot to support receipt of fuel from an oceangoing tanker under austere beach conditions...The capacity of the field fuel storage depot tank farm is over 500 m³...The T/O&E of the fuel storage depot envisages containers, a POL laboratory, and depots of drummed oils, property, and supplies as well as fuel service equipment and lifting and engineering equipment...



Russian Logistic Vehicle Modernization

OE Watch Commentary: The Russian Armed Forces are incorporating interoperability and modularity not just into combat vehicles, but also into logistical vehicles. The accompanying article discusses Russian manufacturer KamAZ's new project for a new, air droppable, 4x4 vehicle, presumably, that will be a member of the Mustang family.

Former Defense Minister Anatoliy Serdyukov decided to shift course on the logistical vehicle modernization effort by abandoning the Ural's Motovoz family in favor of the KamAZ's Mustang family. The Mustang family consists of three chassis, the KamAZ-4350 (4x4), KamAZ-5350 (6x6), and KamAZ-6350 (8x8). This shift was likely due to KamAZ being part of the State Corporation for Assisting the Development, Production, and Export of High-Tech Industrial Products (Rostec). Currently, the Russian Armed Forces have almost completely retired their Ural-4320s, ZIL-131s, and GAZ-66s. The Motovoz trucks are still in service, and will remain in service for the foreseeable future, but are relatively few in number. The vast majority of logistical vehicles in service with the Armed Forces are of KamAZ's Mustang family, and the KamAZ-4350 is now the standard vehicle found in the battalion's logistical support platoons.

In terms of capabilities, the Mustang family has about the same payload capacities as the Motovoz family of vehicles, but Russian logisticians point out other differences between the families. In general, most logisticians are of the opinion that the KamAZ Mustang family is best suited for over the road hauling at distances of over 500-600 km, while the Ural Motovoz family is best in less austere environments where off road characteristics are most important. Another difference is technical complexity, the Mustangs are substantially more complex than the Motovoz vehicles, preventing operators and organizational level mechanics from conducting many repairs on the Mustang vehicles that they could otherwise perform on the Motovoz family of vehicles. Due to this situation, the brigades' MTO battalions, and army group and military district MTO brigades have greatly increased their lift capacities, but are not always capable of delivering materials directly to the subunits at the forward edge of the battle area. In general, The Russian Armed Forces and military forces of the Interior Troops (MVD-VV) appear to be integrating both the Mustang and Motovoz family of vehicles as they complement each other.

In terms of standardization, reportedly 90-95% of KamAZ's Mustang family's vehicle components (including POL) are now interchangeable. These vehicles not only have components interchangeable with other KamAZ vehicles, but also interchangeable with subcomponents and parts of other manufacturers such as engines produced by the Urals Automotive Plant (Ural) and cabs produced by the Italian firm Industrial Vehicles Corporation (Iveco). This line of effort towards interoperability and modularity is paralleled throughout the Russian defense industry and is most apparent in combat vehicle development. Although the Mustang family is currently Russia's solution for interoperability, Russia has already started its next generation of logistic vehicles, the Tayfun and Platforma families. These vehicles will take integration one step farther, by utilizing a common chassis for logistic and some combat vehicles. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

Russian Logistic Vehicles

'Motovoz' Family

'Mustang' Family



Source: Image Courtesy: Vitaly Kuzmin

Source: "KamAZ Intends To Create New Air-Droppable Cargo Truck for Airborne Troops," TASS Online, 9 September 2016, <<http://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/3609174>>, accessed 11 October 2016.

KamAZ plans to begin work in 2017 on developing new air-droppable cargo trucks for the Russian Airborne to replace the outdated GAZ-66 trucks. Viktor Isakov, adviser to the company's general director., announced this on Friday .

"Given the current situation, we propose setting up in 2017 a united R&D project to create a unified family of special logistic-support equipment which can be air dropped by parachute or by airland delivery. Let us give this project a provisional name, Logist-VDV," Isakov said at a round table meeting held during the international military-technical forum "Army 2016."

According to him, the development of a new vehicle involves the creation of vehicles with a 4x4 wheel configuration weighing 18.5 tonnes for air dropping and better protected vehicles with a 6x6 configuration weighing 26.5 tonnes for the airland delivery method. The new vehicles are expected to replace the outdated GAZ-66 trucks.

"The new vehicles are intended for logistic and landing support units, and in maintenance and medical formations," the adviser to the general director explained.



Russian Military Success in Syria?

OE Watch Commentary: Over the past year, the typical Russian media consumer has been fed a consistent, and largely optimistic diet regarding the role which Russian military forces are playing in Syria. According to this narrative, the Russian military (primarily air force assets) have helped to both degrade terrorist elements and strengthen Syrian security forces. On a daily basis, Russian military officials highlight successful operations which purportedly demonstrate progress in regaining stability for the “legitimate Assad government.” However, a recent article from the pro-Kremlin news source, *Gazeta.ru*, suggests that such a sanguine depiction could be deceptive.

The article begins by describing how the Russian military has reduced its overall military presence in Syria, with “just one aviation group left at the base in Hmeimim.” While the author posits that these reductions may be predicated upon economic motives, he also describes many of the challenges in trying to effectively support the Syrian military. For instance, he points out that most of the Soviet and Russian-trained Syrian officers “have been deliberately dismissed” resulting today with “virtually no Russian-speaking officers left in the Syrian Army.” Besides problems with communication, the author claims that the remnants of Syrian security forces are plagued with “nepotism, corruption, sycophancy, intrigues, and fraud.” The author further asserts that the “Russian military advisory staff has been withdrawn from Syria,” resulting in poor or absent military coordination between the two countries.

After describing the endemic corruption within the higher ranks of the Syrian military and other security services, the author asserts that “neither the [Syrian] soldiers nor the officers are motivated to succeed in combat. The army’s fighting spirit is currently extremely low.” He points out that on a number of occasions, Syrian military units have often retreated after meeting minimal resistance. He describes how the “Russian VKS [Air Force] carry out strikes, but Al-Asad’s soldiers do not go into battle. They cover 60 meters -- then lie low. Then they retreat. They say: ‘We would just be killed.’” The author concludes the article on a pessimistic note, describing how the regime’s heavy-handed methods “are creating implacable enemies for themselves” among other elements (e.g. Christian, Turkmen) of Syrian society.

Over the past year the Russian military has expended considerable resources in propping up and defending the current Syrian government and its military. Their involvement has largely been portrayed to the Russian media consumer as an unqualified success, signifying that the Kremlin has re-established an effective military presence within Syria and the Middle East. As with many other aspects of the Kremlin-controlled media, this article suggests that there is a wide gap between such assertions and reality. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“Russian military advisory staff has been withdrawn from Syria. The central headquarters of the Syrian Armed Forces currently have no Russian advisers.”



Russians offloading supplies at their airbase in Hmeimim, Syria, 2016.
Source: ru.m.wikipedia.org

Source: Mikhail Khodarenok, “Россияне наносят удары, а солдаты Асада в бой не идут,” [Russians Carry Out Strikes, but Al-Asad’s Soldiers are Not Going into Battle] *Gazeta.ru*, 22 September 2016. <https://www.gazeta.ru/army/2016/09/22/10209455.shtml>

Almost a year ago, on 30 September 2015, Russia began military operations in Syria. Despite the external support, Bashar al-Asad’s army has not achieved any significant successes: Rebels control 60-70 percent of the country’s territory, and the population and even military personnel are forced to pay tribute to the corrupt special services. With such allies, the war cannot be won without a fundamental political rethink, believes Gazeta.ru’s military analyst Mikhail Khodarenok.

A significant proportion of the Russian Armed Forces’ subunits and units have been withdrawn from Syria. There is, in fact, just one aviation group left at the base in Hmeimim. There are reports that the Kremlin has taken a political decision to reduce spending on maintaining the group of Russian troops in Syria as far as possible and to carry out military operations based on the current budget limitations. Forces will be reduced. Gasoline is being used sparingly. Aviation fuel is being saved. Bombs and similar items are running low. Rumors are circulating that there is even discussion under way about acquiring air-launched weapons from Belarus, where there are significant stockpiles left from back in Soviet times....

(continued)



Continued: Russian Military Success in Syria?

...Since 2004 officers and generals who received their military education in the USSR and Russia have been being deliberately dismissed. There are virtually no Russian-speaking officers left in the Syrian Army. Preference has been given to officers who studied in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and the West.... Nepotism, corruption, sycophancy, intrigues, and fraud now flourish in the government army....

Russian military advisory staff has been withdrawn from Syria. The central headquarters of the Syrian Armed Forces currently have no Russian advisers. There are not any in the general staff, or in the Armed Forces of the Syrian Army, or in the main and central directorates. Thanks to this the Syrian and Russian military are currently not even communicating at the minimum required level. And this is producing mutual distrust. Actions are not coordinated. Both sides suspect the other not only of leaking information, but at times even of treachery....

...Young Syrians flee abroad to avoid conscription. There is little or no help at all for the families of killed or injured servicemen. They openly live in poverty.

Neither the soldiers nor the officers are motivated to succeed in combat. The army's fighting spirit is currently extremely low. During the battle for Aleppo Syrian troops surrendered the territory of a military college when just a single rebel armored personnel carrier carrying maybe 8 or 11 men forced its way into this college... This is what happens most frequently: The Russian VKS carry out strikes, but Al-Asad's soldiers do not go into battle. They cover 60 meters -- they lie low. Then they retreat. They say: "We would just be killed"....

...Corruption in the Syrian special services is on a simply incredible scale. To one degree or another they extract tributes not just from the entire civilian population but also from the army as well. ...In particular, there is quite a large number of Christians in Syria. According to some estimates, 2.5 million people. But they do not want to fight for Al-Asad.

No one is working with the Turkmen population.... These are not Turks, but real Turkmen who moved to these areas of Syria during the time of the Ottoman Empire. They are rightly considered to be very good fighters. The Mukhabarat [Syrian intelligence] are not helping this as they are kidnapping Turkmen people. People are simply disappearing. In the best case scenario, the relatives are handed back the possessions with the statement that "your son died in prison". By doing this, Al-Asad's men are creating implacable enemies for themselves. ...The current situation in Syria is a stalemate. There is no military solution to the Syrian problem.

Russia's Fitter Fighting Force

OE Watch Commentary: Sergei Shoygu will mark his fourth-year anniversary as Russia's Minister of Defense next month. Nearly all Russian military commentators give Shoygu top marks for his efforts to modernize and strengthen Russia's armed forces. While operations in Syria or large scale snap exercises capture many of today's headlines, some of Shoygu's smaller incentives have had a substantial impact upon improving the combat capability of the Russian military. A recent article in the government newspaper *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* describes how physical fitness training and testing under Defense Minister Shoygu has improved over the past few years.

The article begins by pointing out that regardless of rank, physical fitness training applies to all members of the Russian military. Today, those who fail to achieve a passing score on the annual test "face a severe penalty -- right up to expulsion from the Army." The physical fitness test has been modified to include a variety of exercises (60) to test the speed, strength, endurance and agility of military personnel, according to age and gender. While personnel are measured in each of these four categories, they are permitted to select specific exercises for the fitness test. For example, the excerpt describes how "a 48-year-

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"Gone are the days when servicemen with big stars on their shoulder boards would calmly shake their 'beer' bellies and flabby muscles."

Source: Yuriy Gavrilov, "Генералам приказали худеть," [Generals Have Been Ordered to Lose Weight] *Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online*, 27 September 2016. <https://rg.ru/2016/09/27/fizpodgotovku-oficerov-priravniali-k-ih-professionalnoj-vyuchke.html>

Officers' physical fitness has been made as important as their professional skills.

More than 500 Western Military District HQ officers are currently being examined for physical fitness. For several years now, all military leaders in the Armed Forces -- right up to Defense Ministry generals -- have been subjected to such checks.

Gone are the days when servicemen with big stars on their shoulder boards would calmly shake their "beer" bellies and flabby muscles. These are the new realities: All cadre servicemen who have forgotten about sport (generals and admirals are no exception) face a severe penalty -- right up to expulsion from the Army. Officers' physical fitness has gone from being a nominally mandatory discipline in the Armed Forces to becoming a fully mandatory one, and is now on a par with the criterion of the serviceman's professional skills....

...The overall physical fitness assessment is now composed from points obtained from four or five exercises in separate kinds of physical training. When it concerns, for example, the strength elements, these are pull-ups, arm flexion and extension in a lying position, torso bending and straightening, body-raising [onto a crossbar]. As for running, 60-meter, 100-meter, and shuttle sprints. One- and three-kilometer cross-country runs, swimming, and long-distance marches also provide a measure of a person's stamina.

(continued)



Continued: Russia's Fitter Fighting Force

old colonel needs to earn a minimum of 16 points in each exercise. That is, to perform not less than three chin-ups or five body-lifts onto the crossbar. Then 20 floor push-ups and a 1-km run within 3.5 minutes.” (For a visual example, see the brief video of a Spring 2016 physical fitness test: <https://youtu.be/-qvAl0sPob0>).

The current physical fitness testing system provides for both negative and positive incentives. Those who fail to achieve a minimal passing score “are given exactly six months to improve their fitness rating.” If at the end of this period, they are unable to meet the minimum standard, they are subject to being removed from the military. “Conversely, officers who rate as excellent in physical fitness receive a monthly bonus of up to 100 percent of their salary for one year.” The article concludes by describing out the good physical shape of the current Russian military leadership, pointing out that “they are trim and energetic, and engage in sport.”

The Russian leadership has worked diligently over the past several years in reforming and modernizing its armed forces. The military has received a considerable amount of new equipment, modern training facilities and improved housing facilities. Alongside this focus on better equipment and facilities has been a renewed stress upon strengthening the human element of Russia's armed forces. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

According to current requirements, a serviceman must accumulate from 60 to 100 points in order to be rated “Excellent.” Below 60 is “Good,” and at least 35 is “Satisfactory.” In calculating the final score, the examinee's age is taken into account.

This is how it looks in practice: In order to, say, pass the fitness test, a 48-year-old colonel needs to earn a minimum of 16 points in each exercise. That is, to perform not less than three chin-ups or five body-lifts onto the crossbar. Then 20 floor push-ups and a 1-km run within 3.5 minutes.

In all, more than 60 diverse exercises have been defined, and a serviceman has a right to choose from them. For example, if he is an excellent runner by virtue of his body “architecture,” but is a little weak on the crossbar, he easily compensates for his low “strength” score on the cinder track. Hand-to-hand combat, a short-distance double-time forced march, and cross-country skiing, too, can all be alternatives. The main thing is that, as a result, the person should exceed the minimum line on the assessment scale.... The purpose of this work is to prepare the soldier and the officer to fulfill combat-training performance standards.

By order of the defense minister, servicemen who have scored a “two” [a “fail” under the old five-point system] are hit in the pocket. They are given exactly six months to improve their fitness rating. If, after six months, they do not score at least a “three” in the performance tests, they may be expelled from the Army with the endorsement “for non-compliance with the terms of the contract.”

Conversely, officers who rate as excellent in physical fitness receive a monthly bonus of up to 100 percent of their salary for one year.

It must be said that their subordinates are set an example of good physical shape by Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu himself, by his military deputy ministers Valeriy Gerasimov, Dmitriy Bulgakov, and Yuriy Sadovenko, and by other assistants to the military department chief. They are trim and energetic, and engage in sport. Shoygu himself, for example, plays hockey....



Personnel from Russia's Black Sea Fleet taking physical fitness test.

Source: mil.ru



Housing for Those Who Chose Russia

OE Watch Commentary: When Russia annexed Crimea in March 2014, Ukrainian military personnel were confronted with three options: (1) change allegiance and serve in the Russian military; (2) remain in the Ukrainian military-which meant moving out of Crimea; (3) resign from the Ukrainian military and become a civilian resident of Crimea. While exact figures are hotly debated, of the approximately 18,000 Ukrainian military stationed in Crimea in early 2014, about half (about 9,000) elected to change uniforms and join the Russian military. Of the other half, two thirds (about 6,000) chose to leave the military and the remaining third (about 3,000) moved off of Crimea and remained in the Ukrainian military.

Besides having family ties to Crimea, quality of life issues (pay, housing, benefits etc...) were reportedly key incentives for many of those who decided to transfer to the Russian military. It is no secret that prior to Russia's annexation of Crimea, the Ukrainian military had been poorly funded, trained, and equipped. Notwithstanding the question of loyalty, joining the Russian military would result in a significant pay hike, better benefits, greater opportunities, and a boost in prestige.

Despite economic challenges, over the past two years, the Kremlin leadership has invested heavily both in new military equipment and infrastructure improvements for the peninsula. The brief accompanying excerpt from the Russian *Interfax* website, describes recent legislation which was passed in August authorizing housing benefits for those ex-Ukrainian military personnel who transferred to the Russian military after Crimea's annexation. According to the excerpt, "Russian contract servicemen serving in Crimea and Sevastopol in the units that belonged to Ukraine before March 18, 2014 should be provided with housing in the form of the provision of residential space or money for its purchase or construction." Such a move will likely strengthen the bonds of allegiance among those who made the decision to transfer to the Russian military.

End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

"Russian President Vladimir Putin has issued a decree ordering that Russian contract servicemen serving in Crimea and Sevastopol in the units that belonged to Ukraine before March 18, 2014 should be provided with housing in the form of the provision of residential space or money for its purchase or construction...."



Vavilova 55/7 - a typical example of the Russian elite housing built in the 1950s under Stalin's project. This house was built for the members of the Russian Science Academy.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1950s_Elite_Housing_Moscow_%28Stalinka%29_RSA.jpg

Source: "Putin orders provision of housing to Crimean contract servicemen who served in Ukrainian army before March 2014," *Interfax*, 24 August 2016.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has issued a decree ordering that Russian contract servicemen serving in Crimea and Sevastopol in the units that belonged to Ukraine before March 18, 2014 should be provided with housing in the form of the provision of residential space or money for its purchase or construction....

...The document was posted on the official legal information portal on Wednesday. In accordance with the presidential decree, the provision of housing should take place "in the form of provision of money for purchase or construction of residential space or the provision of residential space in accordance with the procedures and on the conditions established by Russian legislation for servicemen who are Russian citizens serving in the military under a contract."



Russia's Fall 2016 Draft

OE Watch Commentary: 1 October marked the beginning of the Russian Military's Fall draft campaign. Over the next three months, Russia's Mobilization Directorate will conscript some 152,000 young Russian men for a one-year military service term. The accompanying passages from Russian sources discuss recent measures to improve conscripts' quality of life, in addition to some persisting problems.

The first excerpt from the government-sponsored *RIA Novosti* news source points out that the results from the Spring 2016 conscription campaign were particularly positive, with a greater number of recruits who had already completed pre-induction (DOSAAF-Voluntary Society for the Promotion of the Army, Aviation, and Navy) training or had graduated from college. It announces the fall target and also asserts that the health of the draft contingent continues to improve, with 76% of potential new recruits deemed fit for military duty.

The Kremlin leadership has worked hard over the past several years to improve both the quality of life (e.g. better food, facilities, and equipment) and the overall image of completing mandatory military service. Legislation which demands the completion of military service as a prerequisite for any government employment has also helped with compliance. The second excerpt from the popular *Komsomolskaya Pravda* website describes additional measures which have been implemented to ease the entry of new conscripts into the military. Automated tracking of new recruits ensures that "draftees will be provided with food rations for the entire journey" and "comfortable sleeping conditions" at their training location.

While the Russian military has made significant improvement with how it manages conscript soldiers over the past decade, problems remain. The third excerpt (from a pro-Kremlin source, *Gazeta.ru*) recounts how those who monitor human rights issues "speak of persisting problems with medicine, instances of petty extortion, and everyday difficulties" for conscripts. According to the excerpt, chief among conscript grievances include "violence, beatings, mockery, and corruption connected with non-regulation relations...." These complaints echo problems that continue to fester within the wider Russian society. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

"But then, there are no complaints about food; they feed you well in the Russian Army..."

Source: "В России начинается осенний призыв на военную службу," *RIA Novosti*, 1 October 2016. https://ria.ru/defense_safety/20161001/1478273701.html

On 1 October, the autumn conscription of citizens for military service began in Russia. According to the Ministry of Defense plans, the autumn conscription campaign will add 152,000 soldiers. ...

...During the spring 2016 campaign, 155 thousand conscripts were added to the ranks.... over 20 thousand new recruits completed training in military occupational specialties in DOSAAF or in secondary educational institutions....

...The Defense Ministry noted trend towards improvement in the health of new recruits, where during the Spring 2016 draft it amounted to 76% (Spring 2015 - 74.4%)....

Source: Viktor Baranets, "Новобранцы, встать в строй!" [New Recruits, Fall In!] *Komsomolskaya Pravda Online*, 30 September 2016. <http://www.kp.ru/daily/26588/3603759/>

Colonel General Vasily Tonkoshkurov, chief of the Russian Federation Armed Forces General Staff Main Organization and Mobilization Directorate, answers Komsomolskaya Pravda's questions....

[Baranets] *How does the General Staff rate the readiness of military commissariats for the draft campaign? What will be new about its "technology"?*

[Tonkoshkurov] *Today the vast majority of military commissariats are fitted with equipment of the Passport automated system. This will make it possible to provide all citizens being sent to perform military service with personal electronic cards directly at the assembly points....*

[Baranets] *How will they be fed on the way to the unit? After all, many will have to spend several days traveling....*

[Tonkoshkurov] *When proceeding to their place of military service, all draftees will be provided with food rations for the entire journey. Special points have been deployed on military airfields where comfortable sleeping conditions have been created and provision made for the draftees to have three hot meals a day...*

Source: Inna Sidorkova and Maksim Solopov, "Кормят в Российской армии прилично," [They Feed You Well in the Russian Army] *Gazeta.ru*, 30 September 2016. <https://www.gazeta.ru/army/2016/09/29/10222181.shtml>

...The fall draft campaign is starting in Russia. The Defense Ministry is looking after draftees' needs by using of a new type of personal draftee document -- electronic cards -- and uniforms and food on the journey to the place of service. Almost one out of every five of the 150,000 draftees is entering the Army already with a higher education. Human rights campaigners are noticing progress but speak of persisting problems with medicine, instances of petty extortion, and everyday difficulties, although they highly commend the food....

...“Around two thirds of the several hundreds of complaints that received on our ‘hotline’ during the year were connected with issues of medicine,” the human rights campaigner says.... Second on the list, according to the human rights campaigner, are complaints of violence, beatings, mockery, and corruption connected with non-regulation relations...”

"But then, there are no complaints about food; they feed you well in the Russian Army..."



Are Russian Naval Pilots Ready?

OE Watch Commentary: The Kremlin continues to beef up its military presence in and around Syria. Besides moving advanced air defense systems to protect Syrian air space, the first excerpt from *Interfax* indicates that the Russian Navy will deploy its one aircraft carrier, the *Admiral Kuznetsov*, “a large ASW [anti-submarine warfare] ship, a large oceangoing tanker, and a rescue tug” into the Eastern Mediterranean for a period of four to five months. There is some question, however, if and when Russian pilots will be conducting actual combat missions from the flight deck of the *Admiral Kuznetsov*. As the article points out, it is “not fully clear as to how many... pilots went through the full cycle of training for flights from an aircraft carrier.”

Trained personnel required to conduct effective air operations from an aircraft carrier cannot be hastily attained. The second excerpt from *Vzglyad Online* describes the challenges that the Russian military has confronted in developing the necessary training infrastructure to support naval air operations. Russian aviator pilots have only had intermittent access to the Ground-Aviation Test Training Complex (NITKA) in Sika, Crimea. The Russian military leased the facility from the Ukrainians after the collapse of the USSR. However, Ukrainian officials restricted access to this facility after the Russian-Georgian conflict in 2008. After Russia annexed Crimea in March 2014, there were questions if Russia was going to renovate the Sika site in Crimea or continue with work on a new training facility in the Krasnodarsk Region.

As a result of these restrictions and logistic delays in completing naval-ground training facilities, combined with the apparent rush to put this aircraft carrier into action, some are now doubting if Russian pilots are fully prepared. According to Aleksandr Sannikov, an expert quoted in the *Vzglyad Online* article, “there are entirely substantiated fears that the pilots of this regiment will not manage to even complete all of the needed training procedures prior to the ship’s departure.” This view, however, is challenged by another expert, Dmitriy Litovkin, who claims that the Russian “pilots are prepared.” Litovkin points out that the pilots had three months of range training, supplemented by using “MiG 3-dimensional simulators.”

The second article ends on a cautious note, pointing out that “Russia is preparing to employ its only aircraft carrier and its aviation group based upon its direct combat designation for the first time in its entire history.” It goes on to state that “the Ministry of Defense has decided to send people, who – let’s repeat, based upon open information – have certainly not completed the needed professional training – to a combat operations area.” Regardless of these concerns, the Kremlin appears anxious to demonstrate that it too can project naval air power to support military operations in Syria. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“Nevertheless, the Ministry of Defense has decided to send people, who – let’s repeat, based upon open information – have certainly not completed the needed professional training – to a combat operations area.”

Source: “Адмирал Кузнецов” отправится в Средиземноморье в середине октября,” [Aircraft Carrier *Admiral Kuznetsov* Will Set off on a Long Deployment to the Eastern Mediterranean in Mid-October] *Interfax-AVN Online*, 27 September 2016. <http://www.interfax.ru/world/530158>

It is expected that the Northern Fleet (SF) heavy aircraft-carrying cruiser Admiral Kuznetsov will set off on a long deployment to the shores of Syria in mid-October, a source familiar with the situation informed Interfax-AVN on Tuesday.

“The carrier battle group will depart on a long deployment in the period from 15 through 20 October,” the Agency source clarified....

...On 21 September Russian Defense Minister General of the Army Sergey Shoygu announced Defense Department plans to dispatch the carrier to the shores of Syria. In previous years Admiral Kuznetsov performed missions in the Eastern Mediterranean several times.

According to available information, the carrier will be escorted on the deployment, which will last 4-5 months, by a large ASW ship, large oceangoing tanker, and rescue tug....

...At the present time it is not fully clear as to how many MiG-29KR/KUBR aircraft of 100th OKIAP the carrier will receive before the long deployment and how many pilots went through the full cycle of training for flights from an aircraft carrier, inasmuch as, according to available information, a large number of this regiment’s aircraft are at Yeysk (Krasnodarskiy Kray), where the new NITKA complex has been built.

According to official information, this complex will be technically ready for training flights no earlier than the end of this year. Meanwhile, the NITKA complex in Crimea stands idle.

Source: “Тотовность «Кузнецова» к операции в Сирии вызывает сомнения,” [The Kuznetsov’s Readiness for the Operation in Syria Raises Doubts] *Vzglyad Online*, 22 September 2016. <http://www.vz.ru/politics/2016/9/22/833905.html>

The Defense Minister has officially confirmed that which the experts had surmised a long, long time ago: The only Russian Aircraft Carrier the Admiral Kuznetsov will be sent to the shores of Syria. Sources have already announced that the Kuznetsov aviation group will participate in the conduct of strikes against the Syrian rebels. However, an entire series of circumstances indicate that this cruise appears to be not fully prepared....

...We know that the regiment’s pilots have begun training, but then again, not from the aircraft carrier’s deck, but on the simulator in Yeysk, since the spring of 2016, and they carried out the first landing on the aircraft carrier quite recently, in August. We know that in the middle 2000s the pilots of 279th Regiment, who have the skills to at least take off and land from the Kuznetsov, numbered no more than 10 – and the majority of them were pre-pension age. We know that Navy Naval Aviation has been attempting to intensively train an entire group of inexperienced, young pilots for work from the Kuznetsov over the course of two years. We also know that each pilot (even high class) must complete the so-called KBP – combat training

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Continued: Are Russian Naval Pilots Ready?

course, which is unique for each aircraft, prior to being declared as ready to accomplish a combat mission....

...Crimean Saki Garrison Veterans Organization Spokesman Aleksandr Sannikov also expressed fears with regard to the training of young carrier aviation pilots in the Crimea. In a conversation with Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer, Sannikov assumed that the absence of proper attention by the command authorities to NITKA's problems



Russian aircraft carrier, Admiral Kuznetsov.
Source: Wikimedia commons

(the training aviation complex in the city of Saki, the Crimea) could result in the fact that the Admiral Kuznetsov will depart on the long-range cruise with an aviation wing of a reduced composition. "There are entirely substantiated fears that the pilots of this regiment will not manage to even complete all of the needed training procedures prior to the ship's departure," he warned. While talking about the training at Saki, Sannikov indicated that they completed a simplified program: the flights were conducted with touching down on the deck but the passes – without hooking the arresting wire, which did not permit them to fully master the skills. "What is more, the test cycle has not been fully conducted on the MiG-29KR and MiG-29KUB", he asserted.

Indeed, there is also another point of view. Military Expert Dmitriy Litovkin thinks that the Russian pilots are entirely ready for the air war in Syria. "The pilots are prepared. This year, they flew at the ranges from May through July. Furthermore, they trained the pilots on MiG 3-dimensional simulators in Moscow on Leningrad Prospekt. The 3D technologies impart a realistic nature to the training on those simulators and also the use of hydraulic devices to simulate the aircraft cockpit's oscillations. They rehearsed landing and takeoff from the aircraft carrier and aerial refueling. There is a very good team there – rigorous and young," Litovkin told Vzglyad Newspaper.

...But not only this causes alarm. Russia is preparing to employ its only aircraft carrier and its aviation group based upon its direct combat designation for the first time in its entire history.... Nevertheless, the Ministry of Defense has decided to send people, who – let's repeat, based upon open information – have certainly not completed the needed professional training – to a combat operations area. As a minimum, those doubts are substantiated. God forbid but the risk of possible losses – even noncombat losses – increases manifold under this approach.

Transition in the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan - From Conscripts to Contract Soldiers

by Matt Stein

Kazakhstan's Armed Forces have been working to modernize, reform and expand their capabilities since the state became independent in 1991. Much of the attention on this development has been on security cooperation with Russia, the United States and other partners, but there have also been internally driven efforts that could have just as significant an impact. One of these efforts over the past several years has been the increase in the number of professional contract soldiers in the Armed Forces, which is part of a plan to have contract soldiers make up 99 percent of the Armed Forces by the end 2016. While the result has yet to be announced, an examination of Kazakhstan's effort to have its Armed Forces made up of contract soldiers will show how this effort has been progressing and the impact this could have on the capabilities of the country's Armed Forces and on the Central Asian region.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Stein%20-%20Transition%20in%20the%20Armed%20Forces%20of%20Kazakhstan%20-%20From%20Conscripts%20to%20Contract%20Soldiers.pdf>



Russian-Chinese Naval Training

OE Watch Commentary: From 12-19 September, elements of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) of China and ships from the Russian Federation's Pacific fleet took part in Sea Cooperation 2016 east of Zhanjiang, Guangdong in the South China Sea. The exercise was designed to improve interoperability between the two navies. Participants took part in search and rescue operations, artillery and missile strikes on maritime targets, seizure of a captured ship, and the defense of an anchored ship. The exercise culminated in an amphibious assault on an island against a defensive force.

According to the first excerpt from a Chinese source, the exercise showcased a new 'common command information system' which purportedly improved communications between the two nations' forces. While specifics of the new information system were not provided, the new system is able to incorporate video transmission systems with satellite navigation and integrate the operational data coming from both Chinese and Russian forces, allowing for a better understanding of developments for both sides. As the second excerpt from another Chinese source indicates, this improved capability was demonstrated through the use of mixed units throughout the island assault exercise. The amphibious assault on the island involved land, air and sea forces, and according to the article, was not scripted.

The third brief excerpt, from the Russian Ministry of Defense news service, points out Russian President Putin's comments that the exercise "benefits the security of both Russia and the People's Republic of China." The Russian Naval Commander, Alexander Fedotenkov echoes this, claiming that this exercise is "not aimed against anyone - our cooperation is aimed at defense of our joint interests." **End OE Watch Commentary (Gartner)**



Russian and Chinese Marines take part in Sea Cooperation 2016.

Source: <http://en.people.cn/NMediaFile/2016/0915/FOREIGN201609150912000023836555563.jpg>

Source: Zhang Kejin, "Sino-Russian 'Joint Sea-2016' Military Exercise Makes a New Breakthrough in the Command and Control Model; the Two Navies Use a Common Command Information System for the First Time," *Jiefangjun Bao Online*, 18 September 2016.

"This system provides a common platform for the personnel of both sides to jointly thrash out operation plans, organize force collaboration, exchange concepts of operation command and methods of force employment." Tu Jianbin, chief operations officer of the Information and Communications Bureau of the PLAN Staff Department, gave an explanation to the reporters. The dedicated command information system is comprised of a video transmission system, a satellite navigation system, and other relevant systems. It gathers multiple communications means, such as wireless communications, satellite communications, and program-controlled communications. It can integrate the operational information data of the Chinese and Russian naval forces so that postures sharing and information transmission can be realized for all the exercise forces from the joint direction team and the command posts of the red and blue teams to all surface, air, underwater combat units.

Source: Guo Yuandan, "Eye-witness Account of Sino-Russian Joint Three-Dimensional Island Seizing Exercise, With the Chinese Side Dispatching the Most Powerful Landing Ships," *Huanqiu Shibao Online*, 19 September 2016.

At the landing command post of the red team, the reporter saw that communications via the data link system were effected between the red and blue teams' command posts and various combat units, resources sharing was also seamlessly effected among all combat units. Under the unified information command, the first being dispatched was the special operations sabotage team comprised of Chinese and Russian marines. They stealthily closed in on the designated zone, reached the beach by breaking obstacles, and opened up a channel on the beach. Facing the blue team's fire interdiction from warplanes and onshore forces, the amphibious armored vehicles of the red team filed out of the well deck. The Chinese and Russian armored forces collaborated closely, using strong fire to reinforce the infantry force's action. Then, helicopters carrying Chinese and Russian marines rapidly took off, made penetration deep to the rear of the enemy positions, carried out a three-dimensional action to seize the island occupied by the blue team. All the actions were accurate, efficient, and speedy. A high degree of integration was effected in the whole process.

Source: "Russia, China start joint maneuvers in South China Sea," *Zvezda TV*, 13 September 2016.

On 5 September, Russia's President Vladimir Putin said the forthcoming joint Russian-Chinese naval exercises "do not affect anyone's interests but benefits the security both of Russia and the People's Republic of China". He made his comments after stating that Moscow fully supported Beijing's decision not to recognize the ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague in favor of the Philippines in its dispute with China over the South China Sea (see BBC report "Putin answers media questions after G20 summit" of 5 Sep 16).

The exercise in the South China Sea is "not aimed against anyone - our cooperation is aimed at defense of our joint interests," the Russian navy's commander in chief Alexander Fedotenkov said, Zvezda reported on 13 September.



Details from Northern Fleet Summer Training Exercise

OE Watch Commentary: The 200th Separate Arctic Motorized Rifle Brigade has had a summer cruise, visiting the New Siberian Islands Archipelago where they made an amphibious landing on Koteln'y Island. Last year, the 80th Separate Arctic Motorized Rifle Brigade had an extended training deployment (For more information see: "Major Arctic Exercise," *OE Watch*, October 2015). The 200th, which has long been designated a coastal defense brigade is apparently now an Arctic brigade. The brigade conducted raiding exercises and anti-amphibious landing exercises. The exercise also tested cruise missile live-fire, engaged in surface fire and conducted integrated air defense drills. The accompanying passage from the Russian Ministry of Defense website provides details of the exercise.

The cruise missile firings were two P-15 *Termit* [termite] anti-ship missiles. These missiles were first fielded in the 1960s and are known to NATO as *Styx* or the SS-N-2. There are ship and ground launched versions. They have an operational range of 80 kilometers and deliver a conventional 1000-pound warhead.

The air defense portion of the exercise detected and directed fires against aerial targets using both ground and ship-mounted air defense systems. The ground air defense used the Pantsir-S1 [SA-22 Greyhound] short-to-mid range SAM and antiaircraft system. It mounts 12 S57E6 missiles with an engagement range out to 20 kilometers and dual 2A38M 30mm autocannon with a maximum effective range of four kilometers. The naval air defense employed the SA-15 Tor [SA-15 Gauntlet, Kinzhal is the naval version] all-weather low-to-medium altitude, short-range surface-to-air missile system designed for engaging airplanes, helicopters, cruise missiles, precision guided munitions, unmanned aerial vehicles and short-range ballistic threats. The naval air defense also employed the AK-100 cannon. This armor-turreted system fires a 100mm [3.9 inch], 26.8 kilogram [59.1 pounds] round out to 10,000 meters. It fires 60 rounds per minute. The naval air defense further included the AK630 30mm rotary cannon [Gatling gun] which has six barrels. It fires HE Frag rounds out to an effective range of 4,000 meters against aerial targets and 5,000 meters against surface targets. It is employed against anti-ship missiles, precision-guided missiles, aircraft, small craft, shore targets and floating mines.

There is a mystery to the exercise. Last year's exercise was a major shakeout of the 80th Separate Arctic Motorized Rifle Brigade and involved the amphibious landing ship *Kondopoga*. As the second passage discusses, this year, the troops did an amphibious landing from an antisubmarine warfare vessel. Apparently the Russian effort in Syria has stripped the Northern Sea Fleet of the *Georgiy Pobedonosets* amphibious landing ship. The Ropucha Class Landing ships, which were built in Poland in the 1970s are in demand and two, possibly three, are now undergoing major repairs. Where is the *Kondopoga*? **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

Source: "A Northern Fleet Exercise in Protecting Russia's Island Zone and Sea Coast Took Place in the Arctic," Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, 17 September 2016, <http://www.mil.ru>

A crew of the "Rubezh" [Frontier] coastal missile complex, which was deployed at one of the positions on Kotel'nyy Island, fired two "Termit" cruise missiles which struck an amphibious target within the ice-pack area.

The crew of a ground-based "Pantsir-1" self-propelled antiaircraft missile and gun system, which was also deployed on a launch site on one of the New Siberian Islands' shores, fired at simulated marine, coastal, and aerial targets. And the crew of the large ASW ship "Vice Admiral Kulakov" destroyed simulated marine and aerial targets using a "Kinzhal" antiaircraft missile system and AK-100 and AK-630 artillery systems.

During the exercise, subunits of a Northern Fleet Arctic motorized rifle brigade, which had been delivered to Koteln'y Island by the large ASW ship "Vice Admiral Kulakov," rehearsed raiding operations and assault-landing defense (PVO) on the Arctic islands' austere coast.

In the exercise's preceding stages, while executing air defense missions, radar section crews detected and tracked aerial targets, and subsequently issued target designations to the crews of a ground-based "Pantsir-1" self-propelled antiaircraft missile and gun system and also to the air defense crews of the large ASW ship "Vice Admiral Kulakov." The targets' simulated destruction was executed by so-called "electronic launches."

Two Tu-95 strategic bombers and two Tu-142 long-range ASW aircraft participated in this stage.

Commenting on the exercise's preliminary results, Northern Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Nikolay Yevmenov stated that "the successful performance of firing by the tactical group based on the New Siberian Islands and by the crew of the large ASW ship 'Vice Admiral Kulakov' has proved once again that the Northern Fleet is capable of performing its missions of protecting Russia's island zone and sea coast in the Arctic."

The commander also stressed that "the fleet forces' activities were carried out in strict accordance with the principles and norms of international law within the Russian Arctic sector and are not directed against third countries whose interests extend to part of the Arctic Ocean waters."

Russia's energetic activities in creating and developing elements of Arctic infrastructure began in 2012. At that time, Northern Fleet naval infantrymen, for the first time in the Russian Navy's history, conducted an amphibious landing on the Kotel'nyy Island shore. In 2013, a naval task force headed up by the Northern Fleet flagship, the heavy nuclear-powered missile cruiser Petr Veliki [Peter the Great], delivered equipment, accessories, and supplies to the New Siberian Islands to restore the "Temp" aviation headquarters. The Northern Fleet forces' Arctic voyage in 2014 culminated in an exercise by protecting the Russian Federation's island zone and sea coast and, last year, during a similar voyage, an inter-service exercise designed to protect important facilities on the Taymyr peninsula was conducted for the first time with the participation of Northern Fleet Arctic motorized rifle brigade subunits.

(continued)



Continued: Details from Northern Fleet Summer Training Exercise

Source: Sergey Ishchenko, "War and Armies - The War in Syria": "The 'Syrian Express' Has Overtaxed Itself: An Antisubmarine Warfare Ship Is Disembarking an Assault Force on the Arctic Islands Out of Necessity," *Svobodnaya Pressa*, 21 September 2016, <http://www.svpressa.ru>

Twelve Northern Fleet naval combatants (including nuclear and diesel submarines), ten support vessels, the coastal missile-artillery troops, and 45th Air Force and Air Defense Army aircraft are participating in Northern Fleet maneuvers. The exercise extends from the Kola Peninsula to the East Siberian Sea.

The main participants of the current exercise are the large Antisubmarine Warfare Ship Vice-Admiral Kulakov, the Maritime Weapons Transport Academic Kovalev, the Salvage Tug Pamir, and the Buoy Tender [Crane Ship] KIL-164. These sailed to the Novosibirsk Islands Archipelago from Severomorsk on 30 August.

For five years, Northern Fleet surface combatants and support vessels have exercised along the Northern Maritime Route in September-October. Counter-amphibious assault defense of the islands is always one of the most important tactical episodes of the exercises, and large amphibious landing ships were always included. However, there are none in the Novosibirsk Islands exercise.

Consequently, there are very motorized riflemen in the exercise – there are simply no vacant cabins and berthing spaces to accommodate a major assault force on the Kulakov. In order to settle a dozen or so infantrymen on that ship, the sailors had to bunk in the Kulakov's battle stations. There is no room for their equipment either.

But why wasn't a single Northern Fleet Large Amphibious Ship (BDK) included in the current detachment? On 22 August, the Landing Ship Kondopoga, Vice Admiral Kulakov, the Naval Transport Academic Kovalev, and the Salvage Tug Pamir conducted a planned departure to the Barents Sea. But a week later the detachment sailed to the Novosibirsk Islands without the Kondopoga.

What happened to the Kondopoga? Apparently, we don't have a single combat-capable landing ship left on the Barents Sea. Already well-worn, they now have been simply driven to exhaustion during the course of the logistics support operation in Syria or are finishing off the remainder of their engine service life there. The endless scheduled trips along the Novorossiysk-Tartus route have exhausted the forces of the so-called "Syrian Express".

There are four Ropucha class large landing ships assigned to the Northern Fleet – the Olenegorskiy Gorniyak, Aleksandr Otrakovskiy, Kondopoga, and Georgiy Pobedonosets.

The first has been waiting for a long time for promised repairs at the 33rd Ship Repair Plant in Baltiysk. According to the information of the plant's press service, "a significant volume of hull work, the repair of mechanisms, and also the modernization of the ship's weaponry, the certification of all of its mechanisms and components, including the engines, the pipeline systems, and the underwater and surface portions of the hull are planned".

The second completed 588 days of continuous operation in the "Syrian Express" in the middle of this summer. During this time, the Aleksandr Otrakovskiy traveled 65,000 nautical miles, which totals approximately three lengths of the equator. Due to extreme deterioration, the ship is not prepared either technically or organizationally for a new long-range cruise.

The third is the Kondopoga. The fourth - the Georgiy Pobedonosets – left for the Mediterranean Sea at the end of May and is continuously transporting cargo through the Black Sea straits to Tartus.

Is this really normal, when even in our very strong Navy there is no proper vessel to support the assault troops in its area of operations? Is there not even one available to go to the Novosibirsk Islands for a couple of weeks? Where else are large antisubmarine warfare ships transporting an assault force to its landing location in peacetime?

This is not simply abnormal – it is catastrophic. We have been moving toward this situation for decades, when they thoughtlessly decommissioned those Ropucha class ships, which could still have performed service, and sold them for scrap in the 1990s.

The only new large amphibious landing ship under Project 11711, the Ivan Gren has been under construction for 12 years now. The Navy should receive the Ivan Gren next year and the Petr Morgunov in 2018.



The RED DIAMOND is the Army's leading e-journal highlighting current threats in the Operational Environment. It is produced by the Threats Intelligence Support Activity (US Army TRADOC G-2) and posted at: https://atn.army.mil/dsp_template.aspx?dpID=377.



Largest Arctic Exercise in History

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying passage from *Izvestiya* discusses the details of a unique, two-month exercise conducted by the Russian Ministry of Defense. This large-scale, expensive exercise attempted to achieve maximum benefits from its training conducted from the highest to the lowest levels. *Na Strazhe Zapolyarya* [On Guard in the Polar Regions], the official weekly newspaper of the Northern Fleet, discussed how only contract sailors were on board the large *Vice Admiral Kulakov* Antisubmarine Ship for the exercise. The skills acquired and perfected during a two-month deployment need to be in a professional sailor's kitbag. KA-27 helicopters conducted air insertions of motorized rifle reconnaissance troops. Seven land and sea-based cruise missile launches were conducted, including an underwater submarine launch. Two intercontinental ballistic missiles were launched. At least one nuclear icebreaker participated in the exercise. All in all, an impressive effort in a tough region. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

“The Russian Ministry of Defense has successfully concluded a unique two-month exercise, during which military personnel repelled strikes of the aggressor’s aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles, and cruise missiles from the Barents Sea to Chukotka and then conducted a retaliatory strike, including using Bulava intercontinental missiles. Ships, submarines, strategic long-range bombers, fighter aircraft, S-300, S-400, and Pantsir air defense [missile] complexes, and also motorized riflemen and naval infantrymen were involved in the large-scale maneuvers.”

Source: Aleksy Ramm, “«Север» защитил Арктику: Старт «Булавы» был частью самых масштабных за всю историю учений в Заполярье (“North” protection of the Arctic: Bulava Launch Was a Portion of the Largest Exercises in All History in the Polar Region),” *Izvestiya*, 30 September 2016, <http://izvestia.ru/news/635049>

“The verification of the readiness of the Northern Combined Strategic Command’s units and formations to defend Russia’s northern regions from various threats, began with the probable enemy’s massive missile-aircraft strikes and ended with the landing of assault forces and reconnaissance-saboteur teams,” according to a Northern Fleet military department source. “The entire military infrastructure, which was created recently in the Arctic, was also inspected. Besides the Strategic Command, men and equipment of the Russian Aerospace Forces from other regions, including Long Range Aviation, were involved in the exercises. All of the assigned missions were carried out during the course of the exercises, and the result was successful”.

“Command and staff exercises were initially conducted, during the course of which the General Staff and Northern Strategic Command held various map exercises with the staffs and commanders of the brigades, divisions, and regiments. Actual live firing and missile launches, including cruise missiles, were also conducted. Ships and submarines put to sea, aircraft destroyed training targets, and naval infantry and motorized rifle units and subunits went out to the ranges for live-fire training”.

The large-scale exercises in the north began at the end of July of this year. In the first phase, the enemy conducted strikes using aircraft, cruise missiles, and unmanned aerial vehicles from the Barents Sea, Chukotka, and across the North Pole. Next, enemy ships attempted to breakthrough to the Northern Maritime Route, disembarking assault forces and reconnaissance-saboteur teams along the way.

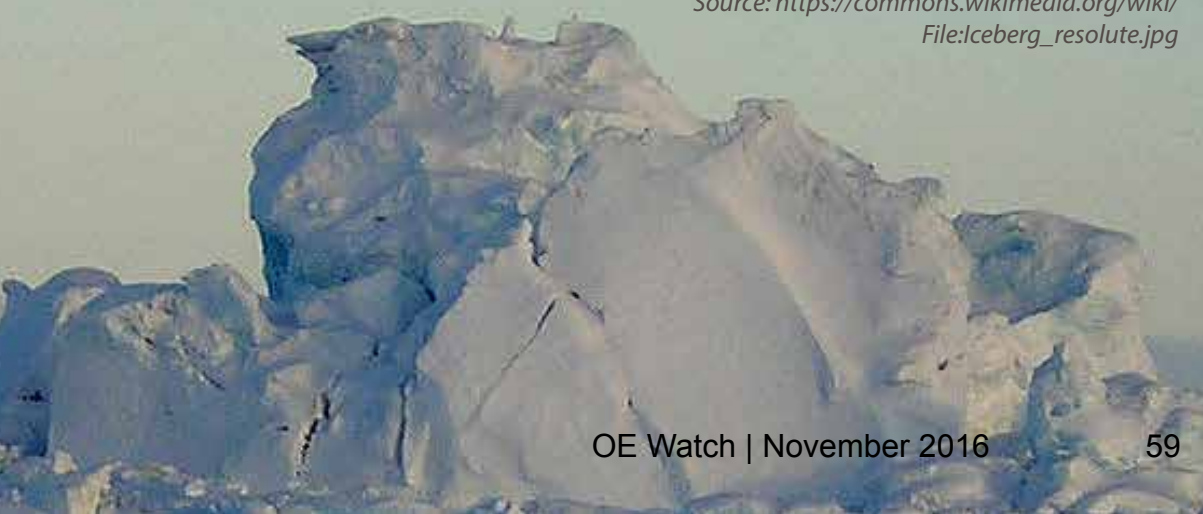
In turn, Russian military personnel defended important facilities and inflicted maximum damage on the enemy. Su-27, Su-35, and MIG-31 fighter aircraft shot down enemy aircraft with the support of S-300 and S-400 air defense missile systems and also Pantsir air defense missile-gun systems. Coastal missile complexes with anti-ship missiles and submarines destroyed enemy ships, and motorized riflemen and naval infantrymen blocked an enemy assault force and destroyed the saboteurs.

In the next phase of the exercise, Northern Strategic Command, with the support of Long Range Aviation aircraft, conducted a retaliatory strike against enemy facilities. Northern Fleet ships, led by the Northern Fleet Flagship – the Nuclear Missile Cruiser Petr Velikiy, put to sea. The flag ship conducted cruise missile launches.

Next, Long Range Aviation Tu-95MS and Tu-160 strategic bombers joined their navy colleagues in destroying the enemy. Units and subunits of naval infantry and motorized rifle troops eliminated the remnants of the enemy assault force.

The culmination of the second phase was the launch of Bulava intercontinental ballistic missiles from onboard the Strategic Missile Submarine Yuriy Dolgorukiy on 27 September. One of the two intercontinental missiles successfully destroyed its target on the Far East Kura range and the second self-destructed....

Captive iceberg in Resolute Bay, Nunavut.
Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iceberg_resolute.jpg





Yet Another Specialized Weapon in the Russian Arsenal

OE Watch Commentary: The APS underwater assault rifle was the world's first and only underwater assault rifle. Designed and fielded, along with the SPP-1 underwater pistol in the 1970s, it is a smooth-bore weapon that fires from the open bolt to propel long, thin pointed rods (length-to-diameter ratio of approximately 21 to 1). The cartridge length is 5.9 inches long and the magazine holds 20 rounds. Its range of 10-30 meters underwater is determined by depth and its effectiveness above water is under 100 meters. The only publicized use of the APS was in Malta in November 1989, when a 16-man team of divers protected the vessels of President George Bush and Soviet Prime Minister Mikhail Gorbachev.

The accompanying passage from *Izvestiya* discusses the new ADS rifle, which appears to be a rifled weapon with a much shorter cartridge that fires accurately under-and-above water. The cartridge's effectiveness above and below water is a marked improvement over the APS and the bullet weight is only slightly heavier than the standard 5.45x39mm cartridge—and about a third of the APS rod. It's becoming more hazardous to be a hostile frogman or snapping turtle these days. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

Source: Aleksey Ramm, “Боевые пловцы получили двухсредный автомат с уникальными боеприпасами: В отличие от аналогов новое оружие эффективно не только в воде, но и на суше (Combat Divers Get Assault Rifle with Unique Ammunition; Unlike Analogues, the New Weapon is Effective Not Only in Water but Also on Land),” *Izvestia Online*, 19 September 2016, <http://izvestia.ru/news/632826>

“The Russian Federation Defense Ministry Special Operations Forces Command [KSSO] has equipped combat divers with unique ADS rifles (special dual-medium assault rifles). This state-of-the-art weapon was developed and produced by the Tula Instrument Design Bureau and is equally effective underwater and on land. In contrast to foreign and Russian underwater weapons that shoot needle bullets that are stable in water but deviate from their trajectory on the surface, the unique ammunition of the ADS maintains its accuracy in both environments.”

Source: <http://izvestia.ru/news/632826>



A Ministry of Defense spokesman stated that “Tests on the ADS as a combat diver's weapon are already completed. The product has received positive reviews and has been adopted by KSSO combatants. The KSSO tested the ADS for a quite long time, even more than previously planned. The compared it with the standard APS underwater assault rifle under water and also performed tests on land.”

The Vysokotochnyye komplekсы [High-Precision Systems] holding company, which includes the Tula Design Bureau, confirmed that the ADS is undergoing testing in Defense Ministry units and subunits but declined further comment.

APS underwater assault rifles and SPP-1 pistols are currently in service with Russian combat divers.

According a spokesman for a Russian Navy special unit, “The APS assault rifles and SPP pistols use special 5.6 mm needle bullets several centimeters long. They are similar in design to the ammunition used in the German P-11 underwater pistol which is the only foreign equivalent of the APS and SPP. In the water, this bullet behaves like a harpoon from an underwater gun: it flies along a trajectory until it begins to lose speed due to the effects of resistance. On the surface, after exiting the barrel, the needle bullet flies just a few meters and then begins to rotate around its axis and, losing lethal power, departs from its trajectory....

...Made to a “bullpup” design (where the trigger is in front of the magazine and firing mechanism) the ADS has a length of slightly more than 60 centimeters [two feet] and weighs only 4.5 kilograms [10 pounds]. The exact specifications of the dual-medium weapon have not yet been disclosed, but based on reports its effective range on land is about 500 meters.

Underwater, the combat diver armed with an ADS at a depth of five meters will hit the target at a distance of 25 meters and at depths up to 20 meters will hit it at a distance of 18 meters.

But the main feature of ADS is its unique PSP 5.45 mm cartridge. The PSP bullet weighs 16 grams, while its speed in the air is approximately 330 meters per second.

When fired underwater, a cavity forms around the bullet due to a special platform in the nose section (as when an air bubble full of steam forms around bodies moving in water). This platform permits the projectile to move accurately on its set trajectory at high speed.

It is noteworthy that PSP is completely identical as regards to its weight and size to the standard 5.45 mm caliber ammunition used in the AK-74, AK-12, and AK-400 and the Kalashnikov assault rifles from the “100 series.”...



Improving Russian Camouflage

OE Watch Commentary: Camouflage has been used on the battlefield since the beginning of warfare. As weaponry has advanced over the years, so too has camouflage. Russia is currently in the process of modernizing its military, and this means not only the weaponry, but also the camouflage that they use to protect these assets. Russia has invested 660 billion dollars since 2010 in an effort to modernize their military, and a small portion of this has been allocated into the research and development of different forms of camouflage. The accompanying passage from a Russian source discusses advancements in the Russian military's use of camouflage technology.

Russia has a longstanding history of using camouflage, or *maskirovka*, in order to protect their troops, mask their intentions and strength, and deliver crippling blows, from a sniper shot to heavy artillery and machinery. Modern Russian snipers utilize specially designed camouflage cloaks that release heat externally. This feature allows the sniper to remain undetected by thermal imaging devices. Russian camouflage is able to conceal much more than just a single sniper. A Russian smoke-screen apparatus can produce a thick enough cloud of smoke to cover up an entire neighborhood for up to nine hours.

Modern camouflage cover can also protect from electric warfare by insulating sensitive electronics from attacks. Threads on the camouflage cover are not fragile either, with a rated capacity of 30 kilograms. Finally, Russia has invested in the creation of inflatable tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, and even MIG-31 fighter jets. These decoys are equipped with heaters, which serve to make the fakes look real even when being tracked by heat detectors. These inflatable decoys can be put up in five minutes and look real from 300 yards away.

Camouflage and deception have always been integral to success on the battlefield. With weaponry becoming increasingly lethal, camouflage is becoming even more important of a tool for the modern Russian military.

End OE Watch Commentary (McConnell)

“The current purpose of camouflage... is not only to shield from visual observation but also to protect against special equipment.”



A Russian sniper concealed in camouflage.

Source: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/8f/88/9a/8f889a55613de35222e8c4c683fedf08.jpg>

Source: Dmitriy Sergeyev, “Надувательство от невидимых людей: как напустить дым и спрятать целую армию (Tricks From Invisible People: How To Produce Smoke To Hide an Army),” *Zvezda TV Online*, 21 August, 2016. <http://tvzvezda.ru>

Russia's Military Advancing Their Camouflage Technology:

“Today, camouflage is used by all branches and types of troops. Its methods and means are used by ground troops, sailors, and fliers. As the military themselves say, the unique developments here are no less than in weaponry. For example, the capabilities of modern camouflage techniques make it possible to securely hide from prying eyes not only an aircraft or tank, but also, say, a field headquarters.

... “The current purpose of camouflage... is not only to shield from visual observation but also to protect against special equipment.”



Russian Forecasting Methodology: In Need of Improvement

OE Watch Commentary: Russia's methodological approach for assessing threats involves the practice of forecasting. According to a recent article in the journal *Military Thought*, Russia believes the United States uses all types of pressure to ensure its hegemonic policy of retaining dominance in world affairs. These include political, economic, military, and information pressure. The proper analysis, assessment, and forecasting of such threats helps guarantee Russia's progress and growth. The author, N. B. Kamalov, discussed the classification of threats in the first 2016 issue of the *Journal of the Academy of Military Science*. The *Military Thought* article appears to complete his discussion of threats. Of particular importance in the latter article is Kamalov's use of the term "war economy area." Those threats affecting the defense-industrial complex are of particular concern. He writes that this area is becoming more relevant due to the introduction of economic sanctions against Russia. As a result, important forecasts must be performed in regard to organizational and managerial, financial, industry-related, functional, and territorial threats to Russia. **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

“Unlike assessment, forecasting is performed at a preliminary stage of decision-making: it facilitates development of a strategy (plans) for the future. A family of forecasts is treated as a multivariant view on the prospects of an asset (object of study) changing in the future under certain conditions and assumptions.”

Source: N. B. Kamalov, “The Methodology of Analysis, Assessments, and Forecasting of External Threats to the National Security of the Russian Federation,” *Military Thought*, No. 6, pp. 52-57.

A qualitative perception of future developments allows for the risks and threats to be discerned in due time and, therefore, preemptive measures to be adopted accordingly. For this reason, forecasting is heavily used in the RF national security area.

Unlike assessment, forecasting is performed at a preliminary stage of decision-making: it facilitates development of a strategy (plans) for the future. A family of forecasts is treated as a multivariant view on the prospects of an asset (object of study) changing in the future under certain conditions and assumptions.

Forecasting serves to tackle a dual task: on the one hand, to provide an unbiased and scientifically sound vision of the future, by relying on current developments (normative forecast), on the other - to identify direction of present activity, taking account of predictions (research forecasting). Its main function is conducting scientific analysis of the processes and trends and foreseeing new situations.

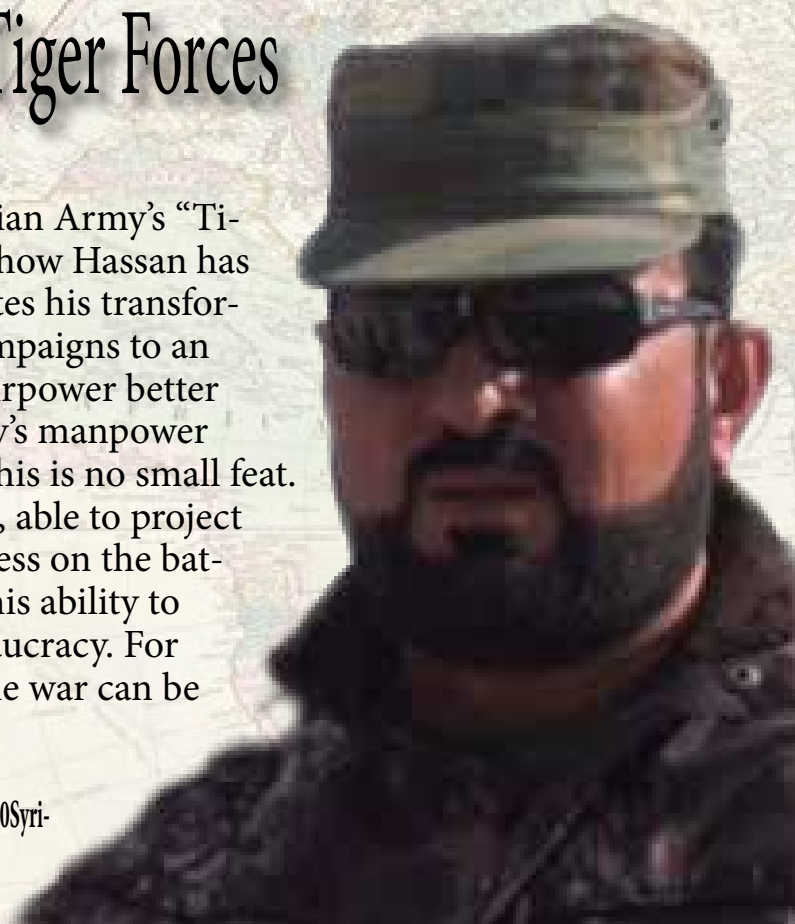
The forecasting also includes investigating objective links of phenomena and processes in particular circumstances at a certain stage of development, assessing an asset (object of forecasting), identifying possible alternatives of future developments and making optimal decisions. The principles of forecasting ensure methodological consistency of various forecasting methods and models.

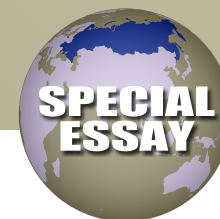
Suheil al-Hassan and the Syrian Army's Tiger Forces

By Lucas Winter

This paper looks at the genesis, evolution and growth of the Syrian Army's "Tiger Forces" and their leader Suheil al-Hassan. The paper shows how Hassan has played an important role since conflict began in 2011. It attributes his transformation from special forces commander to leader of military campaigns to an ability to harness the Syrian Army's full infantry, artillery and airpower better than any other loyalist field commander. Given the Syrian Army's manpower shortages, rampant corruption and rivalry-laden bureaucracy, this is no small feat. Al-Hassan has become a key symbol in the Syrian loyalist camp, able to project more combined arms power than anyone else in Syria. His success on the battlefield comes less from tactical or strategic insights than from his ability to thrive within the loyalist camp's opaque and rivalry-laden bureaucracy. For this he has become a symbol to regime supporters, proof that the war can be won by working within the system.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Small%20Wars%20Journal%20-%20Suheil%20al-Hassan%20and%20the%20Syrian%20Army%E2%80%99s%20Tiger%20Forces%20-%202016-07-22.pdf>





The Mobilization of Russian Society

Ever since Vladimir Putin's decision to return to the presidency (September 2011), the Kremlin leadership has adopted a more antagonistic approach toward the West in general and the US in particular. The Russian leadership appears to believe that the West/US presents a serious threat to the current regime, and in response has been taking actions to place the country on a partial war-footing.

This brief essay examines how the Kremlin leadership has attempted to mobilize Russian society over the past five years or so. It will begin by considering their motives and then review some of the more prominent mobilization tools, particularly the Russian media. It will consider the primary barriers to mobilization and the Kremlin's effectiveness to date (May 2016), and conclude with two possible implications stemming from this mobilization attempt.

Mobilization Rationale

The current Kremlin administration wants the Russian people to believe that their country is besieged by enemies from both without (primarily from the West and the US) and within (by Western-sponsored opposition forces). According to its narrative, the Western/US strategy is to weaken Russia using every manner of weapon (e.g., information, economic, political, ideological, spiritual, technological, military, etc.). Kremlin leaders contend that the US is fighting to retain the unipolar global security model, whereby the US enjoys a global security mandate. They maintain that the US has worked diligently since the end of the Cold War to ensure that Russia does not recover its great power status.

Alongside the stated objective of mobilizing against this foreign threat lays the rather mundane goal of remaining in power. These two goals are mutually supporting. As the noted Russian scholar Nikolay Petrov recently put it:

Today, the regime derives its legitimacy not from the bottom up, through elections, but from the top down, by placing the country on a permanent war footing. Putin's role is more like a tsar than the chair of a board. The regime has moved from a hybrid system that still maintained the outward trappings of a democracy to a full-scale authoritarian state, while the shifting balance of power has made the elites more dependent on the president.¹

To carry out this bipolar strategy of challenging the US and remaining in power, the Kremlin leadership has mobilized Russian society to confront what the respected Soviet/Russian military and political affairs analyst, Dr. Stephen Blank has referred to as "perpetual war."² Current Russian strategic theory posits that there is no real divide between war and peace. The former Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, Colonel General Kartapolov described the essence of modern conflict "as distinct from classical operations in past wars, with a diplomatic note at its commencement and a peace treaty at its end, new-type war is never declared and never ends."³ In the Kremlin's *realpolitik* perspective, countries are always in competition with each other. This is a zero-sum model: where when one side wins, the other loses.

Purposes of Mobilization

The purpose of any mobilization is to better prepare a country for armed conflict. As operations in Ukraine and Syria have demonstrated, the Russian military has made significant improvements in combat readiness over the past decade. Having achieved some modicum of success in Georgia, Ukraine and Syria, Kremlin leaders will likely continue to place additional emphasis upon strengthening their armed

forces. Improved military capability could translate into a greater willingness to employ force where Russian interests are perceived to be threatened.

According to a recent British study on Russian mobilization (мобилизация) includes "substantial investments in arms procurement, in improved conditions of service in the armed forces and defence industry, and in command-and-control systems and enhanced coordination between ministries. They also entail an intense programme of exercises involving the domestic security services and the armed forces."⁴ But it in addition to that—and critically—it involves the readiness of society.

A key component of the latest military reform efforts has been the development of a viable military reserve which could be mobilized in the event of war. While there are still problems with fully manning and equipping this reserve force, the concept and structure of these forces has been established. Besides working out the many military details involved with mobilizing the military for armed conflict, the wider Russian society has also adopted a mobilization mentality. Alongside the rhetoric for greater military preparedness, over the past few years, Russian society has become tempered to the likelihood of future conflict. Indeed, as the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Syria have illustrated, many Russians are mentally prepared for war today. The old Soviet perspective of "as long as there is no war" [лишь бы, нет войны] has been replaced by a belief that war is now a viable, and perhaps even an attractive option.

The consequences of this mobilization-mania are readily apparent. Just a few years ago it would have been impossible to imagine Russia fighting with its fraternal neighbor in Ukraine. While the Kremlin has been able to largely mask and camouflage its direct military involvement, recent polls have indicated that almost half of Russians now view Ukraine as a threat.⁵

Their ability to mobilize the Russian information space and transform a friendly neighbor into a mortal threat was also apparent after Turkey shot down a Russian aircraft (which had violated Turkish airspace) back in November 2015. Almost overnight, the Kremlin-supported Russian media began a full scale information blitz against Turkey, altering what had once been a decent relationship into one verging on open hostilities.

Methods of Mobilization

Over the past decade there has been a significant increase in military and patriotic education for Russian youth. From an early age, Russian children now have the opportunity to learn soldierly fundamentals. The school system has become a powerful platform to deliver the Kremlin's message that their country has been besieged by enemies throughout history and that survival depends upon maintaining strong and robust military forces.⁶

In addition to formal school instruction, the Kremlin has been dusting off old Soviet tools to mobilize youth, e.g., resurrecting the "Ready for Labor and Defense" government program.⁷ Alongside the stated goal of improving the physical fitness of young Russians, there is a not-so subtle message that young people must be prepared to defend their country.

The Russian Orthodox Church has also been enlisted to help with the mobilization effort, providing both a spiritual blessing and ideological basis for the Kremlin's defense efforts against the materialist and sinful West.⁸ This is an important aspect of the mobilization effort. Few young Russians may be prepared to fight and die for the

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Putin regime, but many more may be willing to fight and die for some divine promise.

Another tool in the mobilization toolbox has been the creation of the Obshcherossiiskii narodnyi front [Общероссийский народный фронт] or the “all-Russia people’s front” (ONF). This is not a political party per se, but more like a mobilization force for those who want to improve Russia. According to its charter, the Front’s goal is “promotion of unity and civil solidarity in the name of Russia’s historical success; the country’s development as a free, strong and sovereign state with a robust economy; fast economic growth; and reliance on the family.”⁹

There are a host of other methods which the Kremlin uses to help increase defense awareness. Russians can now visit “Patriot Park,” located just west of Moscow. This is a huge complex (almost 66 sq. kms.) that boasts tank grounds and airfields, as well as a number of educational-military clubs, areas for paintball games, concert halls and camp grounds for tourists.¹⁰ Instead of shaking Mickey Mouse’s hand, youngsters can check out the Kremlin’s latest weapons. There are a host of other, more subtle means (sporting events, fashion, advertising) to promote military awareness.

The primary weapon, however, in the Kremlin’s mobilization arsenal has been its indirect control over the major media outlets. One might argue that the most significant achievement of Putin’s reign over the past 16 years has been the consolidation of major Russian media under Kremlin control. Regarding specific policies (e.g., Ukraine, Syria, or the refugee crisis in Europe), the major Russian media outlets all pretty much sing off the same page of music.¹¹ This is especially true for the three major Russian TV stations, which remain the chief conduit of information and entertainment for the majority of Russians.

This control over the media has allowed the Kremlin to portray its message in a consistent, persistent, coordinated and largely one-sided manner, from morning talk shows, to call-in radio, to magazines and newspapers, evening TV news programs and documentary films, which are then cut and pasted across much of the Internet, resulting in a 24/7 highly professional media saturation which has proven to be very effective. Unless the average Russian media consumer makes the effort, he or she has hardly ever been exposed to a perspective which deviates significantly from the approved Kremlin viewpoint.

Besides using daily news programs to pound this message home, over the past decade the Kremlin-sponsored media has developed an untold number of TV and radio talk shows where “experts” discuss and explain what is really happening in the news.¹² These programs are an interesting mix of propaganda, analysis, entertainment and discussion, often designed less to inform than to incite emotions and provoke indignation. These highly professional television and radio programs have helped to craft a narrative whereby the West/US is always out to weaken Russia, while the Kremlin leadership remains above reproach.

One indication as to the effectiveness of the Kremlin’s mobilization effort deals with the question as to who is responsible for the downing of MH-17 over Ukraine in July 2014. As a result of its media saturation, the majority of Russians polled believe Ukraine or the US was responsible for this tragic crime.¹³

Besides creating a television station dedicated to covering every facet of Russia’s Armed Forces, the Kremlin has also developed a number of military-themed programs on regular TV and radio stations.¹⁴ These programs drive home the point of mobilizing for future battle.

Barriers to Mobilization

Despite the efforts of the Kremlin leadership, there are a number of barriers which have thus far thwarted their efforts to fully mobilize the country for war. First, there is the typical Russian *бардак/bardak* (the general inefficiency of Russian society, literally “whorehouse”). Some of this may stem from the average Russian’s deep skepticism toward those in leadership positions. While the Kremlin has tried to exploit the sentiment of “Russia getting back up off her knees” after the humiliations of the 1990s, many Russians still harbor doubts that the coun-



The opening of Patriot Park near Moscow, June 2015.

Source: Government.ru

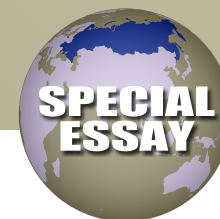
try’s leadership is genuinely concerned with the welfare of the people. These doubts may escalate as costs mount.

Second, Russia’s endemic corruption continues to retard the mobilization effort. While the popular image of Putin’s power vertical suggests strict accountability, the reality is far different. Based on past experience, probably 25-40% of what is allocated toward mobilization is siphoned off into personal accounts through various corrupt schemes. Mobilization, like patriotism, often remains the last refuge for scoundrels.

Somewhat related to corruption are the economic strains resulting from depressed fossil fuel revenues and Western sanctions. The Kremlin’s plan to modernize the military with 70% modern equipment by 2020 will likely have to be pushed back a few years. Programs to mobilize the wider Russian society will also likely be delayed.

The fourth factor might be labeled the “general decency” of the Russian people. Despite the shrill, bellicose rhetoric of their media, many Russians are still capable of thinking for themselves. Those connected

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to the Internet have access to other sources of information.

Finally, there may be questions as to the degree to which the Kremlin truly wants to mobilize society. Does it actually want to inspire citizens to volunteer and act independently? The Russian leadership may prefer instead the passive and apathetic, who, rather than daring to act outside of the system, remain content to sit on the couch, drink beer and yell at the TV.

By one measure, the effectiveness of the Kremlin's mobilization effort has been outstanding. Putin's approval ratings remain at the rock-star level, and should he elect to run in 2018, he will likely win without much effort. Anger and ill-feelings toward the US remain robust, with upwards of 75% of the Russian population holding negative views toward America.¹⁵ Moreover, a majority of Russians regard the US as the primary threat to their country. Similarly, fewer Russians are willing to listen to Western criticisms regarding the direction their country is taking, although Kremlin statistics regarding the level of popular support ought to be taken with a grain of salt.

Nevertheless, this mobilization effort has had a couple negative consequences. Having been whipped into an emotional frenzy by the never-ending "two-minute hate sessions," aggression, fear and paranoia are becoming more commonplace in Russian society. Every day the average Russian is told that foreign and domestic enemies are working to undermine his safety, stability and well-being. In such a poisonous atmosphere, any criticism of the authorities is interpreted as treason; hence, although down deep the Russian citizen may suspect that he is being manipulated and lied to, many of them not only keep their mouths shut, but also even begin to echo the Kremlin line to prove their loyalty.

Conclusion

Over the past half-decade, the Kremlin leadership has not only been mobilizing the consciousness of Russian society for the eventuality of conflict, but also has taken concrete actions to improve the readiness and combat capability of its various armed forces. With each passing month, as the Kremlin continues to manipulate the information space, a significant percentage of the Russian people, government

and power ministries are growing more hostile toward the West in general and the US in particular.¹⁶ This hostility has been exacerbated by deteriorating economic conditions within Russia. Strengthening its political legitimacy via this mobilization-mania, the Kremlin leadership may be increasingly tempted to demonstrate its ability to protect the motherland from the sinister plans of NATO and the US.

Where this will lead, nobody knows. Here are two observations which suggest either a positive or negative direction.

The positive scenario comes from the tail-end of Vladimir Putin's recently televised "direct-line" discussion with the Russian people in mid-April, where toward the end of the performance an 8-year old called with the following question:

"My name is Alina, and I am in first grade. Could a woman become president of our Russia? Because daddy says that only Putin can deal with America." (applause)

And here's Putin's response: *"Alina, we should not focus on how to deal with America. We have to think about how to deal with our domestic affairs and problems, our roads, our healthcare, education, how to develop our economy, restore it and reach the required growth pace."*

*If we do all this, we will not have to deal with anybody because then – only in this case – we will be invulnerable people with bright prospects who want to live in this country and are proud of it. As for a woman president, maybe a woman would do best at tackling these problems."*¹⁷

The second scenario reflects a more negative direction and comes from the Russian historian, Leon Aron, who recently warned: *"the present Russian regime, which cannot modernize and for which a modicum of institutional reform might prove fatal to its hold on power, has staked its legitimacy on patriotic mobilization. Putin has saddled this tiger with remarkable ease and had it trot steadily. Yet among the many dangers of such a ride is the necessity of feeding the beast with an ever increasing supply of fresh meat, the bloodier the better..."*

Victory (or, more precisely, victories large or small in the imagined war with the West) have become the foundation of political survival and thus must be pursued relentlessly."

Aron concludes, *"This might not end well."*¹⁸

1 Nikolay Petrov: "Putin's Downfall: The Coming Crisis of the Russian Regime," European Council of Foreign Relations, available from www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/putins_downfall_the_coming_crisis_of_the_russian_regime7006, accessed on 11 May 2016.

2 Stephen Blank, "Russia's Hybrid War: Through a Glass Darkly," available from <http://intersectionproject.eu/article/security/russias-hybrid-war-through-glass-darkly>, accessed on 11 May 2016.

3 See: A. V. Kartapolov, "Уроки Военных конфликтов, перспективы развития средств и методов их введения. Прямого и непрямого действия в современных международных конфликтов," [Lessons of Military Conflicts, Prospects of Development of Means and Methods of Administering Them. Direct and Indirect Action in Contemporary International Conflicts] Vestnik Akademii Voennykh Nauk, 2015, 2 (51).

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5 According to a recent (May 2016) poll conducted by the Russian Levada Center, 48% of Russians now view Ukraine as a threat. For more details, see: Elena Mukhametshin, "Основными противниками жители России считают США, Украину и Турцию" [Russian residents believe that the United States, Ukraine and Turkey are their main opponents] Vedomosti, 2 June 2016. <https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/articles/2016/06/02/643351-rossiyane-reshili-im-vragi>

6 Ilya Rozhdetsvensky, "Russia's Littlest Soldiers: How the Government Teaches Kids to Love the Motherland and to Fight for It," available from <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2015/07/16/russia-s-littlest-soldiers>, accessed 13 May 2016. For a more general analysis, see: Sergei Golunov, "Patriotic Education in Russia," available from https://www.gwu.edu/~ieresgwu/assets/docs/ponars/pepm_161.pdf, accessed 13 May 2016.

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8 For a detailed study on how the Russian Orthodox Church has helped with the mobilization effort, see: Vera Zakem, Paul Saunders, and Daniel Antoun, "Mobilizing Compatriots: Russia's Strategy, Tactics, and Influence in the Former Soviet Union," available from https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/DOP-2015-U-011689-1Rev.pdf, accessed 13 May 2016.

9 For more information on the ONF, see Tatiana Stanovaya, "The All Russia People's Front: A Party with no Power?" available from <http://intersectionproject.eu/article/politics/all-russia-peoples-front-party-no-power>, accessed 13 May 2016.

10 Alec Luhn, "Here's What You Can Do at Russia's 'Military Disneyland'" available from <https://news.vice.com/article/heres-what-you-can-do-at-russias-military-disneyland>, accessed 13 May 2016.

11 Much has been written over the past 15 years to describe this process. For a recent example, see Maria Snegovaya "Stifling the Public Sphere: Media and Civil Society in Russia," available from <http://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Stifling-the-Public-Sphere-Media-Civil-Society-Russia-Forum-NED.pdf>, accessed 13 May 2016.

12 The list of these programs is long and continues to expand. Some of the most popular are "Sunday Evening with Vladimir Soloviev," "Pravo Znat," "Moment Istiniy," "Politika," and "Pravo Golosa."

13 Nick Robins-Early, "Few Russians Believe Separatists Shot Down MH17" available from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/mh17-russian-missile-investigation_us_561faff3e4b0c5a1ce622a7b, accessed 13 May 2016.

14 Again, the list is long, and besides the Zvezda television station dedicated to covering military topics, there are programs like "Armeiskiy Magazine," "Voennoye Taina," "Genstab," "Voennoye Review," and "Voennoye Programma A. Slatkova."

15 Andrei Kolesnikov, "Russian Ideology after Crimea," available from http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_Kolesnikov_Ideology2015_web_Eng.pdf, accessed 13 May 2016.

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