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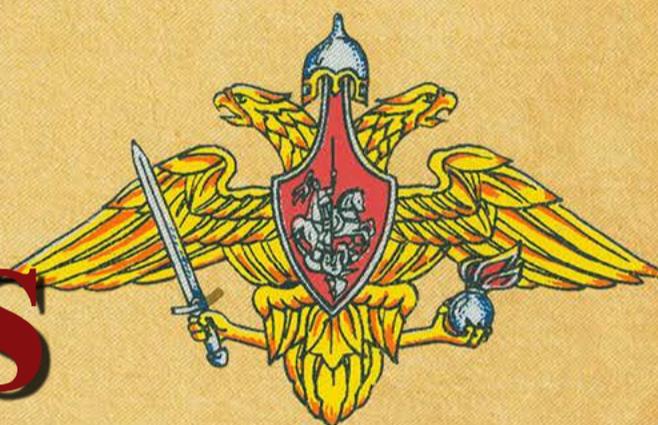


FOREIGN NEWS & PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Special Look:

So What is New About Russia's 2014 Military Doctrine?

Вооружённые
Силы Российской
Федерации



Сухопутные войска

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Contact FMSO at:

usarmy.leavenworth.tradoc.mbx.fmso-web@mail.mil

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Regional Analysts and Expert Contributors

Africa	Robert Feldman
Middle East	Michael Rubin Lucas Winter
Turkey	Karen Kaya
China, Korea	Cindy Hurst Youngjun Kim Tim Thomas Jacob Zenn
India, Southeast Asia	Ivan Welch
Mexico, South America	Geoff Demarest Brenda Fiegel
Central Asia	Matthew Stein
Russia, Eastern Europe	Chuck Bartles Anna Borshchevskaya Christina Chadwick Ray Finch Les Grau James Harvey Alyssa Jackson Emily Kangas Greg Sarafian
Editor-in-Chief	Tom Wilhelm
Editors	Ray Finch Harry Orenstein
Design Editor	Hommy Rosado

Turkey's Efforts in National Cyber Defense

10 December 2014

“Today, cyber defense has become an imperative component of nations’ defense strategies...”

OE Watch Commentary: Turkey has recently increased its efforts to develop a national cyber defense strategy and establish institutions to deal with cyber threats. The accompanying passages point out its efforts and institutions to deal with this growing threat, particularly in the military field.

In early December 2014 Ankara hosted the second International Cyber Warfare and Security Conference. The conference attracted high-level speakers on the issue from around the world, including important ones from Turkey. In particular, the presentation of Commander Namık Kaplan, Head of the Turkish Armed Forces Cyber Defense Command, was important in providing the military’s views on the subject. The first accompanying passage provides insights into his presentation, in which he claims that a new “war domain” has emerged in the form of cyber space, in addition to the traditional domains of land, sea, air and space. Kaplan noted that cyber attacks are asymmetric, borderless and hard to attribute. He also presented a slide showing the organization of the Turkish Armed Forces’ Cyber Defense Command, consisting of the cyber units of the General Staff, Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Gendarmerie and Navy.¹

The second accompanying passage is by Turkish military analyst Burak Ege Bekdil, who notes that there is an increasing awareness that cyber threats can have a military dimension. He cites a government official who claims that cyber espionage is an existing threat which can have a military dimension. Bekdil outlines the main institutions within the country that deal with cyber threats, pointing out that TÜBİTAK, Turkey’s scientific research institute, accounts for 70 percent of all existing Turkish cyber security programs. He also notes other institutions working on the issue, such as the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, the General Staff, and Turkish companies Aselsan and Havelsan, specialists in military electronics and software.

The final accompanying passage includes highlights on this issue from a recent interview with Mr. Faruk Özlü, President of Defense Technologies, Engineering and Commerce



Source: Com. Namık Kaplan, “Armed Forces in [the] Cyber Era,” Presentation given at Cyber Warfare and Security Conference in Ankara, Turkey, November 2014, <http://www.icwcturkey.com/files/presentation/54899e858e6b5.ppt>

Source: Burak Ege Bekdil, “Feeling Vulnerable, Turkey Seeks National Cyber Solutions,” *Defensenews.com*, 10 December 2014, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/europe/2014/12/10/feeling-vulnerable-turkey-seeks-national-cyber-solutions/20215515/>

“Cyber espionage is an existing threat which in the future can have a military dimension.’ [a top government official who deals with cyber solutions] said.

...
Turkey’s scientific research institute, TÜBİTAK, operates a cyber security institute, SGE, which is in charge of most programs. SGE’s 2013-14 action plan to counter cyber threats mentions seven areas of work: building legal infrastructure; supporting legal proceedings through expertise; strengthening national cyber infrastructure; building a rapid reaction force against cyber threats; improving human resources in the field; developing local solutions; and expanding cyber defense capabilities.

Other players that deal with cyber security solutions include the government watchdog Information and Communication Technologies Authority, the General Staff, military electronics specialist Aselsan and military software specialist Havelsan. But TÜBİTAK accounts for 70 percent of all existing Turkish cyber security programs.

‘Today, cyber defense has become an imperative component of nations’ defense strategies,’ Turkey’s chief procurement official, Ismail Demir, said in a speech at the recent International Cyber warfare and Security Conference here [in Turkey].”

(continued)

Continued: Turkey's Efforts in National Cyber Defense

Corporation (STM), a company that has been providing high-tech solutions and engineering services to the Turkish defense industry since 1971 and is considered one of the partners of this industry. Özlü notes that his vision is to become a globally recognized center of excellence in the field of cyber security. He also discusses his company's national and international activities, particularly its work with NATO's civil and military cyber defense establishment. End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)

1. Source: Com. Namık Kaplan, "Armed Forces in [the] Cyber Era," Presentation given at Cyber Warfare and Security Conference in Ankara, Turkey, November 2014, <http://www.icwcturkey.com/files/presentation/54899e858e6b5.ppt>

Source: "STM Aims to be Globally Recognized Center of Excellence in Cyber Security," Interview with Mr. Faruk Özlü (Chairman of the Board of Defense Technologies, Engineering and Commerce Corporation), Defence Turkey, Winter 2014 issue, No 56, <http://www.defenceturkey.com/index2.php?p=article&i=1764#.VL6BNEt160t>

[Question] ...Could you please let us know about STM vision and goals related to cyber security and defense?

[Answer]our vision in the field of cyber security is to become a globally recognized Center of Excellence. We aim to become a solution provider and a trusted partner in the area of integrated cyber security and defense from tactical to strategic level. We also plan to establish the necessary skilled manpower in the cyber domain with R&D activities, operational services and solution development. In the light of this vision, we established a technical team which solely works on cyber security. We already conducted several feasibility studies and prototype development activities for SSM, as well as R&D projects in EU context.

[Question] ...What are the current activities of STM in both the national and international arena related to this matter?

[Answer] ...We are also closely following NATO's Cyber Defence activities. In June 2014, we had a chance to observe NATO's civil and military cyber defense establishment and visited NATO Computer Incident Response Capability (NCIRC) Center. During this visit, we were pleased to see that our integrated cyber defense vision and approach is very much in line with NCIRC project. As a result of this, we were invited to NATO's Science and Technology Organization (STO) Cyber Situational Awareness Working Group to present STM's Integrated Cyber Defence System prototype.

[Question] There is currently a National cyber security strategy and an action plan in place and there are several responsibilities assigned to governmental agencies, universities and industry. What will STM's contribution be to the fulfillment of the goals listed in the action plan?

[Answer] One of the most critical assets of cyber security is the skilled manpower. National Cyber Security Strategic Plan can only be successful if there is a sufficient amount of skilled resources that will operate the cyber operation and incident response centers. Currently, there is a huge gap in the necessary number of resources and the resources in hand. This shortage is not only Turkey's problem but also a globally recognized issue. As STM, one of our goals is to provide such operational services to our customers with a dedicated and sophisticated technical team. STM's Cyber Centre of Excellence ambition and Cyber Security Lab will be the key enabler in training these teams and make them ready for real-life challenges and cyber security demands.

“Train-Equip” Program for Moderate Syrian Opposition to Start in March

15 January 2015

“Ankara is insisting that the opposition who will receive the training and equipment should also fight against the Assad regime.”

OE Watch Commentary: After several rounds of meetings and talks, a joint program among Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the US to train and equip moderate Syrian opposition forces is expected to begin in March. The accompanying passages from the Turkish press point out important aspects of this program and highlight the differences in US and Turkish perspectives.

As the first accompanying passage notes, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar had agreed to host the program to train Syrian opposition, within the framework of fighting ISIS. Approximately 1500-2000 people will be trained in Turkey; with those trained in Qatar and Saudi Arabia, some 5000 people will be trained each year (15,000 people over a three-year period). However, as the piece highlights, Turkey would like the trained forces to fight against both ISIS and the Assad regime as necessary, whereas the US focus is on ISIS. The piece cites a Turkish foreign ministry official as saying, “We would neither train nor equip a group that will not fight Assad.”

The second accompanying passage claims that this difference of opinion has been addressed by not specifying any particular target for the trained forces in the agreement document. The passage notes that Turkey interprets this to mean that they will fight both ISIS and the regime as needed. Turkey and the US will also establish a joint election committee and decide on those who will be trained until March. This passage also notes that Turkey has insisted on a no-fly zone and a safe zone on the Syrian side of the border, and that trained forces fight against the Assad regime, as well as ISIS. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**



The ‘train-equip’ program is planned to start in March 2015.

Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flickr_-_The_U.S._Army_-_Kabul_Military_Training_Center.jpg

Source: “‘Eğit donat’ toplantısı yapıldı” (Meeting Held on ‘Train Equip’ [Program]), Al Jazeera Turk, 15 January 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/egit-donat-toplantisi-yapildi>

“Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar had agreed to host the program to train Syrian opposition, within the framework of fighting ISIS.... The U.S. Congress had approved the budget requested by the Obama administration to ‘train equip’ the Syrian opposition in December 2014. U.S. officials are planning to start the training in the spring, if the preparations take place as planned. The U.S. is expressing that the train equip program is focused on fighting and destroying ISIS.

The agreement on the ‘train equip’ program is expected to be signed in January. The program is expected to start in March. About 1500-2000 people will be trained in Turkey. If you add Qatar and Saudi Arabia, a total of 5000 people will be trained each year, for a total of 15,000 people trained in three years.

Ankara is insisting that the opposition who will receive the training and equipment should also fight against the Assad regime.

In November, the Special Envoy for the U.S.-led coalition John Allen had said that, ‘The trained Free Syrian Army members will not fight Assad.’ Turkish Foreign Ministry sources who assessed this statement to Al Jazeera said that, ‘We would neither train nor equip a group that will not fight Assad.’... Turkish Foreign Ministry sources said, ‘From our perspective, everyone who will be trained and equipped will fight against both ISIS and Assad, we have no doubt about this.’

(continued)

Continued: “Train-Equip” Program for Moderate Syrian Opposition to Start in March

Source: “‘Eğit donat’ toplantısı yapıldı” (Meeting Held on ‘Train Equip’ [Program]), Al Jazeera Turk, 15 January 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/egit-donat-toplantisi-yapildi>

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The Syrian Crisis from a Neighbor’s Perspective: View from Turkey

By Ms. Karen Kaya

This paper examines how the crisis in Syria is spilling over into neighboring countries and the possible implications for Turkey’s security. Besides dealing with huge numbers of refugees, the fighting in Syria has exacerbated religious tensions in the region and a host of other security challenges for Turkish officials.

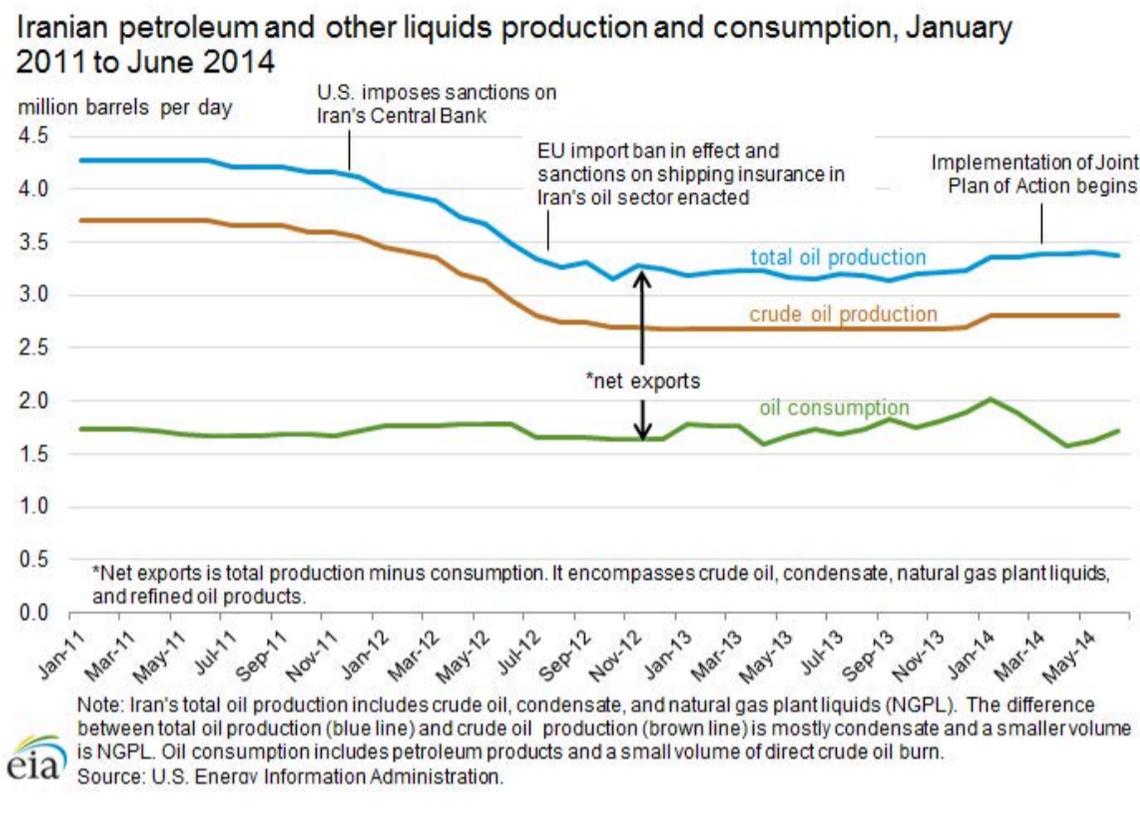
http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20140430_art010.pdf



“The 2015-2016 budget is unrealistic... Our budget should be healthier.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The precipitous drop in the price of oil has shocked the Iranian economy, which derives approximately two-thirds of its revenue from oil and petroleum products. The recognition of declining revenue comes against the backdrop of the Iranian budgetary process, which is now in full gear ahead of the start of the Iranian fiscal year on March 21. Much of the current debate revolves around how the government should treat Iran’s National Development Fund, a sovereign wealth fund founded in 2011. While in theory the Fund should amount to \$60 billion, it has failed to report consistently and may only have half of that amount.*

*With the price of oil declining, Parliamentary Speaker Ali Larijani, a close ally to the Iranian Supreme Leader, is laying down the gauntlet to a parliament which seeks to take the populist solution and figuratively raid the piggy bank. Significantly, President Hassan Rouhani and Larijani are rivals whose careers have intertwined. For example, both Rouhani and Larijani have served as consecutive chairmen of the Supreme National Security Council. And while Larijani is speaker of parliament, Rouhani previously served as a deputy parliamentary speaker. As the Iranian presidency—perhaps not by coincidence—often rotates between hardliners and reformers, Larijani’s subtle budget fight with Rouhani might signal the escalation of a political rivalry which will define Iran’s next election. (Larijani might be hardline but he is more polished and less bombastic than Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, whom he is rumored to despise.) This, in turn, can have security implications as declining resources force both Rouhani and Larijani to better define budget priorities. As Rouhani argues that diplomacy and reconciliation with the West might relieve some budgetary pressure on Iran, Larijani and other hardliners might pivot by depicting Rouhani as weak on security and defense, a stance that might lead Rouhani to diminish the patina of moderation which he often seeks to project. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***



Source: http://www.eia.gov/countries/analysisbriefs/Iran/images/petroleum_production_consumption.png

Source: “Qaymat-e Naft dar Budgeh 94 Ghayr Vaqa’i” (The Price of Oil in the ’94 Budget is Unrealistic), resalat-news.com, 13 January 2015. <http://resalat-news.com/Fa/?code=194555>

The Price of Oil in the ’94 Budget is Unrealistic

The speaker of the Majlis [parliament] said: The 1394 [March 21, 2015-March 20, 2016] budget is unrealistic. According to Fars, Ali Larijani, speaker of the Majlis, said yesterday afternoon in a Joint Budget Commission meeting of the assembly, pointed out that according to the program, each year, an additional three percent of oil revenues are supposed to be added to the National Development Fund. Applying this figure for the coming year, he said there should be another 12 percent allocated to the fund. The Leadership gave instructions about this and so we in the Majlis must pay attention and listen... Taking into account the orders of the Supreme Leader, 20 percent of oil and gas revenues should be deposited in the National Development Fund in 1394 [2015-2016]... If there are new sanctions, a picture of our reaction should be shown. He pointed out that some other countries had calculated their budget on the assumption that oil would be \$60 per barrel. This rate, however, is very unrealistic, and yet whatever the price of oil we will see, our budget should be healthier, and it is necessary that a working group should be formed to study this issue.

“Two-thirds of all expenditure credits will be spent on salaries and benefits.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Islamic Republic was born in a maelstrom of revolution and war. It was only a decade into existence when, with the Iran-Iraq War over, Iranian leaders initiated a serious discussion with regard to how to develop the economy. When Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani became president in 1989, he preached “pragmatic” reform of the economy. Whether he was sincere and simply could not overcome the already entrenched interests or whether his commitment to economic reform was rhetorical only, he did not keep his promises. Throughout the Rafsanjani and Muhammad Khatami eras the state continued to dominate the economy. As oil revenue quintupled between 2000 and 2005, the huge influx in hard currency enabled the Iranian government to delay any internal economic reform. In 2005 Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won office simultaneously as an economic populist and one committed to reform. He would often distribute—literally—bags of cash during his provincial tours and spoke often of the need for privatization of state-owned industries. While he sought some basic subsidy reforms—for example, placing a cap on subsidized gasoline purchases—his commitment to reform waivered as various constituencies, ranging from taxi drivers to military veterans, lobbied for exemptions. Meanwhile, time exposed his privatization efforts as a shell game: state-owned industries would be sold on the Tehran Stock Exchange, only to be snatched up by banks or companies affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Through it all, when the state ran short on cash, it would simply stiff employees in these state-owned (or IRGC-owned) factories and enterprises. Wages could sometimes run eight or nine months in arrears. In past years this has led to civil strife and sparked the creation of Iran’s first independent trade unions.*

*Never before, however, has the Iranian government faced the cash crunch that now confronts it. The fall in the price of oil below \$50 per barrel effectively cuts the budget by almost half, as previous years’ budgets were calculated on the price of oil being at least \$90 per barrel on average across the year. The commentary excerpted here reflects resistance within the Iranian government to embrace the reality of low oil prices over the coming year. It suggests many regime officials are unwilling to calculate a budget with a price of oil set below \$72 per barrel, a figure which seems increasingly difficult to achieve. On January 15, Iranian Finance Minister Ali Tayebnia acknowledged in a meeting of senior clerics that the government should probably calculate its budget on the assumption that the average price of oil over the coming year would be \$40 per barrel. The commentary excerpted here meanwhile suggests the government cannot make payroll unless oil averages \$75 per barrel. While even this figure would drive a wedge between government employees and ordinary families, something that could lead to civil strife, a \$40 per barrel average may put the Iranian government’s ability to meet payroll in jeopardy. Never before has the Iranian government faced the possibility of defaulting on the salaries of direct ministry workers. Should the price of oil remain below \$75 per barrel, the Iranian government could be facing unprecedented challenges which might directly impact on its stability. Of course, if they believe itself painted into a financial corner, some Iranian officials might also counsel military action or sabotage of other states’ oil infrastructure in order to drive the price of oil higher. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***

Source: “Chalesh-e Afzayesh-e Haquq” (The Challenge of Increasing Salaries), Mardom Salari.com, 4 January 2015. <http://mardomsalari.com/Template1/GetFileMagPaper.aspx?FilePrm=1068565521584174.pdf>

The Challenge of Increasing Salaries

A review of the funds for this section in the budget bill shows that 727 trillion rials [\$26.5 billion] will be spent on government ministries, institutions and organizations, military and police and security personnel. This figure makes up 43.8 percent of next year’s expenditure credits in the budget. Retiree pensions, welfare payments, civil and military salaries, and salaries of veterans and parents of martyrs, make up a total of 1.102 quadrillion rials [\$40.3 billion], paid for just the wages of active and retired employees. This is 66.3 percent of all expenditure credits in the 1394 [2015-2016] budget. In other words, two-thirds of all expenditure credits will be spent on salaries and benefits of the government’s family.

This figure was 64 trillion tomans this year (93) [2014-2015], 14 percent of which is 72.7 billion tomans. With 17 percent wage increase, 74.88 billion would be needed which is 2.18 billion more than the government’s proposed figure. Instead of the 72 dollar a barrel price of oil in the budget we would need oil at 75 dollars a barrel. Today price of oil is under 60 dollars.

“There will be...closures of the bureaus.”

OE Watch Commentary: According to the Iranian constitution, one of the primary purposes of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to export its revolution. While the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its elite Qods Force are one element of this, the Iranian government has among the most active media and propaganda wings in the world, with outlets broadcasting not only in Persian, but in Arabic and English as well, and with bureaus on almost every continent. Perhaps not for too much longer, however. The excerpted article from the conservative website Tabnak reports that the boom is dropping on the Central News Units—the primary news bureaus of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB). While IRIB outlets will remain open in New York, London, Baghdad, and perhaps Damascus, other units through Europe, the Middle East, South America and Central Asia will close. Damascus is actually listed on both the remain-open and slated-for-closure list, but this appears to be an error, with Cairo instead slated for closure. The Iranian government, however, will continue to support its English-language and Arabic-language outlets, perhaps relying on news and feeds purchased on the open market instead, much as American outlets like CNN often purchase film or coverage from local sources in areas where they do not have their own bureaus.

The closure of such bureaus may also impact the Iranian military’s operational capabilities as Iranian officials have in the past used its journalistic bureaus for cover and surveillance for terrorist operations.

That said, the current financial crisis caused by the precipitous decline in oil prices shows clearly the Iranian government’s priorities, as it shuts peripheral capabilities and perhaps curtails some social services while simultaneously expanding the reach of the Iranian military.

End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)

Source: “Ta’atili Dafatar-e Vahed-e Markazi Khabar dar Sarasar Jahan” (Closure of [Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting] Central News Units around the World), Tabnak. ir, 14 January 2015. <http://goo.gl/F6Ij7p>

Closure of News Bureaus Around the World

Considering changes in the structure of television news-gathering and the management of news stories, there will be fundamental reforms in the structure in the Central News Units and closures of the bureaus which have the lowest production in different countries.

Accordingly, the four offices in the cities most important to Iran—New York, London, Damascus and Baghdad—will be maintained but the others will be closed. And world events will be covered through the feeds of PressTV [Iran’s English-language channel] and al-Alam [Iran’s Arabic-language channel], or other news network competitors...

And, if necessary, a news team can be deployed to a country or city which is at the heart of the news. Iran had reporters with these based in four European countries: France, Belgium, Germany and Britain... Accordingly, the units up for closure are in Caracas, Brussels, Pretoria, Moscow, Kabul, Kuala Lumpur, Ankara, Paris, Beirut, Berlin, Damascus, Islamabad, Dushanbe, Beijing, Rome, and Buenos Aires, and certainly some journalists are assigned to the Central News Unit as a second job, and in these countries they have other professionals....

The Islamic State Challenge in Libya

15 January 2015

“... the abundance of arms and the condition of tawahhush (mayhem) then ideal for jihad ...”

OE Watch Commentary: According to an article in the November issue of the Islamic State's (IS) propaganda magazine, Dabiq, excerpted alongside this commentary, Libya has “the strongest presence of the Islamic State” outside of the Syria-Iraq core. On first glance, this seems unimpressive: two heavily armed coalitions (“Dawn” and “Dignity”), neither with ties to the IS, have been contesting power in Libya for some time. Unlike Iraq and Syria, the IS in Libya hardly registers in a traditional military sense. Yet IS expansion in Libya is on everyone's mind, including the group itself. The second accompanying article, notes how IS supporters have launched a Twitter campaign using an Arabic-language hashtag that translates as “#Emigration_to_the_State_in_Libya.” According to the article, Libya's IS branch has drawn fighters from neighboring countries and other parts of Africa.

The IS's “official” armed presence in Libya is based in Derna, a coastal city in the country's east that was a center of the anti-Gaddafi Islamist insurgency in the 1990s. In 2014, veterans of the Syrian jihad returned to bolster a group called the “Majlis Shura Shabab al-Islami” (MSSI or “Islamic Youth Shura Council”) and in October they officially declared themselves as a Libyan-based IS affiliate. The MSSI hardly lords over Derna, as some English-language media outlets have stated or implied. Indeed its practices have ruffled the feathers of local Islamist militias with more nationalist orientations, particularly the powerful Abu Salim Martyrs Brigade (which recently formed a new group called the Derna Shura Council). As was the case in various parts of Syria, any attempt by the IS to exert full control over a significant Libyan population center would likely be challenged locally.

IS presence in Libya is not limited to Derna. The third accompanying article highlights the group's influence in the city of Sirte, once a bastion of Gaddafi support and more recently a stronghold of the jihadi group Ansar al-Shari'a. The article sees the line between the IS and Ansar al-Shari'a as increasingly blurry and claims that the IS is focusing on western Libya, particularly the cities of Tripoli, al-Zawiya and Sabrata.

What is clear is that IS presence is being felt throughout Libya. In a three-week span starting late December 2014 and into 2015, IS militants in the country claimed or were associated with a variety of attacks, including rocket fire against the al-Abraq (Labraq) Airbase next to the town of Shahhat in the east, urban combat against government troops in the Benghazi suburb of al-Laythi, the ambush and killing of another dozen government troops in the southern desert near Sabha, claims of having kidnapped around a dozen Coptic Christian Egyptians in

Source: “Remaining and Expanding,” November 2014. Dabiq. Available at: <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/islamic-state/isis-isil-islamic-state-magazine-issue-5-remaining-and-expanding.pdf>

Libya – from amongst the lands mentioned in the official expansion – is the one with the strongest presence of the Islamic State, with larger cities already being administered solely by its leaders and soldiers... the Islamic State uprooted methodologies in Libya that allowed for the consolidation of murtaddin – the allies of the crusaders – by ordering to directly target them, despite what might be said by the weak-hearted and sick-hearted, those who claimed that Libya should only be a land for “da'wah” immediately after the killing of Gaddafi despite the abundance of arms and the condition of tawahhush (mayhem) then ideal for jihad.”

Source:

أنصار “الدولة الإسلامية” يروجون للنفير إلى فرعها بليبيا
 “Islamic State Supporters Call for Mobilization to its Libyan Branch,” 15 January 2015. Al-Sabeel (Jordan). <http://goo.gl/on5E47>

Supporters of the Islamic State in Iraq and Sham have begun a publicity campaign for the group's Libyan branch... its supporters created the hashtag “#الهجرة_إلى_الدولة_في_ليبيا” ... fighters from Libya, as well as from African countries and particularly Sudan, Senegal and Mali, as well as a number of Tunisians, Egyptians and Algerians, together constitute the core of the Islamic State in Libya.



Egyptian Christians kidnapped by IS fighters

Source: <https://twitter.com/khilafa505/status/554671264624017408/photo/1>

Continued: The Islamic State Challenge in Libya

Sirte, and the attention-grabbing though unconfirmed claim that they had killed two kidnapped Tunisian journalists. In addition, video of a recruitment/propaganda (Daw'ah) tent in Derna and photos of religious police (Hisbah) in various parts of Libya, both with IS branding, have been posted to the Internet.

Libya is currently in a state of political fragmentation, spiraling violence and general uncertainty, known in the jihadi lexicon as a state of "tawahhush" (mayhem, savagery). Domestically, this is a favorable environment for the IS both to incubate and to grow, which is why the group's propaganda warrants serious attention. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

Source:

ليبيا: تنظيم الدولة الإسلامية يعلن سرت إمارة إسلامية
 "Libya: The Islamic State Organization Declares Sirte an Islamic Emirate," 10 January 2015. Le Maghreb (Tunisia). <http://goo.gl/d0KIUx>

Only days after officially announcing its official presence in Libya and expanding its operations, military sources from eastern Libya claim that the Islamic State organization intends to announce a new Islamic Emirate in Sirte in the following days... A local security report spoke of the existence of an extremist organization that follows the IS ideology and seeks to implement religious punishment as is done in the emirate of Derna, as well as to replace the civilian state apparatus with religious institutions as a prelude to ruling by Shari'a.... The spread of the IS and its goal of imposing its ideology is also on the verge of occurring in Tripoli, al-Zawiya and Sabrata.



IS equipment in Benghazi
 Source: <http://justpaste.it/Rebat1>



IS fighters in Benghazi
 Source: <https://twitter.com/tgareerr7/status/556760137151840256/photo/1>

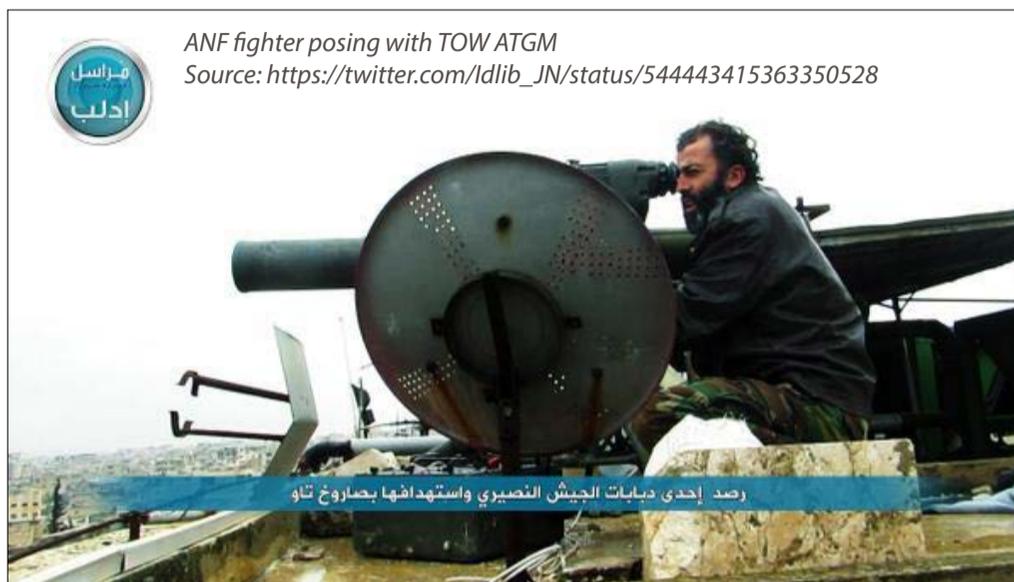
“... a pre-emptive strike against the Western ally expected to fight on the ground against al-Nusra ...”

OE Watch Commentary: Syrian Arab Army (SAA) military presence in Idlib Province was thinned out significantly in mid-December 2014, when an al-Nusra Front (ANF)-led coalition overran two SAA camps in southern Idlib. The camps, called Wadi al-Daif and al-Hamidiyya, protected large fuel reserves and overlooked the highway between Hama and Aleppo at the town of Mara'at al-Numan. Days of fog and cloudy weather preceded the rebel attack, preventing the Syrian Air Force from resupplying and defending the encampments, as it had been doing for months. The rebel attack was well planned and relied on heavy weaponry, as the first accompanying article indicates. ANF armament included equipment seized recently from the Idlib bases of two powerful moderate rebel factions, the Syrian Revolutionaries Front (SRF) and Harakat Hazm. ANF media even released footage of one of its fighters fiddling with a TOW ATGM, although there is no evidence the weapon was actually used.

As of early January 2015, SAA presence in Idlib Province is limited to the towns of Idlib, Ariha and Jisr al-Shughur, the swathe of highway connecting the three, and the isolated Abu Dhuhur Airbase. Rebel competition to the ANF in Idlib has been significantly degraded following the assassination en masse of Ahrar al-Sham leadership in September (by unknown perpetrators) and the banishment of Jamal Maarouf and his SRF followers in November (by ANF and its allies). The notion of the ANF establishing an “emirate” in Idlib no longer seems farfetched, as noted in the second accompanying article.

Events in Idlib underscore the problem faced by the armed moderate opposition, which is constantly forming and dissolving alliances while maintaining its relevance largely through political means. As the third accompanying excerpt explains, jihadis are targeting the remaining moderate leaders in Syria's north. These actions constitute a preemptive step in the ANF's strategy to deal with the expected entry to the battlefield of NATO-trained rebels, according to the fourth accompanying article.

ANF appears to be on the road to consolidating its control over Idlib. It remains to be seen whether the group will also attempt



ANF fighter posing with TOW ATGM

Source: https://twitter.com/Idlib_JN/status/544443415363350528

Source:

2/1 شهادات من أرض المعركة

Nidal Hamada. “Testimonies from the Battlefield,” 27 December 2014. Al-Ahed. <http://goo.gl/C7WFj4>

In the final attack, the two military bases were attacked with over 6,000 mortar, artillery and tank rounds on the day prior to the offensive. On 13 December, rebel gunmen launched their strongest offensive, using 100 military vehicles including tanks, BMP IFVs and Duskhars, as well as rounds of heavy fire. As a result the outer checkpoints of Wadi al-Daif retreated toward the interior, after which military commanders decided to vacate the two bases as holding ground was impossible due to the heavy cloud cover which neutralized the air force...

Source: Mustafa al-Haj. “Jabhat al-Nusra Deals Syrian Regime Major Blow in Idlib,” 19 December 2014. Al-Monitor. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/syria-idlib-jabhat-al-nusra-control-loss-regime.html>

If Ahrar al-Sham pledges allegiance to Jabhat al-Nusra, the only obstacle remaining for al-Qaeda's Syria branch would be the city of Idlib. Moreover, opposition activists believe that the fall of the military bases of al-Hamidiyya and Wadi al-Daif could mean the fall of Idlib soon.

Source:

تهديدات بالتصفية تطال قادة من المعارضة السورية .. والعشرات منهم قتلوا “اغتيالاً”

Nadhir Ridha. “Syrian Fighters... 70 Key Factions Control 60% of the Territory,” al-Sharq al-Awsat. 14 January 2015. <http://goo.gl/5pKwll>

Mahmoud al-Azu, the leader in the FSA's Fursan al-Haq Brigade, disclosed new anonymous threats... he has been threatened three times before, the first time by the

(continued)

Continued: Syria: Al-Nusra Front Consolidates in Idlib

*to do so in Daraa, the only remaining province where moderates and the ANF coexist. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)***

Islamic State organization and the most recent an attempt to kill him with an IED planted in front of his home in Kafr Nabl, Idlib Province... In the past few weeks, Syria's north has witnessed several assassination attempts of leaders from the 'moderate' Hazm Movement... Syrian pilot Mohib al-Jadaan, a leader in the FSA's "7th Brigade" was killed... Activists blame the extremist Islamist brigades such as the Islamic State and Jabhat al-Nusra and its ally Jund al-Aqsa of being behind these attacks and assassinations, especially after they seized control of a broad area in Syria's north and east.

Source:

مقاتلو سوريا.. 07 فصيلا رئيسيا يتحكمون في 06 % من الجغرافيا
Nadhir Ridha. "Syrian Fighters... 70 Key Factions Control 60% of the Territory," al-Sharq al-Awsat. 14 January 2015. <http://goo.gl/5pKwll>

The step to eliminate [Jamal] Maarouf was a pre-emptive strike against the Western ally expected to fight on the ground against al-Nusra and the other Islamic factions on NATO's list of targets.



Map of Hama-Aleppo Highway (from Khan Shaykhun to Aleppo)

Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Syria_M5_Highway.svg

“... the regime has tried to infiltrate opposition-held territory using tunnels ...”

OE Watch Commentary: Subterranean warfare has become a persistent feature of the Syrian conflict, particularly in the Ghouta, the semi-rural agricultural belt surrounding Damascus. Despite being dangerously near the capital and within the sights of heavy Syrian artillery, much of the Ghouta has been a rebel stronghold since early in the conflict. The landscape – a mix of urban block settlements, industry, and agriculture on the surface and favorable soil for tunneling beneath – helps explain this. The first accompanying article summarizes ongoing fighting in the neighborhood of Jobar, at the northeast edge of Damascus and bordering the “Eastern Ghouta.”

As of November 2014 Syrian government forces have begun using tunnels to attack, according to the second accompanying article. In doing so they are reversing an established pattern in which rebels use tunnels offensively and the government defensively. According to the article, from the government perspective tunneling has become “much more effective than bombing positions with barrel bombs.”

Several highly publicized instances of rebel mining in February and then over the summer of 2014 brought the issue of tunneling in Syria to the fore. Most occurred in Aleppo’s old city, where rebels continue to maintain relative hegemony over the subterranean space thanks to existing historical subterranean networks. The most recent underground attack took place in December 2014, when a pair of rebel tunnel blasts allegedly killed dozens of government fighters in Aleppo’s old city.

Tunnels are likely to remain an important feature of the Syrian landscape for some time. The third accompanying article, from an Arabic-language defense journal, provides some details on the cost and equipment of a May 2014 rebel tunnel blast in Idlib Province. That particular tunnel was doubtlessly more expensive and technically challenging than most of the digging and burrowing that is occurring, probably at this very moment, in Aleppo, Deir Ezzour, the outskirts of Damascus and several other parts of Syria. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

Source:

جوبار: سنة جديدة من حرب الأنفاق
“Jobar: A New Year of Tunnel Warfare,” al-Safir. 3 January 2015. <http://assafir.com/Article/1/393661>

The itinerant fighting in Jobar continues between buildings and tunnels. A source on the ground described the fighting as follows: “gunmen have booby-trapped most buildings, which is the hardest thing for army units working to defuse the charges.” In terms of dealing with tunnels, the source said that they were either blown up as occurred recently with when the military uncovered a tunnel leading to al-Abbasin Square, or they are dealt with by counter-tunneling and then exploding the tunnel.

Source:

سورية: حرب أنفاق لكسر الاستعصاء الميداني
Rami Suweid. “Syria: Tunnel Warfare to Break the Stalemate,” 25 November 2014. Al-Arabi al-Jadid. <http://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/7e282beb-943a-45b6-88ca-85e9d3f39f72>

The situation developed such that the opposition dug a comprehensive tunnel network reaching most government forces’ frontline positions. The regime in turn dug a network of defensive tunnels to uncover any potential breaching of the frontline via tunneling and in such cases, blowing up the rebel tunnels. In the past two months, the regime has tried to infiltrate opposition-held territory using tunnels, reversing the picture and forcing the opposition to monitor and survey to uncover offensive tunnels.

Source:

حرب الأنفاق
Nadhim al-Khury. “Tunnel Warfare,” October 2014. Arab Defence Journal. <http://arabdefencejournal.com/newdesign/article.php?categoryID=9&articleID=1829>

The leader of the al-Furqan Brigade, Hassan al-Omar, wrote on his Facebook page that the total cost of the tunnel under the al-Sahaba Checkpoint was \$336,000 USD. Around 100 young men worked on the tunnel. The equipment was primitive: electric compressors, pickaxes, electricity generators, lamps, flashlights, oxygen generators, oxygen tanks, loaders to remove the rubble, and machines to lift the spoils out.

Why not “Je Suis Nigeria”?

15 January 2015

“So, yes, we are Charlie. But until we are Baga too, our outrage and solidarity over the Paris massacre is also a symbol of how we as Africans neglect Africa’s own tragedies, and prioritize Western lives over our own.”

OE Watch Commentary: Clearly the pain on the European continent from the terrorist attack in France was also felt on the African continent, with newspapers from Morocco to South Africa condemning the slaughter of the French cartoonists. However, as the accompanying article relates, the media - including Africa’s - paid far less attention to another massacre that happened at almost the exact same time: Boko Haram’s slaughter of an estimated 2,000 people in the Nigerian town of Baga in the northern state of Borno. Perhaps African Arguments, one of the few journals that noticed the discrepancy in reporting on the Paris and Baga attacks, says it best by asking why “Je suis Charlie” and not also “Je suis Nigeria.”

The human tragedy of Baga is compounded by the military one; Boko Haram not only took over the town, they also seized the base there. Now Boko Haram essentially controls all of Borno, or as the accompanying article declares, Boko Haram is becoming a *de facto* state. Still, as a handful of African newspapers would later note, despite all that happened in northern Nigeria, the events of that day were overshadowed, by the events in Paris.

The accompanying article provides some of the reasons for this lack of newspaper space for a most newsworthy item. Surely Baga’s remoteness is significant. Even days after the massacre the news from the region is remains sketchy, with estimates of body counts varying widely. Moreover, as Boko Haram still has a strong presence in the territory, additional details from the site might not readily be forthcoming. An additional reason cited by the article for the discrepancy in coverage includes the “clash of civilizations” aspect of the Paris attack, making it a more compelling narrative, at least to editors, compared to Nigerians fighting other Nigerians.

There are other reasons, including political ones, for the relative silence of the African press with regards to Baga, and the reader is encouraged to follow the link to view the article in its entirety. For now, perhaps the most interesting question is the very last one of the article, “Where are the African solidarity marches?” **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**



Boko Haram has laid ruin to villages in northern Nigeria.
Source: http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-01-12-i-am-charlie-but-i-am-baga-too-on-nigerias-forgotten-massacre/%23.VLcX9qR0xv4#.VLsbKSvF_To

Source: Simon Allison, “I Am Charlie, but I Am Baga too: On Nigeria’s Forgotten Massacre,” Daily Maverick (South Africa), 15 January 2015, <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-01-12-i-am-charlie-but-i-am-baga-too-on-nigerias-forgotten-massacre/#.VLcX9qR0xv4>

There are massacres and there are massacres. The Paris massacre was tragic, but it was hardly the worst thing that happened last week. Not even close. For that, we must head to Nigeria, and to the town of Baga – or at least to the spot on the map where Baga once stood, because there’s not much left of it now.

Reports of the massacre there are necessarily hazy; the nearest journalists are hundreds of kilometres away (even there, they are not particularly safe), and information comes almost exclusively from traumatised refugees and unreliable government sources.

In normal circumstances, we could describe this as an act of astonishing brutality. But there’s nothing astonishing about it. Instead, it’s all wearily familiar, and demonstrates yet again how little protection the Nigerian state is able to offer its long-suffering citizens.

Even in Nigeria, to the media fraternity’s shame, the 15 deaths in Paris got more press than the hundreds and hundreds at home, according to media analyst Ethan Zuckerman who also pointed out that Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan expressed sympathies to the French government but said nothing about Baga.

It may be the 21st century, but African lives are still deemed less newsworthy – and, by implication, less valuable – than western lives.

Where are the African leaders condemning the Baga massacre? Where are the African journalists obsessively analyzing and reporting it? Where are the African solidarity marches?

Boko Haram Fails to Capture Cameroonian Army Base

13 January 2015

“The fighting was intense, but they were pushed back. We inflicted casualties upon them, there were none on our side.”

OE Watch Commentary: *Born in Northern Nigeria, Boko Haram has repeatedly ventured into neighboring countries. In one such foray last year, a large number of its fighters seized a Cameroonian military base, prompting the Cameroonian government to respond with airstrikes against them. That apparently did not sufficiently dissuade the jihadists from attacking again, but this time, as the accompanying article states, the Cameroonian military successfully repelled their assault.*

As Boko Haram gains in strength in Nigeria, where it practically rules the entire northern state of Borno, it has increasingly been willing to flex its muscle across borders; thus the latest Cameroonian raid. Cameroon, along with Niger and Chad, which have also dealt with Boko Haram, is not a prosperous nation that can afford large well equipped armed forces. Therefore, Cameroon repulsing Boko Haram’s ambitious attack is all the more notable.

Nigeria’s northern neighbors must contend not only with Boko Haram fighters crossing the borders, but also with the huge numbers of civilians fleeing the group’s terror. These refugees are placing a tremendous burden on these countries that lack sufficient resources to handle the growing human catastrophe. A UNHCR representative in Niger bemoaned the fact that they are waiting for things to get worse, not better. Urgent appeals have gone out for international aid.

*It is not just humanitarian aid being requested. Some countries in the region, such as Cameroon, are also seeking military aid, with Chad recently answering the call by deploying forces to help its besieged neighbor. Though Cameroon was able to repel Boko Haram’s recent attack, it could use assistance to deal with the terrorist organization’s continuing incursions. Meanwhile, efforts continue, though so far unsuccessfully, for Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon to form a regional force, enabling them to present a coordinated front against a determined enemy that threatens all of them. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***

Source: Cameroon Army Repulses Boko Haram Attack on Military Base, Vanguard, 12 Jan 15, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/01/cameroon-army-repulses-boko-haram-attack-military-base/>

Cameroon’s army repelled an attack Monday by Nigerian Boko Haram Islamists on a military base near the northwest border after intense fighting, a military source said.

“A group of Boko Haram fighters attacked Kolofata (in the far northwest) this morning. They specifically targeted the military base in the town,” a police source said.

Boko Haram has seized dozens of towns and villages in northeast Nigeria in the last six months and now reportedly controls large parts of Borno state, which borders Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

More than 13,000 people have died since Boko Haram launched its insurgency in 2009 and hundreds of thousands more have been made homeless.

Last month, Cameroon sent warplanes into action against Boko Haram fighters for the first time, after a large force of jihadists crossed the border and seized a military camp.

Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau last week threatened Cameroon in a video message on YouTube, warning the country would suffer the same fate as Nigeria.

“Simply extending the disarmament deadline again will only prolong the agony and discredit the organization.”

OE Watch Commentary: *There had been great hope in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) last year that when the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), a component of the UN peacekeeping mission known as MONUSCO, helped government forces defeat the M-23, a Rwanda-backed rebel group, it would then turn its attention to defeating another rebel group, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). However, as the accompanying article relates, the long-awaited military move to rid the eastern part of the DRC of this group has been in fits and starts. At the time this commentary was written, it was still uncertain whether a full-scale offensive would ever be mounted.*

Whether or not the FIB ever brings its full force against the FDLR, there are lessons to be learned regarding why this hesitation is occurring, which could be valuable when examining other conflicts. To begin with, the FDLR, originally composed mainly of ethnic Hutus who fled Rwanda following the genocide when Tutsis came to power, are in small, widely dispersed, entrenched units. Thus, countries that contributed troops to the FIB, including South Africa, Tanzania and Malawi, know that, unlike M-23, which at the time of its defeat was concentrated in one particular area, the FDLR poses a significantly more difficult enemy to overcome.

This concern that the FIB, described as the UN's first overtly offensive force, would likely encounter extremely stiff resistance is a significant reason why the FDLR was given repeated chances to voluntarily disarm. In January 2014, under threat of attack, FDLR agreed to lay down its weapons in six months; however, when that date arrived, FDLR was granted another extension, to 2 January 2015. That date has passed and there have been some significant actions against the group, but still no major offensive.

*Now there seems to be uncertainty as to what will happen next, with some expecting yet another postponement, doubting the FDLR really intends to disarm. To complicate matters, it does not always appear the UN is on the same page as the countries supplying forces to the FIB, nor are all those countries in total agreement among themselves regarding how to proceed. Additionally, it is important to remember that a 2009 offensive against the FDLR resulted in a widespread humanitarian crisis, with over one million people displaced. As the accompanying article relates, delaying an offensive now only prolongs the agony for a large civilian population waiting in fear for the fighting to start. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***

Source: Stephani Wolters, “Extending the FDLR Disarmament Deadline Will Only Prolong the Agony,” Institute for Security Studies (South Africa), <http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/extending-the-fdlr-disarmament-deadline-will-only-prolong-the-agony>

Until then, the United Nations (UN), SADC and the ICGLR had all been more or less on the same page on the subject: wanting to take seriously the FDLR offer to lay down its weapons, and to give it the time in which to do so. But then the deadline for the voluntary disarmament passed in May.

The joint South African Development Community (SADC) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes (ICGLR) decision to accord the FDLR an additional six months took many by surprise, and was not supported by the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), under whose command the FIB operates.

Then there is the disjuncture between the African regional organizations and the UN. Yes, SADC member countries – South Africa, Tanzania and Malawi – contributed the troops to the FIB, but the UN finances the FIB and has an international mandate to command FIB operations. That SADC and the ICGLR seem to have made the decision to delay an FIB operation unilaterally, without much coordination with the UN, further confuses the question of motivation.

The FDLR has used the local population as a shield in the past, and has perpetrated massacres to prevent military action against it.

It seems the countries contributing troops to the FIB now lack the will to wade into such complicated terrain. Tanzania has expressed reserve about the operations against the FDLR. And South Africa has shown itself increasingly reluctant to engage in an operation that has an uncertain outcome at best, especially if it cannot count on the military support of its FIB partners and the political backing of the rest of SADC.

Cameroon Prepares for War against Boko Haram in Nigeria^{31 December 2014}

“Nigeria, the country that was supposed to be at the forefront of the fight because it is the birthplace of Boko Haram, seems to have abandoned the Borno State border with Cameroon.”

OE Watch Commentary: *After the Nigerian government declared a state of emergency in three northeastern Nigerian states in May 2013, the army drove Boko Haram into the borderlands between Nigeria and Cameroon. Many Nigerian officers spoke about what they perceived as Cameroon’s indifference or inability to prevent Boko Haram from exploiting cross-border hideouts to attack Nigeria. In a twist of fate, one and a half years later, on 31 December 2014 a French-language article written by a Cameroonian expert for courrierinternational argued that it was now Nigeria that abandoned the border area to Boko Haram. This has allowed Boko Haram to carry out attacks in Cameroon from bases in Nigeria, such as the attack on five Cameroonian border towns involving 1,000 militants on 27 December 2014.*

The article says that as a result of the heightened level of Boko Haram’s violence in Cameroon, as well as the discovery of various symbols of Islamic State organization (formerly known as ISIS) in Boko Haram camps, Cameroon must take the fight across the border into Nigeria. This article follows discussions in Cameroon about whether the army should have the right of hot pursuit in Nigeria, though this would likely be contentious. Nigeria would view Cameroonian troops on its soil – even in Boko Haram-controlled towns – as a violation of Nigerian sovereignty.

The intensity of Boko Haram attacks, including its raid on 3 January 2015 that destroyed the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) base in Baga and reportedly killed 2,000 people there, suggests that Boko Haram will be a significant security concern in the border region for at least the rest of 2015. The Baga attack, for example, prompted Chad to deploy several hundred troops into Cameroon to combat Boko Haram. Additionally, Boko Haram is showing a new focus on Cameroon, with its leader, Abubakar Shekau, for the first time issuing a video on 7 January 2015 threatening Cameroonians and the Cameroonian president that they will taste what has befallen Nigeria.

*As a result, it is likely that until Nigeria can secure the border region, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad will increasingly consider carrying out cross-border operations against Boko Haram in Nigerian territory. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)***

Source: “L’armée camerounaise seule face à Boko Haram” (The Cameroonian army faces Boko Haram alone), courrierinternational.com, 31 December 2014.

L’armée camerounaise seule face à Boko Haram

The terrorist group Boko Haram has reached a new level of violence. For the first time, the fighters of the sect took a locality of Cameroon: Achigachia, a village on the border with Nigeria. Drones and helicopters of the Cameroonian air force have, for the first time since the war, taken part in the fighting. The army has repulsed the attackers and snatched the black flag with white writing, a symbol of the Islamic State.

There is no longer any doubt. Cameroon is total war against Boko Haram. It is only a war against an enemy who imposed a war asymmetric. This enemy slaughters civilians, plunders from livestock farmers, and destroys agricultural products before hitting the national defense forces by surprise and disappearing in nature. Nigeria, the country that was supposed to be at the forefront of the fight because it is the birthplace of Boko Haram, seems to have abandoned the Borno State border with Cameroon. This thus gives [Boko Haram] a fallback area with impunity to knock on Cameroonian territory

“Southern Kaduna people and those governing us cannot afford to see the series of murders of the innocent keep on repeating itself.”

OE Watch Commentary: Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, one of the major conflict narratives in the country has been that of so-called indigenes versus settlers. In the case of the Muslim-majority north, Christians who have descendants from southern Nigeria are often considered to be settlers, while in the Christian-majority south, Muslims who have descendants from northern Nigeria are often considered to be settlers. Nowhere is this narrative more prominent, however, than in the Middle Belt, where the northern and southern regions meet, particularly Kaduna.

According to an article in Nigeria's Daily Post, on 7 January 2015, Muslim Fulani herdsmen took over 16 towns previously inhabited by members of the Christian Atakar community and killed up to 180 Atakars (Atakars live predominantly in Zangon Kataf Local Government Area and number about one million). The article states that the government has not provided support to the affected Atakar communities, while aid from Christian organizations and NGOs has been minimal.

The Atakar tribal chief, who is perhaps the most influential figure in the area, given the limited government presence, called upon the entire people of southern Kaduna to unite and fight what he calls the dangerous trend of Fulani expansion. Should the Atakars seek to reclaim these towns, it would be one of many examples of the role of vigilante warfare in Nigeria. In both the Middle Belt and in the battle against Boko Haram in the northeast, civilians are arming themselves and fighting when they believe the government has not shown enough its ability to mitigate conflict.

Yet, the reasons for the inexorable Fulani southward migration are likely deeper than those which can be resolved on a battlefield. The desertification of northern Nigeria is forcing Fulani herders southwards to support their livestock, while high birth rates are making it necessary for young men to search for new parcels of land outside of historical Fulani areas. In addition, the prolific illegal arms trade in West Africa has resulted in herders now being armed with automatic rifles, whereas in previous generations they only had sticks or whips. As a result, the reasons for conflict in the Middle Belt can be explained not only by the indigene versus settler rationale, but also by ecological, demographic and criminal factors. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

Source: “Why Fulanis Are Attacking Southern Kaduna – Atakar Community Development Association,” daiypost.ng, 7 January 2015.

Why Fulanis are attacking Southern Kaduna – Atakar Community Development Association

The Atakar Community Development Association (ACDA) cried out that Fulani militias have taken over 16 Atakar villages and killed about 180 persons. This alarm was raised by the National President of ACDA, Mr. Ishaya Kunden, during the burial ceremony of the assassinated District Head. Kunden said, “Right now, Fulani men are fully settled with their cattle and families, in Mayit, Agwom, Zakai Gira, Tunga Magwot, Telak, Zakum and Kirim. Go there and see them. Their cattle are grazing on everything we left behind. The state government has done very little to help. Only the churches and some non-governmental organizations are coming in with relief materials for victims still hanging around. All our children are out of school. Men cannot go back to their farms. It is horrible. All we are asking is for more soldiers and a few things to defend ourselves. We can return if we get that assistance.” Speaking at the burial, the overall Chief of the Atakar Chiefdom, Tobias Wada, said, “The people of Southern Kaduna must be united to fight this dangerous trend. They want to take over our hills and use it as a launch pad to invade Southern Kaduna.”

“The social and economic panorama [in Venezuela]...cannot be worse.”

OE Watch Commentary: *OE Watch has been keeping an eye on Venezuela’s slide toward chaos for some time. Nothing from the open media suggests respite or a change of trend. It appears that the ‘bolivarian’ government of Venezuela has done nothing in the past fifteen years that would allow its rentier economy to respond to the drop in oil prices the way the Saudis have. Increasing production is not an option. Venezuelan and Colombian observers cannot and do not separate the increasingly desperate economic conditions in the country from the looming internal insecurity.*

What free media still exists are keeping track of what appears to be increasing body counts in the morgues. A key dimension of the Venezuelan condition is Cuban presence, and while this commentator finds it difficult to measure the dimensions of that presence, it appears that Venezuelan government propagandists are writing the opposition’s bylines for them, as exemplified by the accompanying quotation from the government organ, AVN.

End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)

Source: Daniel Lozano, “Encrucijada: el chavismo, frente al año más desafiante de su historia” (Crossroad: Chavism, facing the challenging year in its history), La Nación, Buenos Aires, 4 January 2014, http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1757327-encrucijada-el-chavismo-frente-al-ano-mas-desafiante-de-su-historia?utm_source=n_tis_notal&utm_medium=titularS&utm_campaign=NLExt.

“With parliamentary elections in sight, the bolivarian revolution confronts challenges that check its hegemony, from the fall of crude oil to the collapse of Maduro’s image... As much as the State media (almost all) insist on the bonanzas of the revolution, the citizenry is suffering a different reality on the streets, which they transfer to the opinion surveys: only 16% identify with officialist party, the PSUV.”

Source: La Otra Cara, “170 cadáveres ingresaron a la morgue de Bello Monte en los primeros 12 días de Enero” (170 cadavers entered the morgue at Bello Monte in the first 12 days of January), DolarToday, 14 January 2014, <https://dolartoday.com/170-cadaveres-ingresaron-la-morgue-de-bello-monte-en-los-primeros-12-dias-de-enero/>; See also, Diariocrítico de Venezuela, Morgue de Bello Monte, Diariocrítico de Venezuela, 14 January 2015, <http://venezuela.diariocritico.com/tags/morgue-de-bello-monte>.

“In the first twelve days of the month of January 170 cadavers were put in the Bello Monte [Carracas] morgue. Eighty percent of those deposited correspond to homicides.”

Source: Agencias, “El ocaso del modelo económico de Venezuela” (Twilight of the Venezuelan Economic Model), El País, Cali, 14 January 2015, <http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/internacional/noticias/ocaso-modelo-economico-venezuela-pais-esta-borde-quebra>

Venezuela is a country on the brink of bankruptcy. The crisis is reaching bottom due to the fall in the price of oil. They have once again lowered the [lending market] rating of the country. The social and economic panorama of the neighboring country cannot be worse. The time bomb that began arming itself more than a year ago is about to go off.”

Source: AVN, “Destacan labor de misión cubana en comunidades rurales de Venezuela” (The work of Cuban missions in rural Venezuela is highlighted), AVN, 9 January 2015, <http://www.avn.info.ve/contenido/destacan-labor-misi%C3%B3n-cubana-comunidades-rurales-venezuela>

“From the Betania Socialist Missions Base, inaugurated this Friday in Mariño County in the state of Aragua, the vicepresident of the Republic, Jorge Arreasza, asserted that, ‘only under socialism is this miracle of Chavez possible’.”

The FARC Uses Al Qaeda Networks for Cocaine Trafficking Purposes in Europe

9 December 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *Al Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has long been involved with the FARC, receiving large payments to ensure the safe passage of multimillion-pound cocaine consignments across the Algerian Sahara. However, AQIM was not previously involved in the purchase and subsequent distribution of cocaine in Europe, as they are today. As reported by this source, the AQIM is actively purchasing cocaine from the FARC in exchange for cash and weapons. These same shipments are later trafficked into European countries, including Turkey, France, and Spain. Cash generated through illegal drug trafficking is not shared with al-Qaeda central, but instead is used to conduct terrorist attacks in Europe, as AQIM is an independent unit of the group. The Algerian government reports that since 2007 kidnapping and drug-trafficking activities earned AQIM \$(USD) 130,000,000.*
End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)

Source: “Las FARC usan redes de Al Qaeda para introducir cocaína en Europa (The FARC Uses Al Qaeda Networks for Cocaine Trafficking Purposes in Europe).” La Semana. Accessed on 10 December 2014 from <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/farc-usan-redes-de-al-qaeda-para-introducir-cocaina-en-europa/411647-3>

The FARC is trafficking cocaine into Europe via the Sahel (biogeographic zone of transition in Africa between the Sahara desert to the north and the Sudanian Savanna to the south). As reported by La Semana, the Colombian-based paramilitary group is supported by the Al Qaeda network known as the Islamic Maghreb. This group is active in border areas between Algeria, Mali and Mauritania.

Quoting an official police report, the news media source further indicated that from the Sahel, cocaine is trafficked through Algeria and Morocco and then into Europe. To ensure safe passage of shipments, the AQIM charges the FARC a 15% tax based on the value of the shipment. In addition to protecting shipments, the AQIM is also purchasing cocaine in exchange for weapons that were looted in Libya during the mayhem following the death of Colonel Gaddafi in 2011. Once in their possession, the group coordinates the sale of cocaine in countries including France, Spain and Turkey.

Radical Islam’s Western Foothold:

Hugo Chavez and Hezbollah

By Sam Pickell

“This points to a particularly worrisome possibility: that Hezbollah will move beyond financing and support in Latin America to pursue operational objectives within the Western Hemisphere.”

<http://FMSO.leavenworth.army.mil/universities.html>



“...The situation of those two powers [Cuba and Venezuela] has changed.”

OE Watch Commentary: Now that the Christmas season is over, the government-FARC “peace process” that the FARC has been managing from Cuba is getting renewed attention in the media. From the range of open reporting and commentary (regarding what is nevertheless an opaque process) it would appear that the prospects for a positive result are in decline. The peace talks might even die or completely change character in 2015, or at least that is the hope of numerous Colombian opposition commentators. Among the most cogent, Eduardo Mackenzie (Paris-based) notes that the process was born with the sponsorship of Cuba and Venezuela at a time when those two countries seemed to be economically viable and to have geopolitical initiative. Both countries now struggle economically and face uncertain futures as to their leadership.

Attitudes within Colombia toward the FARC may be dragged down by negative opinions toward the governments of Venezuela and Cuba. Meanwhile, a second, smaller guerrilla force, the ELN, is exploring the possibility of peace talks with the Colombian government. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

Source: Eduardo Mackenzie, “Grietas en el proceso de paz” (Cracks in the peace process), Periodismo Sin Fronteras, 6 January 2015, <http://www.periodismosinfronteras.org/grietas-en-el-proceso-de-paz.html>.

“The pro-FARC platform in Havana was assembled with the help of the Cuban and Venezuelan dictatorships when Hugo Chavez was alive. The situation of those two powers has changed. Chávez died in March 2013, Venezuela is in ruins and on the eve of declaring default. ...In Europe, the governments’ support for the Santos ‘peace process’ is lukewarm and ambiguous. They know exactly what it is that Havana wants to impose in Colombia and they do not share it but are not interested in saying so. ... How then, in that environment, do the Colombians and the democratic world swallow the pill of a bilateral cease-fire with a FARC that neither renounces its criminal ideology, nor turns in its weapons, nor its lands, nor its drug trafficking networks and sanctuaries?”

Source: ElPaís.com.co and COLPRENSA, “ELN anuncia la posibilidad de dejar las armas para iniciar proceso de paz” (ELN announces the possibility of disarming in order to begin a peace process), ElPaís.com.co, 7 January 2015, <http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/judicial/noticias/eln-anuncia-posibilidad-acercamiento-con-gobierno-para-buscar-paz>

“On finishing the fifth national congress of the ELN, its maximum leader, Nicolás Rodríguez, alias Gabino, reiterated by way of a communique the willingness of that guerrilla organization to formalize dialogs with the national government, including contemplation of the abandonment of their weapons.”

OE Watch Commentary: *As reported by this source, the “cockroach effect” is being used to describe how a heavy government crackdown in one part of Mexico will simply send the targeted group or groups scurrying to another desirable territory, where they will carry out the same types of activities. In this particular case, the cockroach effect is being utilized to explain the movement of criminal groups from Michoacan to Guerrero. Starting in mid-2013 the Mexican federal government began sending federal police and military reinforcements to Michoacan with the goal of dismantling the criminal organization known as Los Caballeros Templarios (Knights Templar). During the next 18 months the Knights Templar and several other criminal organizations operating in Michoacan moved swiftly into Guerrero, where they reestablished their respective criminal enterprises, as reported by this source.*

Why Guerrero?

Guerrero represents a strategic hub for drug-trafficking activity for three principal reasons. First, it is a central trafficking location due to its geographic location. From the coastal city of Acapulco drugs and chemical precursors are received from Asia and South America and then shipped directly north to the Federal District, Mexico’s largest internal drug consumption market. Second, its shared borders with five neighboring states facilitates the movement of criminal operators. Third, narco money has been utilized to finance political campaigns and appoint police commanders, which, as this source reports, has allowed cartel personnel to operate freely in areas throughout the state.

End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)

Source: “10 grupos criminales se disputan Guerrero (10 Criminal Groups Fight for Control of Guerrero).” Tierra del narco. Accessed on 28 January 2014 from <http://www.tierradelnarco.com.mx/2014/10/10-grupos-criminales-se-disputan.html>

Nine major drug cartels are currently operational in areas throughout Mexico. These groups include the Gulf Cartel, the Sinaloa Cartel, the Tijuana Cartel, La Familia Michoacana, the Juarez Cartel, the Beltran Leyva Organization, Los Zetas, Los Caballeros Templarios, and the New Generation Cartel of Jalisco. Of these groups, the Beltran Leyva Organization, the Sinaloa Cartel, Los Caballeros Templarios, and the New Generation Cartel of Jalisco are currently operational in Guerrero which marks it as the state with the highest number of criminal organizations vying for control of one single territory in Mexico. The presence of multiple criminal organizations in the state is significant as it has resulted in unprecedented levels of violence characterized by gruesome murders.

The Cockroach Effect

The cockroach effect is being utilized to explain the presence of multiple criminal groups and increased levels of violence in Guerrero. According to authorities, high impact operations in Michoacan were so effective that criminal organizations targeted fled into neighboring Guerrero and established new operating bases which resulted in violence as some of the desired territories already had owners. Breaking the violence phenomenon down even further, of the four aforementioned groups presently operational in Guerrero, major cartel splintering has resulted in the formation of smaller groups which are also vying for territory and participating in other criminal activities such as express kidnappings and extortion.

For example, smaller cells that have broken away from the Beltran Leyva organization include Los Granados, Los Rojos, Los Ardillos, and the Independent Cartel of Acapulco. The South Pacific Cartel and La Familia Michoacana have also splintered into La Barredora and Los Guerreros Unidos. It is also important to remember that criminal presence in Guerrero is nothing new, and for years, these organizations have successfully hand-picked police commanders and Mayors at the state and municipal level. What is different now is that the number of criminal organizations operating in the state has increased which has resulted in higher than normal levels of violence.

Peruvian Cocaine Market Attracts Mexican and Eastern European Criminal Groups

16 January 2014

OE Watch Commentary: High-level cocaine production in Peru has attracted prominent criminal organizations, including the Mexican-based Sinaloa Cartel and Eastern-European-based mafia groups. Today, these organizations are responsible for coordinating the departure of an estimated 60% of all cocaine produced in Peru.

As reported by this source, one of the ways in which they are doing this is by collaborating with airline employees and customs officials, who are responsible for helping them switch out passenger suitcases with identical cocaine-filled suitcases. They are also known to use human drug mules on international flights. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

Source: Burak Ege Bekdil, "Feeling Vulnerable, Turkey Seeks National Cyber Solutions," Defensenews.com, 10 December 2014, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/europe/2014/12/10/feeling-vulnerable-turkey-seeks-national-cyber-solutions/20215515/>

The Sinaloa Cartel and Eastern European based mafia groups are known to conceal cocaine shipments in suitcases which depart from Peru on international flights to Mexico City, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. This idea is evidenced by the June 2014 dismantling of an airport cell in Peru responsible for switching out the suitcases of passengers and replacing them with identical bags filled with cocaine. The same cell was allegedly responsible for at least 7 other shipments that arrived from Lima to Mexico City aboard LAN Airlines flights.

The Sinaloa Cartel and Eastern European based mafia groups are also known to use drug mules who ingest small quantities of cocaine prior to boarding international flights. In August 2014, Peruvian authorities arrested two male Serbian nationals with alleged ties to a Serbian based mafia group at the Jorge Chavez International Airport in Peru. Both confessed they had swallowed cocaine-filled capsules after falling ill before their flight to Holland.

ATTACKS IN CHILE TAKING A DANGEROUS TURN TO TERRORISM

By Brenda Fiegel, Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, KS

Since 2005 anarchist groups have detonated explosive devices in non-populated areas within Chile during late night hours on at least 198 separate occasions. This brief paper examines these attacks and how extremist cells of anarchist groups are capable of carrying out large-scale terrorist attacks.



DIÁLOGO
DIGITAL MILITARY MAGAZINE

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/attacks-in-chile.pdf>

FARC and Al Qaeda are Partners

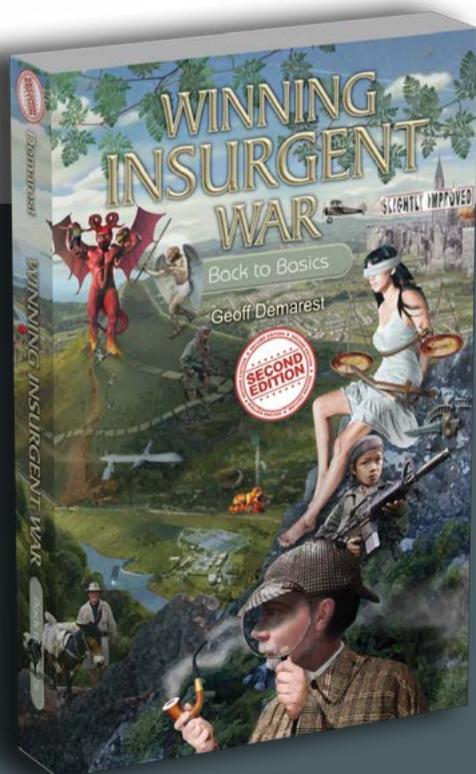
9 December 2014

“...AQMI charges the FARC a tax of 15% on the value of the cocaine in order to assure safe passage along the routes that it controls...”

OE Watch Commentary: *It is no news that the FARC is an international drug-trafficking organization. Interesting is the historical irony of the relationship it has with Al Qaeda. The FARC got into the cocaine business because it controlled routes in vast jungle expanses of Colombia, where Colombian drug organizations wanted to grow coca leaf. The FARC began by taxing the organizations on the value of the product, even while claiming an ideological distaste for the industry. Over time, the FARC grew into other dimensions of the drug trade. Roles turn; now the FARC is paying excise on another continent. End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)*

Source: EFE, “Las Farc usan redes de Al Qaeda para introducir cocaína en Europa” (The FARC use Al Qaeda networks to move cocaine into Europe), La Vanguardia, Bucaramanga, December 9, 2014, <http://www.vanguardia.com/actualidad/mundo/290558-las-farc-usan-redes-de-al-qaeda-para-introducir-cocaina-a-africa>

“RABAT.- The newspaper, which cites a police report, explains that the FARC uses the Sahel as a launching platform toward Europe, first passing through Algeria and Morocco. According to the source, AQMI charges the FARC a tax of 15% on the value of the cocaine in order to assure safe passage along the routes that it controls in the vast zone that begins in the Western Sahara and goes all the way to the north of Mali, passing Mauritania and Algeria.”



Geoff Demarest's *Winning Insurgent 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."

Sinaloa Cartel Uses Coal Company to Exports Large Quantities of Cocaine to Europe

28 August 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *On 28 August 2014 authorities in Peru dismantled a large-scale cocaine export business operating under the guise of two coal export companies, seizing eight metric tons of cocaine. As reported by this source, the respective companies were founded with Sinaloa Cartel financing in 2011 and were allegedly utilized to conceal multi-ton cocaine shipments departing from Peru to Spain and Belgium. Detection of shipments in this case was nearly impossible, as large pieces of coal would be hollowed out and filled with cocaine. They would then be doused with carbon and left to dry for 1-2 months. Because this new and ingenious method of concealment worked so effectively, authorities believe that as many as 30 shipments were sent by the companies prior to their dismantling. End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)*

Source: “Mexicanos efectuaron 30 exportaciones a España y Bélgica a través de dos mineras (Mexican Cartel Uses Coal Company to Send 30 Cocaine Shipments to Spain and Belgium).” La Republica. Accessed on 1 November 2014 from <http://www.larepublica.pe/28-08-2014/mexicanos-efectuaron-30-exportaciones-a-espana-y-belgica-a-traves-de-dos-mineras>

From 2011 to present, the Sinaloa Cartel ran two coal companies as fronts for massive cocaine shipments from Peru to Europe. Detection in this case was difficult for authorities as a never before seen method involving the concealment of cocaine in pieces of coal was utilized. Furthermore, the process itself was complicated and required multiple steps in areas throughout Peru.

According to this source, the process involving the coal companies worked in the following manner from start to finish. First, cocaine would be processed in the VRAEM region of Peru. From there, it would be shipped to La Libertad, Peru by drug transporters known as mochilleros, on public transportation, or in small commercial shipments. From La Libertad, the cocaine would be transferred to the coastal city of Trujillo where it would be concealed inside of individual pieces of coal. Once concealed, workers would douse the final product with diluted carbon and allow it to dry for 1-2 months. Finally, the cocaine would be exported under the guise of coal shipments to Spain and Belgium.

In the days following the August 2014 seizure, Peruvian Interior Minister Daniel Urresti reported that the coal companies owned by the Sinaloa Cartel had already sent 30 shipments to Spain and Belgium. He further added that authorities have not yet determined how many of the shipments contained drugs since they believe the cartel’s strategy was to send legal shipments to Europe at the beginning of their operations to build credibility.

“This is where we see that there are conflicting policies in the administration of President Jokowi. Ministers have said ‘A,’ while other officials have said ‘B,’ and it is ‘C’ in the field. There is no single vision being implemented into an integrated and comprehensive program.”

OE Watch Commentary: *As unrest in Poso, Papua, and West Papua continues, Indonesian authorities are grappling with how to tackle it. According to the following article, “Armed groups are still terrorizing everyone there. They have been shooting local and foreign miners, killing military and police officers, and disturbing public security and order.”*

Minister of Defense Ryamizard Ryacucu is pushing to take a defense approach to tackling the unrest by developing a new military regional command (Kodam) in Manikwari, which is located in the center of the island. This will place two Kodams in Papua, a move that concerns some observers and officials. Coordinating Minister of Politics, Defense, and Security Tedjo Edhy Purdjianto is pushing for an approach based on welfare and development, rather than defense. “This approach is supposed to pivot on education, health, Papua’s economic empowerment, upgrading the level of the natives so they can compete with the immigrants, and reducing the poverty level, etc.” The author of the article argues against using a harder approach, explaining that it triggered the rise of the Free Papua Organization (a movement that aimed to end the current government), security disturbance groups, and armed civilian groups.

*It is unclear whether or not a second Kodam will actually be put in place. According to Indonesian President Joko Widodo, or Jokowi as he is known, preventing acts of terrorism and radicalization requires both the cultural and security approaches. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)***

Source: “Buku, Bukan Senjata (Book, Not Weapons),” Republika, December 23, 2014, <http://www.republika.co.id/berita/koran/opini-koran/14/12/23/nh0r8712-buku-bukan-senjata>

Instead of prioritizing a soft approach to ending the conflict in those areas, the government has preferred to take a hard approach by implementing security measures among the people there. In Papua, and West Papua, the government will develop a new military regional command (Kodam). Therefore, there will be two Kodams in Papua. The old Kodam was the 17th Kodam of Cendrawasih in Jayapura. The plan is to set up a new Kodam in Manokwari, which is located close to the center of the island.

...

We are trying to understand that the people of Papua must be tired of a security approach. This is the same approach that triggered the rise of the Free Papua Organization, the Security Disturbance Groups, or the Armed Civilian Groups. Our brothers in Papua need pencils, books, notebooks, computers, and the Internet more than weapons and machines of war.

...

This is where we see that there are conflicting policies in the administration of President Jokowi. Ministers have said “A,” while other officials have said “B,” and it is “C” in the field. There is no single vision being implemented into an integrated and comprehensive program.

“Indonesia plans to invest \$114.4 million this year in new navigation and communication equipment to develop the country’s navigation system.”

OE Watch Commentary: Indonesian airspace made the news with the tragic disappearance of Malaysian Airlines flight MH370 in April 2014. Charges, claims, and counter-claims swirled about regarding which national air traffic control system last had contact with or visibility of the doomed aircraft. Military early warning radars were also called into question. Some concern arose as to the alertness and technical capabilities of the Indonesian airspace monitoring and control. A recent article from AirTrafficManagement.Net reminds us that the national airspace management system in the long archipelago that makes up Indonesia is not integrated into a single network. Singapore still maintains coverage of some Indonesian airspace, a legacy from the 1940s.

However, recent events belie the idea that Indonesia does not command its national airspace. A piece from the Australia Broadcast Corporation News reports the interception of an unauthorized light aircraft that was flying over Indonesia, having departed Darwin, Australia, headed to Cebu in the Philippines. The Indonesian Air Force interception and escort of this aircraft to a required landing is evidence of the air defense system prowess. A further incident was reported by Global Indonesian Voices. In November 2014 a Saudi private jet bound for Australia was intercepted and forced to land once it was identified as an unauthorized flight.

This demonstrates the Indonesian ability to detect and intercept both a small low flying private aircraft and a high performance jet aircraft. These publicized actions, along with significant government investment in air traffic control infrastructure, speak to viable and modern capability. **End OE Watch Commentary (Welch)**

Source: AirTrafficManagement.Net, “AirNav Indonesia to invest \$114 million,” March 20, 2014 <http://www.airtrafficmanagement.net/2014/03/airnav-sets-rp-13-trillion-for-better-air-traffic-control/>

....“With the new facilities and capacity enhancement in our airspace management, we hope that we can improve the safety and efficiency in our flight operations, including reducing the number of delayed flights,” Indonesia’s transport minister EE Mangindaan said in a press conference.

The minister also said AirNav would integrate the Jakarta Automated Air Traffic System (JAATS) with the Makassar Air Traffic System Center (MATSC), which controls traffic in eastern Indonesia, to form a single system in 2015.

AirNav is also expected to be ready to reclaim management of the airspace over Riau Islands, which has been controlled by Singapore since 1946. “We also aim that by 2016 we can propose to the ICAO [International Civil Aviation Organization] that we take over our airspace management from Singapore,” he said.

Singapore controls the airspace within a 110-nautical mile radius of the city-state. As a result, Singapore’s flight information region extends over Indonesia’s territory, including Batam and Natuna in Riau Islands, and Dumai in Riau.

Source: AirTrafficManagement.Net, “AirNav Indonesia to invest \$114 million,” March 20, 2014 <http://www.airtrafficmanagement.net/2014/03/airnav-sets-rp-13-trillion-for-better-air-traffic-control/>

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(continued)

Continued: Indonesia Air Traffic Control

“The Indonesian air force has used two of its new Russian built fighter jets to intercept an Australian plane that had violated its airspace.”

Source: Australia Broadcasting Corporation News, “Indonesian air force fighter jets intercept Australian plane after it violated the country’s airspace,” October 22, 2014 <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-22/indonesian-airforce-fighter-jets-intercept-australian-plane/5833960>

The Indonesian air force has used two of its new Russian built fighter jets to intercept an Australian plane that had violated its airspace.

A spokesman for the Indonesian air force, First Air Marshal Hadi Tjahjanto, said the civilian plane was detected on Wednesday morning by radar off southern Maluku in eastern Indonesia.

The aircraft, a Beechcraft 95, had departed from Darwin and was travelling to Cebu in the Philippines.

The plane was forced to come down in Manado, in North Sulawesi, after two Sukhoi fighter jets were scrambled from Makassar airbase to intercept it.

The plane is owned by South Australian businessman Richard Maclean, who authorities said was on board, while another man flew the plane.

The pair were quizzed by military investigators before being handed over to airport authorities for further questioning...

“The plane was forced to land by two Sukhoi jets of the SU30 variants from Makassar, which performed a pursuit of the Saudi Arabia-originated plane.”

Source: Global Indonesian Voices, “No Flight Clearance, Indonesian Air Force Intercepted Saudi Private Jet Bound for Australia,” November 4, 2014 <http://www.globalindonesianvoices.com/17196/no-flight-clearance-indonesian-air-force-intercepted-saudi-private-jet-bound-for-australia/>

A private jet flying above Indonesian airspace without permit was intercepted by two Indonesian Airforce Sukhoi SU-27/30MKI Flankers. The private jet, a Gulf Stream (registration HZ-103), is owned by Saudi Arabia, and had been carrying the Saudi government team for preparation ahead of the Saudi Prince visit to Australia.

The Saudi jet, which carried 13 people including 7 passengers and 6 crews, traversed across the southern airspace of Indonesia without permit. The air force fighter jets were forced to demand the private jet to land in Kupang.

“The plane was forced to land by two Sukhoi jets of the SU30 variants from Makassar, which performed a pursuit of the Saudi Arabia-originated plane. Seven passengers on the plane are known to be government officials from Saudi Arabia,” said Indonesian Air Force Operation Commander in Eltari Kupang, Andi Wijaya...

.... “The plane was released after the Saudi Arabia Embassy in Jakarta (assisted in) completing the flight clearance document (for flying) over Indonesian airspace, in addition to paying Rp. 60 million of penalty, which will be deposited to the state treasury,” said the Information Unit Head of the Indonesian Airforce in El Tari Kupang...

....This is the third reported incident in a month time, involving foreign planes traversing across Indonesian airspace without permit.

OE Watch Commentary: *When discussions turn to the area of the globe west of the continental United States, the term often used is “Asia Pacific.” In the past two years a new term has gained currency that reflects a change in regional perceptions of geostrategic reality. That term, “Indo-Pacific Asia,” also has sparked an academic discussion as how to best describe this broad realm of the world that continues to grow in cultural, economic, and political prowess.*

The term seems to have first been championed in the geostrategic context by Rory Medcalf, Director of the International Security Program at the Lowy Institute in Sydney, Australia. In a blog post to The Diplomat, published in December 2012, he queried, “what is the Asia that matters to global security and prosperity?” and then posited “Let’s call it Indo-Pacific Asia.” A similar term was broached in U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s 2010 speech, where she mentioned the commercial importance of “the Indo-Pacific basin.” Mr. Medcalf has gone on to expand this concept in a lengthy and worthwhile article in the journal, The American Interest in October 2013. I recommend this article in its entirety for a foundational start to understanding this emerging term of political and academic dialog.

A recent article from The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS) provides a contemporary example of how this term and concept are influencing the regional perspective and conversation. The author investigates the changes in terminology and geostrategic stage from the post-Cold-War period to our current experience. This piece provides a South Asian perspective of how the name Indo-Pacific Asia can accelerate actual change in policy. Once again the entire article is worth reading in detail.

Mr. Liu Zongyi, a research fellow of Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, provides a Chinese perspective on this term and concept. In a presentation given as part of a U.S. State Department- and Stimson Center-

“China is the quintessential Indo-Pacific power.”

Source: The Diplomat.com, “A Term Whose Time Has Come: The Indo-Pacific,” December 4, 2012. <http://thediplomat.com/2012/12/a-term-whose-time-has-come-the-indo-pacific/>

We are constantly told that the world’s center of economic and strategic gravity is shifting to Asia. But what is Asia? Let’s call it Indo-Pacific Asia.

There are some sound arguments for this term as a coherent analytical description of the emerging strategic and economic order linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Indo-Pacific Asia, or the Indo-Pacific for short, is a more credible and contemporary name than the Asia-Pacific...

What is the Indo-Pacific? I would suggest it is an emerging Asian strategic system that encompasses both the Pacific and Indian Oceans, defined in part by the geographically expanding interests and reach of China and India, and the continued strategic role and presence of the United States in both....

...it is the intersecting interests of the big maritime trading and strategic powers – the United States, China, India and, to some extent, Japan and others – that create the tension and the glue of an emerging strategic system.

... Some countries, particularly China, could well have misgivings about seeing the region through an Indo-Pacific prism. Is the Indo-Pacific really just code for balancing against or excluding China?

....True, an Indo-Pacific map of Asia is one in which Chinese influence is more diluted than in an exclusively East Asian setting.

....Even if we assume that China’s grand strategy and security ambitions are unknown or unknowable, a map of its commercial interests, energy sources, and diplomatic attentions – from East Africa to Pakistan, from Sri Lanka to Myanmar, from Australia all the way along the Western Pacific littoral – leads to a conclusion as clear as the waters of the Maldives. China is the quintessential Indo-Pacific power.

Source: The American Interest, “The Indo-Pacific: What’s in a Name,” October 10, 2013 <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2013/10/10/the-indo-pacific-whats-in-a-name/>

The high table of Asian geopolitics is abuzz with talk of the “Indo-Pacific.” ...India seeks ... “a stable, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.” Shinzo Abe speaks of Japan as a promoter of rules across two inseparable oceans. Indonesian ... calls for a region-wide treaty to safeguard an Indo-Pacific “engine of global growth.” In Australia, the policy establishment has gone further. With a defense white paper earlier this year, Australia became the first country formally to name its region the Indo-Pacific, which suits its two-ocean geography and puts the land down under near the center of things...

In America, Asia-Pacific remains standard issue language, but Indo-Pacific has been thoroughly inducted into the U.S. rhetorical armory, too.... The commander of U.S. Pacific Command, Admiral Samuel Locklear, does not even utter Asia-Pacific these days, though he

(continued)

Continued: Indo-Pacific Asia – The Name Matters

sponsored Maritime Trade and Security Conference in India (June 2014) he expanded upon the conclusion that “Indo-Pacific is an illusion. This geo-strategic design is a hegemony seeking a strategy.” He makes it clear that even though India and Australia may champion this idea, other regional nations do not. End OE Watch Commentary (Welch)

marches to a slightly different beat: He calls it the “Indo-Asia-Pacific.”

...Not all are convinced about the new nomenclature. Some in Southeast Asia, notably the Singaporeans, are still much more comfortable with “Asia-Pacific” even though their interests span the two oceans. As for the Chinese, they have been wary of the unfamiliar new Indo-Pacific mantra, but this may be starting to change. The Chinese rendering of Indo-Pacific, Yin Tai, is starting to be used by some foreign policy scholars. Some Chinese strategists are quietly developing a “two oceans” school of thought, paving the way for an Indian Ocean strategy, even though Beijing’s immediate security preoccupation remains the disputes on its eastern maritime edge.

...The principles for who gets to play in effective security cooperation and dialogue in the Indo-Pacific should be simple: those countries with interests at stake, serious capabilities, a readiness to use them, and a willingness to help shape and abide by rules and norms for a secure and stable region. According to the first three criteria, the Indo-Pacific’s chief security collaborators should be the United States, China, India and Japan, with South Korea, Indonesia, Australia and Singapore as a second tier. The fourth principle, about rules and norms, is where it gets tricky. For as long as tensions and uncertainties persist or worsen around China’s maritime rise, U.S. allies and partners can be expected to want to keep open the option of at least some exclusive security arrangements, and Chinese protestations about them will need to be taken with a grain of Indo-Pacific salt....

Source: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, “The Indo-Pacific & The Indo-US Relations: Geopolitics of Cooperation,” November, 2014 <http://www.ipcs.org/issue-brief/china/the-indo-pacificnbsp-amp-the-indo-us-relations-geopolitics-of-256.html>

... How is Indo-Pacific different from the earlier concept of Asia-Pacific? Why does the US need this new geo-political construct? How should India define its role in the region so that it serves national interest?

...Until recently Indian Ocean was considered only as a thoroughfare through which warships passed. Today, Washington wants the region to have a multilateral structure erect on the web of understandings, agreements and alliances. It is working on building relationship with countries in the region to give shape to a regional architecture in order to manage the Indo-Pacific.

... Beijing has had difficulty in accepting the “Asia-Pacific” label which draws the US into Asia, and now the “Indo-Pacific” which creates a triumvirate of regional powers by including India.

...Indo-Pacific is still finding its feet in the practice of world politics. For the American policymakers, Indo-Pacific seems to be an attempt to integrate India in an Asian architecture that seeks to serve US interests.

The Indian side, however, has welcomed the concept because it provides space for India to follow its strategic autonomy. India can continue to engage with countries all across in flexible interactions and not form alliances. Indo-Pacific concept allows India to be a direct stakeholder rather than being an alliance partner of the US....

Source: Stimson Center, “Sea Change: Evolving Maritime Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific Region,” June, 2014. <http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/chinaperspective.pdf>

...The U.S. wants to establish... Japan, Australia and India to balance the rise of China more efficiently with itself under great financial pressure.

In “Indo-Pacific”, the U.S. is actively establishing a formal micro-multilateral military cooperative system....

...From geo-economic perspective, industries in “Indo-Pacific” are not well distributed. The center of gravity is in Northeast Asia. The center of Pan-Asia economic plate is China. China is the world’s workshop, and the Largest Country for International Trade. India is far behind....

...In order to support its “Asia-Pacific rebalance” strategy, the US raised conception of “Indo-Pacific” and regarded India as a rising superpower, actively encourages India to adopt a “Be East” policy instead of a “Look East” policy.

... As a geo-strategic design, American “Indo-Pacific” will lead to strategic and military competition, and even conflict; while a geo-economic “Indo-Pacific” will lead to cooperation....

“... the Sri Lankan government declared that the \$1.5 billion Hambantota port deal with China ... would be reviewed over concerns that the Chinese... (are) getting freehold land in a high-security zone.”

OE Watch Commentary: *A peaceful change of government in Sri Lanka after a hard fought political campaign and close election marks a real milestone for democracy in South Asia. President Rajapaksa, who oversaw the end of the decades-long insurgency in Sri Lanka, lost his bid for a third term. Maithripala Sirisena, his erstwhile Health Minister, is now forming his new government amidst a plethora of regional news reports, editorials, and all manner of speculation for the future.*

Main news sources in India, such as The Hindu, are reporting the news of the Sri Lankan election victory in light of issues of interest to current Indian business and government. One such article speaks to how this new Sri Lankan government may cost China some of its influence in the region. This seems more wishful thinking than evidence-based analysis. Yet one can see the themes of concern in India through this preliminary speculative analysis.

Singapore sources are reporting on how the government shift may affect the reconciliation with the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. An article in Channel News Asia provides some insight into the potential impact of this change. “Sri Lanka’s new government pledged ... to devolve power to the country’s Tamil minority, in a step towards national reconciliation six years after a controversial military offensive crushed a separatist rebellion.” The bigger picture is just how this initiative may open doors to Western government engagement.

*Sri Lankan press is seizing the opportunity to shine light on the outgoing Rajapaksa government with a spate of reports on potential scandals. An article from the Australian Broadcast Corporation reports, “Sri Lanka’s newly-elected government is vowing to investigate allegations that former president Mahinda Rajapaksa plotted with the military to stage a coup once it was clear he had lost last week’s shock election.” This is indicative of the salacious and spectacular news items that are now bubbling up. It remains to be seen how new President Maithripala Sirisena will moderate the focus on the former government and look to the demanding challenges ahead. **End OE Watch Commentary (Welch)***

Source: The Hindu, “Change of guard in Sri Lanka triggers introspection in China,” January 20, 2015 <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/world/change-of-guard-in-sri-lanka-triggers-introspection-in-china/article6805507.ece>

The change of guard in Sri Lanka has triggered a debate in China that despite its economic heft, the country may still be lacking in diplomatic power to influence smaller countries when it really counts.

...the exit of Mahinda Rajapaksa, and the arrival of Maithripala Sirisena as the President of Sri Lanka is a blow to China’s interests in the island nation.

...uncertainties had crept in, and the new dispensation in Colombo was sending mixed signals... Sri Lanka had stated that “it would review the construction of a Chinese-backed port close to Colombo, citing issues over transparency in the contract and environmental reasons”.

...Officially, the Chinese Foreign Ministry asserted that Sri Lanka’s new government will continue major projects with China and expand bilateral cooperation in various fields, citing a message that President Xi Jinping had received from Mr. Sirisena.

...the Chinese side would suffer heavy financial losses if the project was halted - a situation similar to Myanmar, where projects were being stalled, and triggering domestic concerns.

...media reports ... suggested a change in the “geopolitical landscape in the Indian Ocean,” following the arrival of the new President.

But the daily also focused on the complementarities in the relationship, stressing that China was an “irreplaceable’ partner” to address Sri Lanka’s “urgent need of comprehensive economic development”. Besides, Colombo’s aspiration for becoming shipping hub in the Indian Ocean also depended on partnership with China, which had adopted the “21 century Maritime Silk Road strategy”....

Source: Channel News Asia, “Sri Lanka’s new premier promises Tamils more autonomy,” January 20, 2015 <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/sri-lanka-s-new-premier/1603818.html>

Sri Lanka’s new government pledged ... to devolve power to the country’s Tamil minority, in a step towards national reconciliation six years after a controversial military offensive crushed a separatist rebellion.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, in his first address to parliament since taking office, said lawmakers needed to bring a political conclusion to the conflict between government troops and Tamil Tiger rebels that ended in 2009.

...he said his government would revive a 1987 constitutional amendment that promised a de facto federal arrangement for the island’s Tamil-dominated northern and eastern regions....

(continued)

Continued: Regime Change in Sri Lanka

...Wickremesinghe told parliament during its first session since the Jan 8 presidential election that he hoped to push through several pieces of legislation to make key institutions independent. He said the government would establish independent commissions to run the police, the public service, the judiciary and the elections department.

A right to information act will also be passed and many of the executive powers currently held by the president will be transferred to parliament, in line with new President Maithripala Sirisena's election pledge. The current parliament is due to be dissolved by April, clearing the way for a fresh election.

Source: Australian Broadcast Corporation News, "Sri Lanka's newly-elected government vows to investigate coup allegations made against former president Mahinda Rajapaksa," January 11, 2015 <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-01-12/sri-lankas-new-government-to-investigate-coup-allegations/6012790>

... In a historic speech on Sunday in the city of Kandy, Mr Sirisena vowed to end the corruption and nepotism that marred former president Mahina Rajapakse who ruled the South Asian nation for a decade.

...The new leader defected from the previous government just three months ago and said he now has the backing to push through his reform agenda, pledging to reverse many of the constitutional changes brought in by his predecessor, which gave huge powers to the position of president.

... after the end of the 30-year-long civil war with the Tamil Tigers in 2009, it was hoped the former president would bring about political reconciliation with the Tamil ethnic minorities, but that was not the case. ... it proved to be quite the opposite.

... Mr Rajapaksa "began strengthening his personal power and the power of his family, all of whom have high positions in government. At one stage it was thought that they had amassed about 70 to 75 per cent of the administration of finances in Sri Lanka under their personal control".

"So, in a sense, there was just a continuation of the old style of government that had dogged Sri Lanka since independence, including the divisions between the ethnic groups, which were not being satisfactorily dealt with by Rajapaksa," ...

OE Watch Commentary: In December 2014 Kremlin officials announced that they had extended an invitation to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to visit Moscow in May 2015 for the 70th anniversary celebration of the end of the Great Patriotic War (WW II). If the invitation is accepted, this would be the first foreign trip for the young North Korean leader. This offer comes after a number of high-level diplomatic exchanges over the past two years between Russian and North Korean officials. Besides forgiving the country's \$10 billion Soviet-era debt, the Kremlin leadership has also been working to expand trade and cultural relations with North Korea.

As the brief excerpt from a Chinese newspaper indicates, such a trip would send a strong message to North Korea's chief benefactor, China. While North Korea has gained a reputation for manipulating its two large neighbors, it has relied most heavily on Chinese support since the collapse of the USSR. Should Kim agree to visit Russia before China, such a move will likely be interpreted as an affront to leaders in Beijing.

The article suggests that since both Russia and North Korea have been sanctioned by the West, their closer relations may be an attempt to help "keep each other warm." How "warm" they will become remains unclear. Without China's support, North Korea cannot survive, and there is no indication that Beijing plans to reduce aid to Pyongyang. The Chinese-North Korean relationship can be summed up by the Chinese-Korean maxim "an alliance of tooth and lips" (唇亡齒寒).

Without the tension caused by the troublesome North Korean regime, China would lose an important diplomatic lever in North East Asia. If Russia were to take the place of China as the chief protector and supplier for North Korea, the Kremlin would gain not only greater diplomatic status in the region, but also useful political leverage against the US. While China will likely not try to thwart the growing cooperation between Russia and North Korea, leaders in Beijing are well aware that the alliance of "tooth and lips" is not easily severed. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kim)**

Source: Yan yu: "Do Russia and the DPRK Become Closer to Keep Each Other Warm"? Renmin Ribao Online, 23 December 2014.

According to a TASS 20 December report, Russian Kremlin spokesman recently confirmed that Russia had invited the DPRK Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un [Kim Cho'ng-u'n] to visit Moscow in May 2015 to participate in the activities Russia will hold to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the "patriotic war victory day" in which the Soviet Union and allied forces defeated the Nazi Germany. It is still not clear whether Kim Jong Un has accepted the Russian invitation, but this report was enough to draw the attention of the international community again to Russia and the DPRK, a pair of "partners" that have become increasingly closer....

The relations between Russia and the DPRK have continued to warm up since the beginning of this year....The visit of Choe Ryong Hai, as Kim Jong Un's special envoy, to Russia in November was regarded as one to "prepare the ground" for Kim Jong Un's Russian visit....

...In addition to close political dialogues, there have also been major moves in the economic cooperation between Russia and the DPRK. In March, Russia and the DPRK signed a trade agreement that included cooperation in energy and planned to increase their trade volume to more than \$1 billion by 2020. This has become the biggest move in the trade between the two countries in recent years. After this, Vladimir Putin once again showed generosity in May by signing the bill endorsing the writing-off of the DPRK's \$10 billion debt accrued in the Soviet era in hope of strengthening cooperation with the DPRK in energy, public health, education, and other areas in the future and then greatly promoting the cooperative relations between the two countries. In addition, Russia and the DPRK started a project to renovate and modernize the DPRK's railways with an investment of about \$25 billion this year, and Russia's coal was also shipped to the ROK via the DPRK's Najin Port for the first time in December....

What Are the Reasons for the Close Exchanges Between Russia and the DPRK?...

"Suffering sanctions by the West, both Russia and the DPRK are faced with great pressure at present. Under such circumstances, it can be said that the two countries are holding together to keep each other warm." Gao Fei, director of the Center for Russian Studies of China Foreign Affairs University, maintained that the Russian-DPRK relations had warmed up evidently in the past year mainly for the purpose of better addressing the sanctions from the outside....

..."Improving the relations with the DPRK may enable Russia to gain more political bargaining chips." Gao Fei said: Russian-DPRK cooperation cannot completely make up for the economic losses resulting from the sanctions by the West, but Russia takes this opportunity to release a signal to the West, that is, Russia remains to be a body politic that carries weight in the world and that will continue to play an important role especially in the Korean Peninsula issue....

“Putting advanced technology and equipment into use has further raised the level of actual combat training of the troops in China.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The following article offers an overview of the changing face of military training in China. It describes past military exercises as being a “passive way of ensuring security,” and goes on to describe how military exercises have actually shifted, especially over the past year.*

According to the author, three things stand out in many of the country’s military exercises in 2014. First, scenarios have become more realistic. For example, in the “Joint Action-2014” exercise, Chinese troops used retired tanks and armored cars, installed with a remote control, as real targets. Second, impromptu scenarios have been introduced. Rather than creating exercises for show, they created “exercises for combat” to test the commander’s ability to orchestrate the appropriate steps. Finally, the exercises have incorporated actual combat into them. These types of back-to-back, red-blue confrontation not only simulate true-to-life factors in the operations implementation period, but also are an important way to comprehensively inspect the combat power level of the troops.

The article also points out that Chinese troops are putting advanced technology and equipment into use, which raised the level of actual combat training. Some of China’s major training bases are equipped with simulation combat equipment, such as assault guns, armored vehicles, and other large weapons and armaments. The article boasts that China has made great progress in the research and development of such simulation combat systems equipment. “Putting advanced technology and equipment into use has further raised the level of combat training of the troops in China.”

*The article points out that China has not been “baptized by war” for several decades. However, reading it does leave the perception that China has gone from taking a scripted approach in its military exercises to one that is much more serious and driven. Because military exercises are the primary means of military training (according to the article), one might conclude that the country has likely made great strides in its training doctrine in just the past year alone. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)***

Source: “2014年之中国军演：把和平积习赶出训练场 (China’s Military Exercises in 2014: Driving Deep-Rooted Peacetime Practices Out of Training Grounds),” Gansu Daily, December 26, 2014, <http://china.gansudaily.com.cn/system/2014/12/26/015331864.shtml>

In 2014, if we still interpret the military exercises in China according to their intensity and frequency or by how many first times and how many soldiers are involved, we are evidently laymen. In the past decades, the military exercises in China have quietly completed the change from being used as a political announcement or for highlighting confidence and determination to being used to focus efforts on actual combat and raise the level of combat power.

...

In 2014, if we want to summarize the military exercises in one sentence, it will be: Military exercises have started shifting from making quantitative changes to making qualitative changes.

As viewed from the military exercises this year, all the troops of the armed forces have vigorously grasped actual combat training and at least three aspects are remarkable.

The first is the actual combat environmental setting of the battlefield...

The second is the orientation of actual combat in setting training topics...

The final one is the orientation of actual combat of the training equipment...

At present, various major training bases are equipped on a large scale and in complete systems with various kinds of simulation equipment. The use of a single-soldier laser combat system is no longer confined to a platoon or a company, and simulation combat equipment has also been used for assault guns, armored vehicles and other large weapons and armaments, and the research and production of simulation combat equipment for guns and other indirect-aim weapons have also made relatively great progress and entered a trial use stage. Putting advanced technology and equipment into use has further raised the level of actual combat training of the troops in China.

Although it is a difficult issue for our armed forces, or even other armed forces of the world, to formulate a scientific and quantified standard for the evaluation of military exercises and in the process of review, some participating troops may find some criticism unacceptable and feel offended and humiliated. However, strictly and pragmatically picking out faults and problems undoubtedly has more advantages than disadvantages as far as the Chinese armed forces are concerned, which have not been baptized by war for several decades.

Concern Arises Over the Establishment of a New Mysterious Youth Group in Hong Kong

“Some also fear the group, registered as a non-profit company ... and claiming to be Hong Kong’s first uniformed group to train members in “Chinese-style military foot drills”, will be used to “indoctrinate” young people.”

OE Watch Commentary: According to the media in Hong Kong, a mysterious new group of army cadets has just taken root, raising concern. The group, known as the Hong Kong Army Cadets Association, underwent a secretive inauguration ceremony on 18 January.

According to the first article, only a few media outlets, including the pro-Beijing newspaper, Wen Wei Po, and state broadcaster China Central Television, were invited to cover the ceremony. Meanwhile, reporters from most news outlets could only cover the event by interviewing a Wen Wei Po reporter, who, it seems, offered very little information.

According to the first article, what is known is that Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong’s first chief executive after the territory was handed back to China, will reportedly be the group’s honorary president, and his wife, Betty Chiu Hung-ping, will be an honorary advisor. Also, according to the group’s articles of association, one of its objectives is to “encourage the youth in Hong Kong to be aware of their responsibilities and obligations as Chinese citizens.” Anyone over six years of age is eligible to join.

The move comes on the heels of Hong Kong’s pro-democracy demonstrations, also known as the Umbrella Revolution. Some people are concerned that the group will be used to indoctrinate or brainwash young people.

The second article, originating from Chinese state-owned Ta Kung Pao, defended the founding of the army cadet force, arguing that the group is to strengthen civic awareness among young people in Hong Kong, and encourage them to learn about responsibilities and obligations as Chinese citizens. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

Source: “Mystery Surrounds New Hong Kong Army Cadet Force, Which Was Inaugurated at PLA Base,” South China Morning Post, January 19, 2015, <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1681760/mystery-surrounds-new-hong-kong-army-cadet-force-which-was>

Mystery Surrounds New Hong Kong Army Cadet Force, Which Was Inaugurated at PLA Base

Some also fear the group, registered as a non-profit company last Thursday and claiming to be Hong Kong’s first uniformed group to train members in “Chinese-style military foot drills”, will be used to “indoctrinate” young people.

The ceremony was held yesterday afternoon in the restricted area of Ngong Shuen Chau naval base on Stonecutters Island. Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying’s wife, Regina Tong Ching-ye, was seen being chauffeured into the base in the group’s green uniform.

...

“With so many public figures attending and such high public interest, you can’t just use invitation as an excuse,” she said. “It will only make people wonder if the association has secrets.”

...

Civic Party lawmaker Kenneth Chan Ka-lok said he feared the association would be used to “indoctrinate” young people in patriotism.

He suspected that Beijing initiated the formation of the group because of the involvement of the PLA and the liaison office.

Source: “青少年軍」成立光明磊落”(Army Cadet Force Established Out of Honor), Ta Kung Pao, January 19, 2015, <http://news.takungpao.com.hk/paper/>

“Army Cadet Force” Established Out of Honor

Founding of the Army Cadet Force is for strengthening civic awareness among young people in Hong Kong (and) encouraging them to learn about their responsibilities and obligations as Chinese citizens. It sounds exciting!

Strategic Considerations for New-Type Operational Forces

“Based on technical characteristics, the new weapon concepts include mainly directed energy weapons, kinetic energy weapons, genetic weapons, geophysical weapons, and soft-kill weapons.” “History and practice show that ‘S&T breakthroughs—the generation of new-types of equipment—the reform of unit structures—and upward leaps in operational capability’ are the cause and effect chain of events that generate and develop new types of operational forces.”

OE Watch Commentary: *Today’s digital- and scientific-based weaponry requires that the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) build a new-type operational force. The PLA notes that whoever attains such a force first will gain the initiative in future war and will have the power to change conflict situations to their advantage.*

History has shown that new forces must have four characteristics: timeliness, high-efficiency, demonstration capability, and relativity. The trend these days, the author notes, is toward the use of two ideas. The first is the use of the “Three No’s” of warfare: nobody on the battlefield, no one can see you, and no one can hear you—also stated as unmanned, invisible, and silent. The second is the use of three types of forces: cyber, space and new concept operational forces. The excerpts below focus on the developmental features of the PLA’s new-type operational forces and includes two footnotes that were provided in the article which explain further the “Three No’s” and new concept weapons. End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)

Source: Jia Xiaowei, “Strategic Considerations on Promoting the Building of the PLA’s New-Type Operational Forces,” *China Military Science*, No. 3 2013.

The major threats that China faces currently are that the homeland is not yet completely unified, the sovereignty of territorial lands and territorial seas of some neighboring countries are in dispute, seaward areas have become hot spots, and there is increased urgency concerning protection of national unity and territorial integrity. China’s development interests, especially such new and developing areas as maritime, outer space, and cyberspace are under serious threat.

New-type operational forces are the grit and guts of modern military force systems... they must guarantee the completeness and invulnerability of friendly operational systems while at the same time find the ‘acupuncture points’ and ‘floating ribs’ of enemy operational system and then take their best shot to paralyze enemy destructive capabilities.

New-type operational force construction is a constantly changing process...the target of development must be clear and precise...and be able to form an asymmetrical strategic advantage for dealing with a strong enemy. The overall effect must be to have groups of armed forces with the ‘punch’ to strike lasting fear and awe in the hearts of a strong enemy, be able to threaten and transfix the enemy in peacetime, and be able to unleash decisive action at a moment’s notice.

[The two footnotes that follow on terminology are from the article]

‘Unmanned’ refers to the use of unmanned vehicles and robots by means of remote control or adaptive modes to carry out combat missions, and to reduce or even replace front-line combatants.

‘Indivisible’ means using stealth design, and stealth materials in the production of offensive weapons to make it difficult for the enemy to discover, evade, and counter attack them. ‘Silent’ means use new physical energy and bio-energy instead of conventional destructive mechanisms in order to change shock and awe maneuvering and attacking military actions of the past into silent and surreptitious actions.

People's Liberation Army (PLA) Year End Review

“...reviewing 2014, there have been many changes in China's military and the 'new normal' has been established: based on the achievements of the anti-corruption campaign, the elimination of privileges and the establishment of political prestige, the armed forces of China are determined to defend the national territory, sovereignty and interests. Real combat experiences and training have accelerated the generation and upgrading of combat effectiveness of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The pace of weaponry technology development has also been accelerated.”

Source: “Hong Kong Media: PLA Made Great Changes in 2014,” Jiefangjun Bao Online (in English) 30 December 2014.

OE Watch Commentary: In December the Chinese website Jiefangjun Bao Online, which is sponsored by the official newspaper of the Central Military Commission (CMC) of the PLA, listed the major achievements of the PLA in 2014. The website, which is in English, divided the year's success into the following categories: Military Diplomacy; Control of Disputes on the Seas; Unprecedented Efforts to Provide Public Safety; PLA Strengthens Internal and Anti-corruption Campaign; CMC Leads PLA Audit; 200-Plus Exercises in 2014 to Upgrade the PLA's Combat Power; and 'Blowout' Development of New Weapons and Equipment. The excerpts below highlight some of the exercises of the PLA, as well as some of the capabilities of new equipment procured in 2014. **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

Seven “Red Armies” from seven military area commands (MAC) of the PLA respectively carried out free confrontation drills at the Zhurihe training base against PLA's first professional “Blue Army” from May 20 to July 28, 2014. The results showed that the “Red Armies” lost six confrontation drills and won only one, breaking the common thinking of victory for “Red Army” and failure for “Blue Army”.

Since May of 2014, PLA's seven joint actual-troop exercises codenamed “Joint Operation 2014” were successively carried out in multiple regions and sea areas. These were PLA's series of joint actual-troop exercises with the largest scale, largest number of participating troops, most levels of participating troop units, most complete participating factors, longest exercising period, highest organizing difficulty and most complicated drill subjects since the beginning of the new century. The fierce degree of the confrontation was very rare.

During the super-intensity air-combat confrontation examination, the largest scale in the history of the PLAAF, nearly 100 three-generation fighters with randomly-selected pilots were dispatched as rivals for the air-combat confrontation.

In 2014, MBT-3000, a new export-oriented tank, was modified based on the T-99 tank that has been commissioned in the PLA Army, and was developed to target the IT-based

warfare in the future. The 125mm smoothbore main artillery on such tank is equipped with the automatic loader, fume extraction device and thermal sleeve, and may launch the armor-piercing shell, high explosive shell and gun-boosted missile. The tank's aiming, navigation, integrated information, active and passive protection systems are all digitalized, and its performance and comprehensive combat capability reach the world's most advanced level, with considerable performance-price ratio advantages internationally.

The large-scale commissioning of the 054A frigate and the official commissioning of the 052D destroyer have marked the new development of the weapons and equipment for the PLAN. ...the 054A frigate employs the internationally accepted missile vertical launching and high firing rate close-in defense weapon system. The “Kunming” ship, first destroyer of 052D, ...represents the top level of the PLAN's destroyers in active service. Featuring the largest tonnage, strongest endurance and informatization, it employs the new dynamical system, new 64-unit vertical launching system and new active phased array radar, and may perform such tasks as area air-defense, ground attack, anti-ship attack and antisubmarine attack.

The appearance of J-31 and Y-20 at the Zhuhai Air Show has attracted worldwide attention, demonstrating the developer's full confidence in their technical reliability and maturity. China has become the third country after America and Russia that showed its fourth-generation aircraft at an international air show.

The public believes that China made a breakthrough in its flight tests of advanced hypersonic weapons in 2014, and that once it is turned into the actual-combat-based weapons, China's strategic offensive and defensive capability will be increased, which is different from its capability in ballistic missiles.

“There are, however, parallels with the war in Chechnya. The insurgency in Chechnya was also funded from outside, especially the wahabbist sheikhs of Saudi Arabia.”

OE Watch Commentary: *A Russian-language article published on 15 January in Nezivisimaya Gazeta provided a Russian perspective on China’s arrest of 10 Turkish citizens in January 2015. They were reportedly helping Uighurs from Xinjiang obtain forged documents to travel to Thailand and Malaysia and onwards to Turkey or conflict zones in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Syria. The article emphasized how incidents like this were straining Chinese-Turkish relations.*

The article argues that this issue may push China away from Turkey, with which China nearly concluded a major anti-missile defense deal in 2013. However, the article also argued that strained ties between China and Turkey on the Uighur issue could lead to a greater condominium among China, the EU and the US on terrorism more generally, which would be against Russian interests. Despite this, the article says that EU and US concerns over human rights in China would restrict them from forming an antiterrorism alliance.

Rather, in the conclusion, the article determined that the Uighur issue was at its core like the insurgency Russia faces in Chechnya, which is funded from outside supporters, particularly wahabbists in the Middle East. As such, the article envisions the possibility for the proliferation of the violence in Xinjiang to resemble the experience in Chechnya. Since the situation in Xinjiang is unlikely to bring China closer to Turkey, the US or the EU, Russia may be able leverage its comparative strategic advantage over these countries to collaborate in counterinsurgency and security with China in Central Asia, if not also other theaters where they hold similar positions, such as Syria and Iraq. End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)

Source: “Пекин подозревает турок в поддержке исламистов” (Beijing suspects Turks in support of Islamists), Nezivisimayagazet.ru, 15 January 2015.

Beijing suspects Turks in support of Islamists

In Shanghai, police arrested yesterday 10 Turkish citizens. According to the version circulated in the Chinese media, the Turks were selling fake passports to those ethnic Uighurs from Xinjiang of China, who are involved in terrorist actions. This is not the first such operation of Chinese intelligence services. In November last year, 11 people were arrested from Xinjiang with audio and video materials related to terrorism. Some of these people [buying fake passports] were being sent to Pakistan, Syria and Afghanistan. In October the Malaysian authorities also detained 155 Uighurs who arrived with fake Turkish passports.

The Uighur issue has caused a sharp exchange of remarks between Beijing and Ankara. However, Turkey, which is trying to play the role of a democratic Muslim country, through its Minister of Foreign Affairs protested China. In response, a spokeswoman for China’s Foreign Ministry called the fugitives illegal immigrants and demanded that Ankara did not interfere in Chinese affairs.

The actions of the Chinese party and police officials implies that Beijing, like Moscow and Western capitals, is concerned about the ideas of jihad and the struggle for the independence and that young people may have received military training in Syria and other hot spots and return home to start guerrilla war. There seems to be opening up of prospects for cooperation between the US, the EU and China in the field of combating terrorism. However, Western governments and media instinctively suppress the urge to describe the violence by the Uighurs as terrorism. There are, however, parallels with the war in Chechnya. The insurgency in Chechnya was also funded from outside, especially the wahabbist sheikhs of Saudi Arabia.

Conflicts on the Tajik-Afghan Border

6 January 2015

“The Assistant Prosecutor of the Khatlon oblast, Anvar Nazarov, confirmed that on December 19 four Tajik border guards were captured on the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan while gathering firewood”

OE Watch Commentary: *There have been a number of concerns about instability in Tajikistan because of the drawdown of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan in 2014. These concerns typically have focused on violence spreading north from Afghanistan and continue to appear in various media. The accompanying articles show examples of a few incidents that have happened in the past several weeks on the Tajik-Afghan border; while these incidents validate concerns about security, they provide a closer look at the type of instability that could continue to take place along the country’s border with Afghanistan. There are a few things to consider about each of the incidents in addition to what was reported that help provide some perspective on stability there.*

None of the incidents are directly linked to the Taliban or any other extremist group like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. There were initial reports in Tajikistan that the Taliban had captured the four Tajik border guards for ransom, but this does not appear to be the case. The commander of that border detachment is being charged with negligence and the four border guards might have been captured for trespassing and not because of any planned cross-border incursion into Tajikistan to take hostages. In any case, the incident has not received much attention outside of Tajikistan.

*There have also been a number of reports linking extremist groups with the narcotics trade, and while it is possible that the smugglers mentioned here are involved with one such group, this is not the first time that smugglers or other criminals have been shot on or near the border. Members of Tajikistan’s Drug Control Agency and the Border Guards might have been conducting more operations in the past month or so, but clashes like these have been periodically taking place for a number of years. The year 2014 might be seen as a turning point for security in Tajikistan (and across the region), but, so far, incidents like these might be the best indication of what will continue to take place. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)***

Source: “Прокуратура Таджикистана признала факт захвата афганцами в заложники таджикских пограничников” (The General Prosecutor of Tajikistan acknowledged the capture of Tajik Border Guards by Afghans), Regnum, 8 January 2015. <http://www.regnum.ru/news/polit/1882894.html>

The General Prosecutor of Tajikistan Acknowledged the Capture of Tajik Border Guards by Afghans

The Assistant Prosecutor of the Khatlon oblast, Anvar Nazarov, confirmed that on December 19 four Tajik border guards were captured on the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan while gathering firewood...the Tajik government is conducting negotiations and met with leaders of the (Afghan) group that took the four border guards...the head of the Border Guards denied reports that the Taliban demanded \$9 million in exchange for the Tajik border guards...

Source: Yuldashev, Avaz. “Наркополицейские Таджикистана после перестрелки на границе задержали гражданина Афганистана” (The Drug Control Agency of Tajikistan detained a citizen of Afghanistan following a shooting on the border), Asia-Plus, 16 December 2014. <http://news.tj/ru/news/narkopolitseiskie-tadzhikistana-posle-perestrelki-na-granitse-zaderzhali-grazhdanina-afganistan>

The Drug Control Agency of Tajikistan Detained a Citizen of Afghanistan Following a Shooting on the Border

Members of the Drug Control Agency prevented an attempt to smuggle drugs into Khatlon region on the night of December 14-15...members of the agency blocked the illegal crossing of the border, offered the armed group of smugglers a chance to surrender, which they responded by opening fire. One Afghan citizen was arrested as a result of the shooting....The rest of the smugglers left...two bags of cannabis weighing 23 kg were seized...

Source: Yuldashev, Avaz. “На таджикско-афганской границе произошла очередная перестрелка” (Another shooting took place on the Tajik-Afghan border), Asia-Plus, 5 January 2015. <http://news.tj/ru/news/na-tadzhiksko-afganskoi-granitse-proizoshla-ocherednaya-perestrelka>

Another Shooting Took Place on the Tajik-Afghan border

On the first day of 2015, members of the Drug Control Agency and border guards from the “Hamadoni” detachment prevented an attempt to smuggle drugs into Tajikistan...a group of six armed smugglers crossed the border and tried to move inland...Tajik border guards blocked their way and in response, they opened fire. One smuggler – an Afghan citizen – was shot. The smugglers returned to their own territory and took the wounded with them...At the site of the shooting members of the agency and border guard found cartridges, mobile phones as well as a bags of opium weighing 12 kg...

OE Watch Commentary: *There has been a joke in Kyrgyzstan in recent years that protests are considered a new national pastime. The accompanying article examines how protests have become a significant security, political and social issue in the country, and provides some insight into their evolution over the past decade. The article mentions a number of protests in 2013 and 2014 (see: November 2013 OE Watch, "Patterns of Protest in Kyrgyzstan") and even as far back as 2005, which was the year that protests against the results of parliamentary elections turned into the Tulip Revolution and ousted President Askar Akayev. The article notes that 2005 was the first year that an OBON (special purpose woman's unit) started showing up at protests. OBON is a sort of response by civilians to any special purpose police unit (OMON) from the Interior Ministry or other local law enforcement. The use of an OBON during any protest is important to note, and it is one of several tactics that protesters have adopted over the years with mixed results.*

Most protests in Kyrgyzstan today might not even get noticed in the media; they are not often disruptive to the government or public and rarely involve destruction or violence. Those that have been noticed included groups of protestors cutting off major roads (like the Bishkek-Osh highway), seizing government administration buildings, and even kidnapping a government official, whom they threatened to harm if security forces intervened. In some recent instances protesters have appeared to be prepared for a response from police or security forces, with a notable example of this in the town of Karakol in October 2013. A group of women, acting as an OBON, delayed a security force in riot gear by marching directly in front of it and talking with one of the unit's officers. Similar protests in the past couple of years got enough attention that senior level officials from Bishkek made an appearance to negotiate with the protesters.

Regardless of what results any negotiations achieved, the article shows how the government is now taking steps to counter protests with a new unit in the Interior Ministry and a law against blocking roads. News reports from 2005 to the present have shown how protests have evolved and adapted tactics, and it would be worth watching to see how any significant protest in the future deals with these recent government measures. End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)



"A group of women sit at the front of a protest in Jalal-Abad, Kyrgyzstan in April 2012"
Source: <http://rus.azattyk.mobi/a/24547209/i2.html>

Source: Ivashchenko, Yekaterina. "Митинги в Кыргызстане: Конники, юрты, перекрытия дорог" (Protests in Kyrgyzstan: Equestrians, yurts, road blocks), Fergana News, 20 December 2014. <http://www.fergananews.com/articles/8347>

Protests in Kyrgyzstan: Equestrians, Yurts, Road Blocks

Hundreds of protests take place in Kyrgyzstan every year. Perhaps it might be considered that the most awful of these was the rally in front of the Forum building in April 2010 that grew into the revolution. It resulted in 87 people dead and President Kurmanbek Bakiyev fleeing from power...The regime change gave more freedom to people, who started going out on the street...

In response to these protests the Kyrgyz authorities created a special regiment of the Interior Ministry for maintaining order during mass gatherings in November 2013; however, the country has yet to see how the special regiment in action, even during the longest and most violent protests...Authorities have also reacted to the blocked roads. In October 2014 members of parliament voted for criminal liability for illegally blocked roads...

...Over the years the character and the quantity of protests changed. "Fergana" already wrote in 2005 that a noticeable feature of protests was the appearance of OBON (special purpose woman's unit) whose purpose was not only to shout about injustice, but to repulse any action by police. A benefit of OBON is that police will not touch women in this Asian country...In the past year, 75 percent of the protests took place without notice...It is noted that the authorities are becoming less responsive to the demands of protesters...

...Law enforcement officers took reasonable steps to facilitate protests and prevent it from causing damage. In cases when there was a confrontation, negotiations were used, which helped reach an acceptable solution... "... every political party and rural government must work with its population, because during the April events and the (June 2010) situation in the south, more young people from rural areas than urban participated...Pogroms and arson are what they call protests, and when they seize weapons from security services – this is also a protest for them..." said human rights activist Aziza Abdirasulova...

The New Russian Military Doctrine: A View from Central Asia

“Changes ‘in the first place touch on new threats to Russia, which appeared in Ukraine as well as events in North Africa, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.’”

OE Watch Commentary: *The late December announcement of Russia’s new military doctrine received a fair amount of attention in Western media, but limited attention in Central Asia. The accompanying article from Tengri News in Kazakhstan is one of only a few examples of the kind of attention the new doctrine received across the region. This article and the few others like it provided a basic explanation of the new doctrine without going into any analysis of it. One less widely known source in Kazakhstan published an article (see: <http://www.kz-rus.kz/news/item/139-novaya-voennaya-doktrina-rossii.html>) that gave some analysis on the doctrine, but the article has no author listed. While few in Central Asia are commenting on Russia’s new military doctrine, there are a few things to consider that might not be stated.*



“Members of Kazakhstan’s Armed Forces and Ministry of Emergency Situations participate in ‘Zhetisu-2009’, a NATO supported exercise outside Almaty, Kazakhstan. NATO backed exercises involving Central Asian forces have often focused on peacekeeping or disaster response scenarios.” Source: <http://www.himgorodok.ru/?p=1420>

It is well known that Central Asian governments have a good (or at least fair) relationship with Russia, particularly in the defense and security sectors, and this is not likely to change. This does not mean that the new doctrine will change these governments’ view about NATO. They have been cautious about the situation in Ukraine, but they do see events in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria as threats in the same way as the new Russian doctrine. If anything, Central Asian states have been working with NATO at various levels of cooperation through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Kazakhstan has been the most involved with NATO on the development of its peacekeeping brigade, KAZBRIG. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have expressed interest in having their own peacekeeping units and have participated in the annual Steppe Eagle joint peacekeeping exercise, which NATO supports. Additionally, in 2013 Uzbekistan agreed to host the NATO office that coordinates activities with all of Central Asia. This office holds diplomatic accreditation within the country.

While Russia’s new military doctrine views NATO as a threat, Central Asian governments’ past participation with NATO has not interfered with their involvement in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The CSTO charter states that members cannot participate in another security organization that conflicts with its own interests. It is possible that the new Russian military doctrine will affect or change this clause, but unless Russia puts pressure on Central Asian CSTO members to stop working with NATO PfP, these activities are likely to continue. Additionally, there were a few concerns in Central Asia that membership in the CSTO would get them involved in the event of a conflict between Ukraine and Russia through the clause of collective defense against an external enemy, but it does not appear that this will happen.

Overall, the lack of attention from Central Asia on the new Russian military doctrine might be an indication that they do not believe it will change their relations with Russia or NATO. End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)

Source: “Путин утвердил новую военную доктрину России” (Putin approved the new Russian military doctrine), Tengri News, 26 December 2014. <http://tengrinews.kz/russia/putin-utverdil-novuyu-voennuyu-doktrinu-rossii-267498/>

Putin Approved the New Russian Military Doctrine

The official website of the Kremlin reported that on December 26 Russian President Vladimir Putin approved a new military doctrine...Changes have been made in connection with the “changing nature of military threats and challenges in the area of security and defense...” Changes “in the first place touch on new threats to Russia, which appeared in Ukraine as well as events in North Africa, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.”

The Russian Security Council discussed “indirect action has become typical in the struggle against the leading nations of the world for their own interests... the use of civilian protest...the buildup of NATO’s offensive capabilities near the Russian border...”

...The new military doctrine reserves Russia the right to respond to military force with nuclear weapons...Putin emphasized that, despite the increase in NATO activity in Eastern Europe, Russian military doctrine remains defensive.

Additional German Weapons Exports to Iraq – the Stronger IS, the Greater the Threat

“The point is to break the myth of the invincibility of IS.” (direct quote German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen)”

OE Watch Commentary: On 11-12 January 2015 German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen visited Iraq and met with Iraqi President Fuad Masum in Baghdad and Kurdish leader Masoud Barsani in Erbil. The visit took place on the background of a planned training mission of 100 German military advisors that still needs to be approved by the German Bundestag. Articles covering the visit to Iraq by von der Leyen highlight Germany’s continuing support of the Peshmerga fighters, as well as domestic political debates surrounding the weapons delivery and training mission. Coming in the aftermath of the attacks in Paris, the German defense minister’s statements made during the visit highlight the direct association between Islamic State in Iraq and threats of attacks in Germany.

Germany has already supplied 10,000 Peshmerga fighters with weapons worth 70 million Euro for their fight against the Islamic State. Among the weapons delivered were 16,000 assault rifles and 10,000 hand grenades, as well as antitank missiles and armored vehicles.

The Peshmerga have praised the German systems and Barsani has asked Germany for additional, especially modern, weapons. He particularly lauded the Type Milan antitank missiles that the German Army has delivered to the Peshmerga militia.

Von der Leyen is still evaluating the request, and negotiations of experts from both sides are ongoing. After a meeting with Barsani in Erbil, she said that “we will listen very carefully to what the Peshmerga need.” According to her, the German government puts great importance on evaluating how the deliveries can achieve the sustainable effect that both sides desire.

Meanwhile, the support of the Peshmerga through weapons deliveries remains politically highly contested because, as observers claim, it violates Germany’s hitherto existing basic principle not to deliver weapons into areas of conflict; for a long time the only exception has been for Israel. While the 100 German military instructors should arrive within the next few weeks in Erbil (Iraq), Germany, however, does not want to participate in the coalition’s air strikes against the terrorist militia. **End OE Watch Commentary (Chadwick)**

Source: “Mehr Gewehre für die Kurden? Deutschland prüft neue Waffenexporte in den Irak,” Frankfurter Allgemeine, 11 January 2015. <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/mehr-gewehre-fuer-die-kurden-deutschland-prueft-neue-waffenexporte-in-den-irak-13364655.html>

“Von der Leyen said, the attacks in Paris demonstrated, ‘that ... the fight against terror unites us all.’”

Source: “Von der Leyen: Je stärker der IS, desto grösser die Bedrohung für uns,“ Frankfurter Allgemeine, 11 January 2015. <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/naher-osten/von-der-leyen-kampf-gegen-is-auch-wegen-anschlagsgefahr-in-deutschland-13363833.html>

“‘The longer IS remains strong and attractive, the more the threat for us at home increases’ said the Christian Democratic politician on her trip to Iraq.”

“One cannot evade this by saying we are staying out of it” (direct quote German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen)



(Left) Ursula von der Leyen and (Right) Babaker Zebari.
Source: <https://www.wikipedia.org/>, commons.wikimedia.org/

Ukraine's 'CyberBerkut': Emerging player in Anti-Western Information War

7 January 2015

“This war has already taken thousands of lives, and Yatsenyuk will kill more for your money!”

- CyberBerkut

OE Watch Commentary: *The organization known as CyberBerkut has received attention lately for its apparent successes hacking into European and possibly American computer systems. The group uses “Berkut” in reference to the brutal and controversial specialized police force used against EuroMaidan protestors in Kyiv. The group’s website claims responsibility for the recent hacks into Germany’s state systems, to include that of Chancellor Merkel. The claims add another dimension to the complications and threats that NATO member-countries must consider and counter when addressing the Ukrainian situation. End OE Watch Commentary (Harvey)*

Source: “Hackers Claim To Down Merkel and Parliament Website”, Bonn DW, Richard Connor 7 January 2015, www.dw-world.de

Experts have been investigating after the website of the German lower house of parliament was brought down, apparently by hackers. Chancellor Angela Merkel’s own Internet site was also reported to have been hit.

The Internet sites of both Chancellor Angela Merkel and the Bundestag were both out of action on Wednesday morning (7 January), with a pro-Russian hacking group claiming responsibility.

The websites of Germany’s lower house, the Bundestag (www.bundestag.de), and Merkel’s official chancellery (www.bundeskanzlerin.de) both failed to load, with the group CyberBerkut claiming to have carried out the attack in connection with a visit to Berlin by Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk.

CyberBerkut said Yatsenyuk was in Berlin to borrow money to finance the military campaign against pro-Russians in the east of Ukraine.

“Yatsenyuk needs money to extend the war and not to restore collapsed infrastructure of our country. This war has already taken thousands of lives, and Yatsenyuk will kill more for your money!” a message on CyberBerkut’s website read.

Berkut is the name given to the special forces loyal to Ukraine’s Russian-leaning former President Viktor Yanukovych, accused of killing nearly 100 Ukrainian civilians in unrest before the president was deposed

The group said Yatsenyuk hoped to gain financial help from the EU and IMF “to extend the war and not to restore (the) collapsed infrastructure of our country”.

Source: CyberBerkut web-site (not provided)

CyberBerkut blocked the work sites Chancellor of Germany and the German Bundestag

Translation

The Ukrainian government intends to revise the state budget for 2015 no later than 15 February and Prime Minister Yatsenyuk hopes to receive several millions of dollars worth of credit (loans) from the EU and IMF. It is easy to assume what the money will be spent on. Yatsenyuk need funds to continue the war, and not to rebuild the destroyed infrastructure of our country. This war has claimed thousands of lives, and Yatsenyuk wants for your money to kill thousands more.

In this regard, we appeal to the people and Government of Germany to cease financial and political support of the criminal Kiev regime that unleashed a bloody civil war.

We CyberBerkut! We will not forget! We do not forgive!

Ukrainian Police Conduct Operations with Local Citizens, a Growing Trend

“The command of the Uzhgorod police is grateful for the active cooperation of the public.”

- Uzhgorod City Government

OE Watch Commentary: *As Ukraine struggles to reestablish itself as a state, the national problems of funding, manpower, and organization trickle down to the town and village levels. Recently, local police have joined with citizens to conduct tandem patrols and inspections on Ukraine’s increasingly dangerous roads. This mirrors a similar situation seen in February 2014: Immediately after President Yanukovich was ousted, Kyiv’s ring road began to be monitored by the State Auto Inspection Police (DAI), along with the EuroMaidan Self-Defense Force. This tandem operation served as a check-and-balance against corrupt practices, as well as an attempt to reinvent the DAI as a non-corrupt, protective force.*

In the town of Uzhgorod in western Ukraine, local volunteers supplement the police force and DAI by assisting with patrols and inspections. The same civilian/police operations were re-established in Lviv on 28 January. Lviv’s joint patrols first appeared in mid February 2014 after nearly 100 people were killed in Kyiv’s Euro-Maidan square. At that time, the patrols were to safeguard against violence and vandalism associated with any of the political movements of the time. Now, the patrols are simply to supplement a local police force in an unstable Ukraine. This is likely to be a growing trend as criminal activity is increasing on Ukraine’s road systems in the west and the majority of military and border guard personnel is focused in the eastern conflict with rebel forces.

End OE Watch Commentary (Harvey)

Source: Ukrainian Ministry of the Interior website, <http://mvs.gov.ua/mvs/control/main/uk/publish/article/1306377;jsessionid=67A3E8E589B7A77EF59F7602094B4F33>

Uzhgorod police conduct joint patrols with the public

Uzhgorod police continue the practice of joint monitoring of the city. The goal is the prevention and suppression of offenses and crimes in the territory of Uzhgorod.

Ensuring proper law and order in the city, as well as the security and peace of residents and visitors – are the main priorities of Uzhgorod police. The operations police are working with the public in order to realize this goal.

The streets of Uzhgorod’s public center are patrolled by police, the Federal Auto Inspection Police (DAI) and representatives of the community. Every evening the police officers and representatives of community groups carry out instructions before patrols to in Uzhgorod. At this time the routes are defined, and duty patrol explains how to deal with the detection of any violations, investigation procedures and they emphasize the use of applicable law. Both foot and vehicle patrols are conducted in the city’s public center and streets nightly. Their main task is to prevent offenses and promptly respond to the calls of citizens. The highways are also under observation but by the DAI. The command of the Uzhgorod police is grateful for the active cooperation of the public.

Source: Interfax – Ukraine Information Agency, 29 JAN 2015, <http://ua.interfax.com.ua/news/general/247646.html>

Lviv to renew public patrolling of the streets - City Council

The press service of the Lviv City Council announced that Lviv local authorities are inviting residents to patrol public streets. As stated in a report, the patrol will involve city residents and members of community groups together with law enforcement officials.

“Today, the country is an extremely difficult situation ... We understand that the enemy will use other methods of war, such as terror and sabotage. We need to be as prepared. Therefore, we are restoring the active phase of civil patrols, which will involve the Municipality of Lviv and many NGOs “- Lviv Mayor, Andrei Sadovo

The City Council stated that patrols are organized by foot, bicycle, and by car. Those wishing to participate in the patrols contact the City Security Center and leave their contact information.

According to the Lviv region’s Interior Ministry, due to the introduction of a high alert status, police patrols in the region’s cities almost doubled. Police also took into control of strategic facilities and infrastructure.

Residents were patrolling the city after the events of 18-20 February 2014 when, in protest of the shooting of demonstrators in the square in Kiev, people stormed the buildings of the Lviv Ministry of the Interior, the Internal Troops, state prosecutors, and the Security Bureau of Ukraine, paralyzing law enforcement for a few days.

Bosnia-Montenegro Continue to Lack Finalized Border

14 January 2014

“Montenegrin authorities expressed their deep concern . . . saying that it could put the border agreement in jeopardy.”

OE Watch Commentary: Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) have yet to formally finalize their shared border. Nevertheless, the two countries have maintained a relatively stable relationship since the dissolution of Yugoslavia. BiH received its independence in 1992 and Montenegro in 2006.

In May 2014 both countries sent the technical agreement demarcating their border to their parliaments, and both were reportedly ready to ratify the deal. Had they done so, they would be the first two former-Yugoslav countries to completely resolve their borders. Questions regarding property near the Bay of Kotor, however, have halted the process. Since BiH is mostly landlocked, some in the government seek further Adriatic access, claiming former ownership of the Bay. If Montenegro and BiH are able to resolve their lingering border disputes, they may be able to reach an unprecedented level of border recognition and stability. **End OE Watch Commentary (Jackson)**

Source: “Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina Face Border Dispute,” Independent, 14 January 2015. <http://www.independent.mk/articles/13324/Montenegro,+Bosnia+and+Herzegovina+Face+Border+Dispute>

“Bosnian Parliament is scheduled to debate on Thursday the resolution calling on the Government to turn back the proposed agreement to determine the border between Bosnia and Montenegro. Representative Denis Bekirovik, who proposed the resolution, believes that it is unacceptable for Bosnia to accept that Montenegro gets to keep part of the strategically important Bay of Kotor, close to the city of Herceg Novi.

...Bosnia is landlocked, except for the port city of Neum. But, the Sutorina river valley and the town of Igalo, which some of its politicians now claim, would give it a second access point to the Adriatic Sea.

...Montenegrin authorities expressed their deep concern about the initiative in Sarajevo, saying that it could put the border agreement in jeopardy.”

Public Perception of the Sea Breeze Exercises and Ukraine's Prospects in the Black Sea Region

By Alisa Moldavanova

This paper focuses on the changing Ukrainian public perceptions of Sea Breeze. By closely examining six Ukrainian regional and national newspapers from 2001 until 2013, this study uncovers several underlying themes that explain varying public support and resistance to these exercises. The results suggest that Ukrainian public opinion is not uniform, and emphasize the importance in keeping these regional differences in mind when conducting a public information campaign regarding the Euro-Atlantic prospects of Ukraine.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/international/Ukraine/Sea-Breeze-exercise.pdf>

So What is New About Russia's 2014 Military Doctrine?

26 December 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *Russia's efforts to revise its military doctrine finally bore fruit in December 2014. Russia's 2014 Military Doctrine can directly be attributed to the work of General Valeri Gerasimov, Chief of the Russian General Staff. In the Russian system the Chief of the General Staff is the primary proponent of military doctrine, but this doctrine also provides guidance for Russia's militarized internal security services and intelligence services, such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) and Federal Security Service (FSB). This means that military doctrine in the Russian system has a greater impact than military doctrines in most other countries, which generally concerns only the Ministry of Defense/Department of Defense.*

*Gerasimov alluded to the changes that would be made in 2014 Military Doctrine in an article he published on 26 February 2013, in *Voyenno-Promyshlenny Kuryer* [Military-Industrial Courier], "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying out Combat Operations." In the article he discusses a new theory of war that blends military and nonmilitary methods. In his view this theory was developed by observations of the West's (primarily U.S. and British) new way of conducting war, one that is predominately nonmilitary in nature by a factor of 4:1. Instead of overt military invasions, as in the First and Second World Wars, attacks are now instigated by the installment of political opposition through state propaganda, which in the Russian view would include major media, the internet/social media, and NGOs. Then, as the government struggles to maintain order, economic and political sanctions are imposed by the West to tie the hands of the aggrieved governments and promote further dissent. The theory goes on to describe a deteriorating situation wherein separatist movements can be stoked and strengthened, and private military forces (defense contractors) can be introduced to battle the government and cause further havoc. Eventually, as the government collapses and anarchy results, military forces, under the guise of peacekeepers, can be brought in to manage the area, if desired. This new theory of warfare is derived from Russian observations of*

Source: "Russia's New Military Doctrine Lists NATO, US as Major Foreign Threats," RT Online, 26 December 2014, <http://rt.com/news/217823-putin-russian-military-doctrine/>, accessed 10 January 2015.

Source: 2014 Russian Military Doctrine, <http://news.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d527556bec8deb3530.pdf>

Russia's new military doctrine lists NATO, US as major foreign threats

Russia has adopted an updated version of its military doctrine, which reflects the emergence of new threats against its national security. NATO military buildup and American Prompt Global Strike concept are listed among them.

The new doctrine was approved on Friday by President Vladimir Putin. Its core remains unchanged from the previous version. The Russian military remains a defensive tool which the country pledges to use only as a last resort.

Also unchanged are the principles of the use of nuclear weapons which Russia adheres to. Their primary goal is to deter potential enemies from attacking Russia, but it would use them to protect itself from a military attack – either nuclear or conventional – threatening its existence.

The new sections of the doctrine outline the threat Russia sees in NATO's expansion and military buildup and the fact that the alliance is taking upon itself "global functions realized with violation of international law."

The doctrine lists among major foreign military threats "the creation and deployment of global strategic antiballistic missile systems that undermines the established global stability and balance of power in nuclear missile capabilities, the implementation of the 'prompt strike' concept, intent to deploy weapons in space and deployment of strategic conventional precision weapons."

Another new point in the doctrine is that one of the Russian military's goals is to protect national interests in the Arctic region.

The document also points to the threat of destabilization countries bordering Russia or its allies and deployment of foreign troops such nations as a threat to national security.

Domestically, Russia faces threats of "actions aimed at violent change of the Russian constitutional order, destabilization of the political and social environment, disorganization of the functioning of governmental bodies, crucial civilian and military facilities and informational infrastructure of Russia," the doctrine says.

Moscow sees international cooperation with countries sharing its effort to increase security, particularly members of BRICS, the OSCE, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and others as the key to preventing military conflicts, the doctrine states.

Traditional threats that Russia must deal with mentioned in the doctrine include extremism and terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and rocket technology and actions of foreign intelligence services.

The document notes that modern threats are increasingly drifting from a military nature to informational, and states that the likelihood of anyone launching a fully-fledged war against Russia is decreasing.

(continued)

Continued: So What is New About Russia's 2014 Military Doctrine?

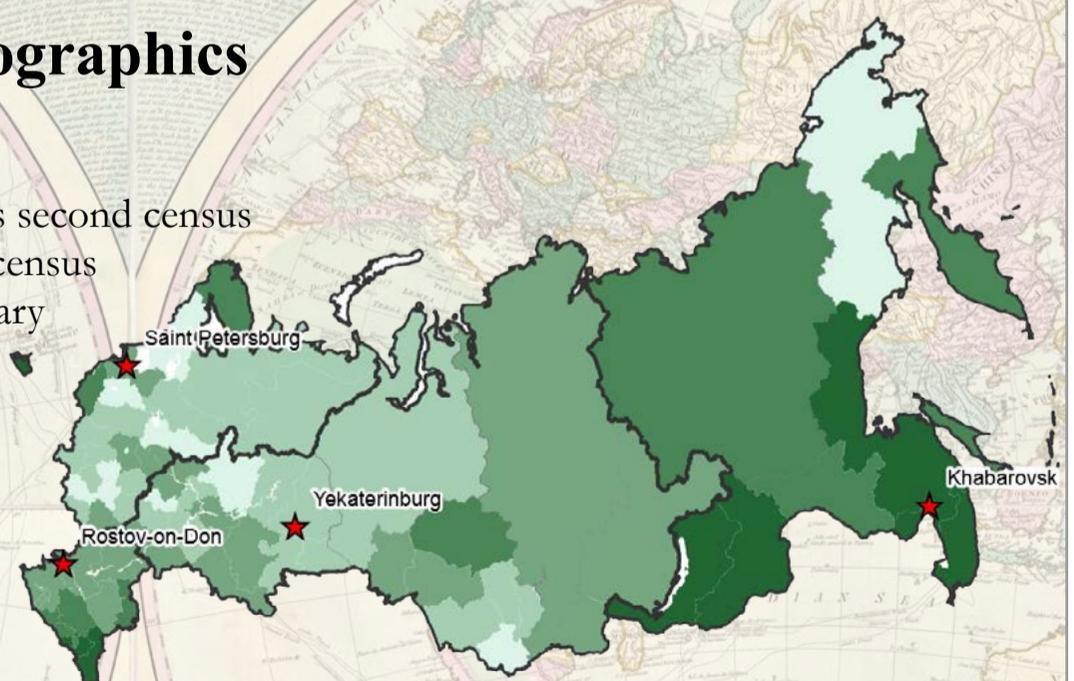
Kosovo, the “color revolutions” and the Arab Spring. Although at the time of the article’s publication Gerasimov could in no way have known of the chain of events leading to the Crimea invasion, it is no surprise that he adopted similar tactics for it.

*The biggest change in Russia’s military doctrine is that it is deemphasizing nuclear deterrence and emphasizing strengthening nonmilitary and conventional military capabilities. Given Gerasimov’s findings, this is no surprise. For the first time Russia’s 2014 Military Doctrine officially acknowledges that the greatest threat of regime change comes not from overt military invasion, but from a “color revolution” or Arab-spring-like scenario. Although nuclear deterrence capabilities are still necessary, primacy will now shift to developing nonmilitary and military capabilities to counter the more likely threat. On the offensive side of the coin, these very same capabilities will be equally valuable for waging war on the same footing as the West. In sum, Russia’s military doctrine is not a revolution in Russian thought; it is more a reaction to their interpretation of the West’s tactics and capabilities, with a Russian flare. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Russian Conscription Demographics

By Charles K. Bartles, FMSO

In 2010, the Russian Federation conducted its second census since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The census included a wealth of data about Russia’s military demographics. Using the census data, this monograph makes a number of important estimates regarding Russia’s future demographics.



<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Russian%20Conscription%20Demographics/Russian-Conscription-Demographics.html>

Russia's Expansion of NBC Units as an Indicator of Expected Urban Warfare

OE Watch Commentary: *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. Although the term "flame" is used, in practice these weapons are rocket-propelled thermobaric grenades. Thermobaric weapons are almost completely fuel and work by creating a fuel-filled aerosol cloud of either volatile gases, liquids, or finely powdered explosives. This cloud is then ignited at the center of the cloud; the ignition of the cloud draws oxygen out of the surrounding area to cause a powerful burn. Although a thermobaric weapon produces a powerful burn in relation to a similarly sized charge of high explosives, the primary cause of damage is the vacuum created by the sucking of the oxygen out of the area and the overpressure caused from the blast. Due to the innate properties of thermobarics, they are best employed in enclosed or semi-enclosed environments, such as subterranean areas, in buildings, urban areas, and in the mountains.*

Russian NBC units field shoulder-fired and vehicle-mounted thermobaric weapon systems. The rocket-propelled infantry flamethrower (RPO), colloquially known as the shmel, is a family of multiuse shoulder-fired devices that fire expendable rocket-assisted thermobaric projectiles. The newest addition to the family is the MRO Borodach, (small-caliber infantry flamethrower), which was fielded in 2013 and has reportedly seen service in Eastern Ukraine. The Borodach is not replacing the Shmel-M, but instead is likely to be a special version of the RPO family designed for urban warfare. The heavy flamethrower system (TOS-1), colloquially known as the Burantino, consists of a combat (launch) vehicle (BM-1) equipped with 30 220mm rocket tubes mounted on top of a T-72 tank chassis and a transport-loader vehicle (TZM-T), also on a T-72 chassis, which carries an additional set of rockets and a loading boom (the TOS-1A Solntsepek is the current model being fielded).

Source: "NBC Defense Troops Boost Presence in Western Russia," Interfax-AVN Online, 17 December 2014, <<http://www.militarynews.ru>>, accessed 10 January 2015.

NBC Defense Troops Boost Presence in Western Russia

A separate radiation, chemical and biological defense regiment has joined the Guards Combined Arms Large Strategic Formation of the Western Military District based at Nizhniy Novgorod garrison...

"The newly-formed regiment has incorporated radiation, chemical and biological reconnaissance, decontamination, aerosol screening and flame-throwing units," the Western Military District was quoted saying.

The new regiment has "more than 200 pieces of arms, vehicles and special-purpose hardware", including mobile AL-4M laboratories, BAG aerosol screening vehicles, ARS-14KM hardware decontamination vehicles, TOS-1A Solntsepek flamethrowers and the Shmel-M infantry flamethrowers, Interfax-AVN said.

"For the first time, a Western Military District combined arms large strategic formation has a regiment capable of implementing an entire set of tasks of the Radiation, Chemical and Biological Defense Troops without involving additional forces and means," the Western Military District said.



Shmel (Rocket Flame Thrower)

Source: [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Шмель_\(огнемёт\)#mediaviewer/File:RPO-A_missile_and_launcher.jpg](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Шмель_(огнемёт)#mediaviewer/File:RPO-A_missile_and_launcher.jpg)

(continued)

Continued: Russia's Expansion of NBC Units as an Indicator of Expected Urban Warfare

*From a Russian military perspective, flamethrowers are seen not as weapons simply to be handed out to the rank-and-file for any ad-hoc use, but instead as a mature weapon system that fills specific capability gaps in the Russian Armed Forces force structure. While maneuver units do have limited flamethrower assets in their NBC defense units, all heavy flamethrowers and flamethrower battalions reside in NBC defense regiments and brigades. At a time when other armies are reevaluating the role of NBC troops in their militaries, the Russian NBC troops' monopoly on flame and its usefulness for urban and mountain warfare, bunker busting, and clearing light infantry have required the expansion of NBC troops in the Russian military, with the creation or reconstitution of at least four NBC defense regiments in 2014, as the accompanying articles discuss. As Russia experiments with new forms and methods of war, or "hybrid war" as defined in the West, in Eastern Ukraine, urban warfare will likely continue to be a high priority for development, and so will Russia's flame-wielding NBC defense troops. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Source: "Two New NBC Defense Regiments in the Southern Military District by the End of the Year," Voenno-Promyshlenny Kuryer Online, 25 September 2014, <http://vpk.name/news/118214_do_konca_goda_v_sostav_voisk_yuvo_voidut_dva_novyih_polka_rhbz.html>, accessed 10 January 2015.

Two New NBC Defense Regiments in the Southern Military District by the End of the Year

Two new regiments of the Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) Defense Troops will be activated in Volgograd Oblast and the Republic of Ingushetia in Southern Military District before the end of the year. In terms of capabilities they will be able to fully meet the needs of formations and military units of the district's two combined-arms armies...

Flamethrower subunits will receive the TOS-1A Solntsepek systems and the Shmel-M modernized flamethrowers with increased range and power.

A new separate regiment of the NBC Defense Troops supporting Black Sea Fleet already was activated in Sevastopol in the first half of this year and began performing its intended missions as of 1 June.

The three new NBC Defense regiments will be ceremoniously presented with Colors of the new model in accordance with military rituals before the end of this year.



TOS-1A
Source: <http://goo.gl/L5Hazf>

Russia Diversifies Nuclear Deterrence with Rail-Based ICBM

OE Watch Commentary: *Russia appears to be proceeding with plans to field a rail-based ICBM. The missile trains will be operated by the Strategic Rocket Forces (RVSN) and will reportedly carry six Yars ICBMs, each capable of carrying ten multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs). Each train carries approximately the same amount of firepower as a RVSN mobile or silo-based strategic missile regiment, and a rail-based strategic missile division will consist of five missile trains.*

This is not Russia's first experience with rail-based ICBMs. The Soviet Union started using them in 1985, and had three rail-based strategic missile divisions (12 trains each, with three Molodets ICBMs) in Kostroma, Perm, and Krasnoyarsk. The Russian Federation eventually decided to scrap the program in 1993 due to the START II treaty, but even after its withdrawal from the treaty in 2002, it destroyed all of its rail-based ICBMs from 2003-2007, except for two demilitarized pieces that are in static displays in Russian museums.

The return to rail-based ICBMs is somewhat of a surprise, considering the problems experienced with the first iteration of the program. In theory, the missile trains were supposed to be dispersed throughout the country, hiding in plain sight among the ordinary freight and passenger trains. In practice, it proved much different. The rail cars were extremely heavy and caused damage to the tracks as they passed. The situation was so severe that the primary opposition to the rail-based missiles was not the U.S., but the Russian civil rail authority, which complained mightily over the costs. In addition, due to technical limitations of the Soviet-era missiles, there were additional logistics required along the trains' routes to support any launches. By the time the program concluded in 1994, the trains had only left their basing areas on just 18 occasions, traveling 400,000 km.

Source: Yuriy Gavrilov, "Missile Being Placed on Rails: Russia Building Rail-Based Nuclear System," Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online, 17 December 2014, <<http://www.rg.ru/2014/12/16/kompleks-site.html>>, accessed 17 December 2014.

Missile Being Placed on Rails: Russia Building Rail-Based Nuclear System

On the instructions of the president of the Russian Federation, the Russian defense sector is building a new rail-based missile system, Barguzin, and developing a heavy nuclear weapon platform that will replace the celebrated Satan missile. This was announced Tuesday by Sergey Karakayev, commander of the Strategic Missile Troops

In its 15 December issue this newspaper discussed in detail the advantages of a "missile on rails." And now Karakayev has confirmed: Such a system will indeed be making its appearance in the Russian army's inventory. And it will be 100-percent the brainchild of our indigenous military-industry complex. Work on it is currently at the planning and design stage, with the creation of facilities for testing the Barguzin under way simultaneously. In the process, the designers are taking into account the experience of operating the rail-based system incorporating the Molodets missile, which in its time struck terror into NATO's generals

"Of course, the resurrection of a system such as this will definitely take into account all the latest developments in the combat missile field," the RVSN commander declared. "The Barguzin will considerably surpass its predecessor in terms of the missile's accuracy and range and in other characteristics, which will enable it to remain on the Strategic Missile Troops' combat strength for a lengthy period, at least until 2040. In this way, the RVSN are recreating the nuclear missile grouping with three basing modes -- silo-housed, mobile, and rail-based -- which had demonstrated its high degree of effectiveness during the years of Soviet power...



RT-23 Molodets (NATO reporting name SS-24 Scalpel)
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RT-23_Molodets

(continued)

Continued: Russia Diversifies Nuclear Deterrence with Rail-Based ICBM

*Undoubtedly, many of the technical problems of the old rail-based system will be corrected in the new system simply by using the Yars ICBM. Yet, it still seems odd that Russia is developing rail-based ICBM technologies when it already has a competent silo and mobile land-based strategic nuclear capability. If Russia's financial situation continues to deteriorate and the Armed Forces are required to make some concessions, this program could well be one of the first added to the chopping block. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Source: Dmitriy Litovkin, "Rail-Based Missiles Will Be Recreated to a New Standard," Vzglyad Online, 15 Dec 2014, < <http://www.vz.ru/society/2014/12/15/720480.html>>, accessed 5 January 2015.

Rail-Based Missiles Will Be Recreated to a New Standard

In the very near future Russia will be returning to alert-duty status one of the most important elements of its nuclear potential -- rail-mobile missile systems (BZhRK). These missiles, which are unique in world practice, will be free of the deficiencies that in the Soviet era prevented the effectiveness of such systems being fully realized...

Earlier, sources in the defense industry complex were also announcing the resumption of the project and the new missile trains, which may make their appearance as early as 2019. In other words, official confirmation of Russia's plans to reconstitute these missiles -- which were entirely removed from the RVSN's combat strength back in 1994 -- has been obtained for the first time...

No comment is forthcoming from the Strategic Missile Troops concerning the precise missile that will form the basis of the rail-based missile system. Industry is also silent on this score. Experts believe, however, and not without grounds, that it will indeed be the Yars. Indicative of this is the fact that today this is the missile that is of the greatest interest in terms of placement inside a "railcar."

According to open-source data, the RS-24 Yars is 23 meters in length, and its transporter-launch container weighs no more than 50 tonnes. The standard railcar is 25 meters long and has a carrying capacity of up to 60 tonnes. Which is to say that if the missile complex is mounted inside it there will be no "tell-tale" elements in the build. On top of that, while retaining the weight and size characteristics, the new Yars-equipped BZhRK, unlike its predecessor, will indeed be mobile. The designers will have the opportunity to increase the number of missiles per train from three to 10 and more, making the missile train's combat potential comparable with that of a strategic nuclear submarine...

Air Force and Aerospace Defense Troops May Be Combined 18 December 2014

OE Watch Commentary: According to a press report, the Russian Armed Forces will be undergoing a major organizational change in 2015. If reforms progress, as discussed in the accompanying article, the Aerospace Defense Troops and Russian Air Force will be placed under a new branch of service called the “Aerospace Forces.” In the Russian system the Aerospace Defense Troops are considered “troops,” roughly a lesser branch of the Armed Forces, and are responsible for strategic air defense and the operation of military space assets. The Air Force is considered a full branch of service, but has struggled in recent years to maintain operational control of its army aviation (ground attack aircraft and helicopters) and transport aviation from the Russian Ground Forces and Airborne Forces (VDV), which have long desired to integrate these capabilities as organic assets into their own organizations.

If actioned, the notoriously “land-centric” Russian Armed Forces will consist of three branches – the Aerospace Forces, the Ground Troops, and the Navy; and two types of troops—the Strategic Missile Troops (RVSN) and Airborne Troops (VDV). Although the benefits of putting an air force, strategic air defense, and space assets under a single unified command covering air and space are obvious, this reorganization also significantly weakens the position of the Air Force in the Ministry of Defense. This organizational demotion increases the probability that the Air Force could lose its ground aviation and some transport aviation assets, resulting in the Air Force being little more than a branch proponent with operational control of relatively few assets.

End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)

Source: Roman Kretsul, “The Aerospace Sphere Will Be One of the Arenas of the Fiercest Confrontation,” Vzglyad Online, 18 December 2014, <http://www.vz.ru/society/2014/12/18/721009.html>, accessed 5 January 2014.

The Aerospace Sphere Will Be One of the Arenas of the Fiercest Confrontation

Steps to merge the Air Force and Aerospace Defense Troops into a single branch of the Armed Forces will be conducted already next year. At least this is what the information agencies’ sources are saying... A TASS source reported that this branch of the Armed Forces will already appear next year through the merger of the Aerospace Defense Troops and the Air Force.

“As a result of the formation of the new branch of the Armed Forces – the VKS [Aerospace Forces] in 2015, through the inclusion in it at full strength of the Air Forces and the Aerospace Defense Troops, the Russian Armed Forces will consist of three branches – the Aerospace Forces, the Ground Troops, and the Navy – and two types of troops – the RVSN [Strategic Missile Troops] and the VDV [Airborne Troops]”, he said...

The source explained that the Air Force, the Air Defense and Missile Defense Forces, and the Space Troops will be subordinate to the Aerospace Forces commander-in-chief and his deputies will head all of these forces...

The Aerospace Forces Aviation will consist of all types of aviation of the current Air Force, including Army Aviation. However, Frontal and Army Aviation, except fighter aircraft, will be “purely nominally” part of the Aerospace Forces, the source reported, but it will actually be employed in accordance with the military district commanders’ plans...



Emblem of the Aerospace Defence Forces
Source: <http://goo.gl/0gtBy1>

Source: Yuriy Gavrilov, “Aviation and Space Troops may Unite in New Branch of Armed Forces: Checking the Rumor,” Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online, 11 December 2014, <http://www.rg.ru/2014/12/10/armiya-vks-site.html>, accessed 5 January 2014.

Aviation and Space Troops may Unite in New Branch of Armed Forces: Checking the Rumor

SA sensational report appeared on the news wires on Wednesday. It was reported that very soon the Air Force (VVS) will lose its status as a branch of the Armed Forces, and its place in the ranks will be taken by the Aerospace Forces (VKS). Apparently there are plans to include Air Defense units and formations and combat aviation in the Aerospace Forces, as well as information assets and strike forces assets.

“Thus, there will be three main high commands in the Armed Forces: the Ground Troops, the Navy and the Aerospace Forces,” a source in the Ministry of Defense stated to

(continued)

Continued: Air Force and Aerospace Defense Troops May Be Combined

Interfaks-AVN. He included as structural elements of the Aerospace Forces the intelligence system and the aerospace attack warning system, the system for attacking and suppressing the forces and assets of enemy aerospace attack, and the unified system for command and control and the comprehensive support system. The Commander of the Central Military District, Colonel-General Vladimir Zarudnitskiy, has been named as most likely candidate for the position of commander in chief...

The largest question is generated by the new role to be assigned to the Air Force. Air Force Commander in Chief Viktor Bondarev recently stated that the defense against strikes from the air and from orbit will be integrated, and to solve this task strike aviation is ready to participate with air defense assets. "The contemporary views of the use of fighter aviation assume its use not only for winning air superiority, but also for combatting attack assets in near space," emphasized the general...

Of course, this does not mean that the Air Force may entirely switch over to countering missiles flying from orbit. Air combat, providing air cover for one's own troops, and the destruction of enemy ground facilities will probably remain the most important functions of military aviation. Only, evidently, the Air Force will be fulfilling them in a different capacity.

Russia's Strategic Mobility

Supporting 'Hard Power' to 2020?

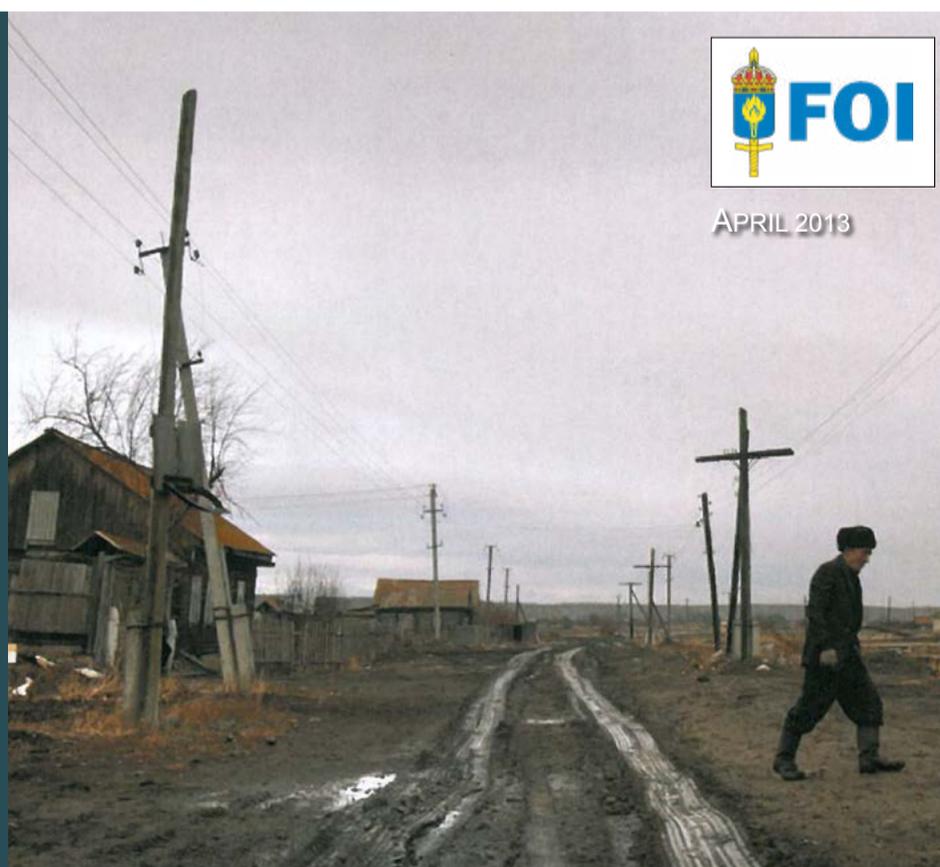
By Roger N. McDermott

http://www.foi.se/ReportFiles/foir_3587.pdf

Roger N. McDermott's *Russia's Strategic Mobility: Supporting 'Hard Power' to 2020?* examines the rapidly changing Russian military's strategic capabilities for logistics, combat service support, and force projection. McDermott's work for The Russia Studies Programme of the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) sheds light on the unglamorous, but vitally important logistic backbone upon which the Russian military relies. Roger N. McDermott is a Senior International Fellow for the Foreign Military Studies Office.



APRIL 2013



OE Watch Commentary: *In the Tsarist era the title “governor-general” was the highest rank in provincial government administration, wielding both civilian and military authority. The Soviets abolished this position after the Bolshevik revolution and rigidly separated civilian and military powers. Despite Russia’s “New Look” reforms, which have been described as the greatest Russian military reforms in 100 years, civil-military relations have remained rather static, maintaining the status quo of a clear divide between civil and military authority. As the accompanying article discusses, this may be beginning to change.*

The Vostok-2014 military exercise held in September was the largest in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union. It involved 100,000 servicemen 1,500 tanks, 120 aircraft, 5,000 pieces of equipment, and 70 ships and was held on the territory of 13 federal subjects (provinces). It also introduced a new entity called a “territorial-defense battalion,” staffed by activated reservists, an idea likely borrowed from Eastern European neighbors that have similar formations. This was a change from the traditional manner that reservists have been used in the Soviet/Russian system: reservists were mainly used to backfill positions in active duty units, and never formed their own stand-alone formations.

*The accompanying article discusses how civil authorities will now be given some military responsibilities regarding civil defense and mobilization. Although in no way will civil authorities regain the same powers they had in the Tsarist era, it does show that Russia is experimenting with new ways of providing security. The consolidation of civil-military responsibilities and introduction of new military formations such as territorial-defense battalions is a sign that Russia sees threats that can solely be countered from the actions of a General Staff, such as overt military invasion, as less likely. In the Russian view, the most likely threats to the Russian Federation will be from “asymmetric and indirect methods,” such as “color revolutions” and “Arab Springs.” In order to counter these threats, Russia will require means that better integrate civil and military responses to them. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Source: Vladimir Mukhin, “Is Russia To Be Divided Into Governorships-General?” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta Online*, 22 December 2014, http://www.ng.ru/armies/2014-12-22/3_kartblansh.html, accessed 10 January 2014.

Is Russia To Be Divided Into Governorships-General?”

Leaders of federation components [provinces] have been charged with responsibility for mobilization and for combating saboteurs. The leadership of the Russian Federation is continuing to strengthen the country’s defense capability. Aside from formulation of the Defense Plan for 2016-2020, next year the country will see broader powers and responsibilities in this sphere given to the heads of the regions. These were the objectives set for the military department, the Security Council, and the government by President Vladimir Putin at a meeting Friday of the enlarged Defense Ministry Board.

“I have in mind the need to increase the responsibility of the leaders of the Russian Federation’s regions both for mobilization readiness and for so-called territorial defense,” the president emphasized. In this way the head of state supported Minister of Defense Sergey Shoygu, who has announced a new role for federal leaders in defense matters and expressed the idea of reviving “governorships general in Russia in the light of historical experience...”

A number of governors displayed unpreparedness for work in wartime conditions [during the Vostok-2014 Military Exercises]. Yet it is precisely the local leaders in the federation components who in such a period are answerable for switching the region’s economy from a peacetime to a wartime footing. In a number of places tactical instructions relating to mobilization training, and specifically the calling up of reservists, were only partially executed. At a recent meeting in Sochi devoted to defense problems Shoygu requested the president, either by personal edict or at the legislative level, to obligate the elected heads of regions and cities to undergo training at the General Staff Academy. This was to be two weeks of training “in mobilization readiness and command and control of the [federation] component at the moment of mobilization.”

“The regulatory legal framework for the organization of territorial defense is in need of an upgrade...Today, economic collapse and humanitarian catastrophe are becoming the aim of war waged against a strong state, and its entire territory is the battlefield...the new technology of modern warfare allows an aggressor to conduct combat operations whereby numerous Spetsnaz subunits and criminal gangs will act in conjunction with regular troops in accordance with a single scenario and plan.”

- Colonel Musa Khamzatov

“Today territorial defense is entrusted to diverse agencies and is in no way centralized. And in this sense too we need to raise the responsibility of the leaders of the Russian Federation’s components. I ask the Security Council to scrutinize these issues together with the government and with the relevant interested agencies and to submit its proposals on improving this regulatory legal framework.”

- Russian President Vladimir Putin

“If we don’t overtake America [UAV technology] in about five years, we will catch up with it for sure... Already now our industry is creating UAV’s conceding nothing to foremost models of foreign states in range and duration of flight, effectiveness of aerial reconnaissance, and performance of special missions.”

- Russian Federation Defense Ministry State Unmanned Aviation Center

OE Watch Commentary: *The Russian Federation has made the integration of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technologies into the Russian Armed Forces a high priority. The Russian Armed Forces appear to be interested in a variety of UAV technologies, ranging from smaller models, similar to the US “Raven,” to larger models, similar in size and purpose to the US “Predator.” Although Russian UAV technologies are not yet sufficiently developed for use as weapon platforms, they are finding uses in communications, intelligence, electronic warfare, reconnaissance, and artillery spotting. In the past Russian UAVs were foreign purchased and found in only in a few units of the Ministry of Defense. Today, Russia purchases most of its UAVs domestically, and they can be found in all branches of service (Ground Forces, Navy, Air Force) and troops (Airborne, Strategic Rocket Forces, Aerospace Defense) of the Ministry of Defense, and, as the accompanying articles discuss, in Russia’s other ministries that possess militarized security forces.*

2014 was a particularly good year for Russian UAV development. Russia added almost 200 UAVs to the inventory and activated 14 UAV companies, with plans that each of Russia’s motorized rifle brigades will gain a dedicated UAV company in the next few years. The Russian Ministry of Defense has announced plans to field its first UAV regiment and set up an inter-ministerial UAV training center.

*In general, Russia has made significant gains in UAV technologies, but is still lagging behind the West. The first Russian UAV capable of functioning, as a weapons platform is not expected to be fielded until at least 2020. Although Russia is currently lagging behind Western UAV technologies, it could well catch up if current plans to invest \$9.2 billion in the technology are followed through. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Source: “Russia To Set Up UAV Regiment In Crimea,” RIA Novosti Online, 14 January 2015, http://ria.ru/defense_safety/20150114/1042532956.html, accessed 17 January 2015.

Russia To Set Up UAV Regiment In Crimea

An unmanned aerial vehicle regiment is to be set up in 2015 as part of the Russian Black Sea Fleet’s naval aviation force...

“UAV are necessary to carry out reconnaissance on the coast and at sea. At present, only Orlan-10 UAV are in service. The plan is to use them together with the fleet’s naval aviation, including for monitoring and tracking NATO ships in the Black Sea,” he said...

Source: “Russian Defense Ministry Bought Nearly 200 Spy Drones in 2014,” Interfax Online, 12 January 2015, <http://www.militarynews.ru/>, accessed 17 January 2015.

Russian Defense Ministry bought nearly 200 spy drones in 2014

The number of unmanned flights in the Russian Armed Forces in 2014 has doubled in comparison with the previous year, while total flying time of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) has more than quadrupled, a spokesperson for the Russian Defense Ministry said.

“In 2014 we formed 14 UAV divisions and had 179 drones supplied to the troops,” the spokesperson told reporters.

The substantial increase in the flying time is due primarily to the active use of UAVs in virtually any event involving operational and combat training for efficient resolution of a broad range of issues under various conditions, the spokesman said.

“The main focus is on ensuring transmission of intelligence in real time to troop and weapon control and command posts,” he said...

Source: Aleksandr Stepanov, “Defense Ministry Began Centralized Training of Military Drone Operators,” Moskovskiy Komsomolets Online, 24 December 2014, <http://www.mk.ru/politics/2014/12/24/minoborony-nachalo-centralizovannuyu-podgotovku-operatorov-voennykh-dronov.html>, accessed 17 January 2015.

Defense Ministry Began Centralized Training of Military Drone Operators

The Russian Federation Defense Ministry State Unmanned Aviation Center (GTsBA) began operation in suburban Moscow’s Kolomna. This is the first and only institution in the country which trains specialists to work with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and tests advanced vehicles. Around 100 persons now are studying at the Center. Soon,

(continued)

Continued: Russian Armed Forces UAV Developments in 2014

however, specialists from other departments – Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), Federal Security Service (FSB), Ministry for Affairs of Emergency Situations (MChS) – will train with Defense Ministry servicemen.

The GTsBA has been established at facilities of the Interbranch Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Center, which traces its history from 1983. With the increase in numbers, capabilities, and scale of use of UAVs, questions come to the fore involving the training of qualified specialists for operating them; processing and transmitting data being received from their employment; and operational-technical compatibility of the complexes. That is why the idea arose to establish a single center for training such specialists...

In the near future it is planned to equip the Center with an automated information-teaching system and to establish Center affiliates in the military districts..."

The general training course depends on the type of UAV for which cadets are training. If these are short-range complexes such as Granat UAV's from the first to the fourth modification, Eleron, Zastava, and others, then training lasts 2.5 months, and they train around four months on medium-range complexes such as the Forpost UAV...

According to Center officers, Russia of course still lags in creating combat drones. While this direction was considered one of the priorities in the Soviet Union and we were one of the leaders of the direction, in the 1990's the sector fell into a pit which lasted around 20 years...

It is the most popular best selling Zala's UAV till now.

The unmanned complex based on the airplane UAV ZALA 421-08 is designed for remote land monitoring at the altitude 100-700 m (up to 3600 m above sea level), at the distance 40 km (Standard complex is arranged detailed for 10km) from the ground control system (GCS), duration 100 minutes, with ability of data receiving and transmission, aero photography and video recording in a real-time mode.

Wing span: 800mm

Length: 420mm

Height: 250mm

Payload: 200g

Weight: 1,9 kg

Maximum service ceiling: 15-3600 m

Flight duration: 100 minutes

Range: 10 km (Up to 40km)

Engine: Electric

Navigation: GPS, autopilot

Launch method: Hand launch /catapult

Speed range: 60-150 km/h

Service personnel: Two

Runway / Landing: 50x50 m

Recovery method: Parachute recovered

Complex weight: 9 kg



(Top) Source 1: <http://igorrgroup.blogspot.com/2010/05/russia-uavs-part-1.html>

Source 2: <http://www.27.mchs.gov.ru/upload/iblock/fd5/fd534fb7a5fb857fd3ef8ecacefc50ca.jpg>

(Right) Source: <http://www.airwar.ru/enc/bpla/orlan10.html>

At Year's End, Annual Report on State of Russian Army and Looking Ahead into 2015

20 December 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *As 2014 drew to a close, Russia's Defense Ministry held an annual board meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin to review and discuss the state of the Russian Army during the past year and to look ahead into goals for 2015. The first accompanying excerpt, from TVZvezda.ru (TV Star), provides a Russian perspective on these discussions. TVZvezda.ru is an internet information portal that belongs to TV and Radio company Zvezda (Star), a government media outlet managed by the Ministry of Defense. By the company's own description, the majority of its audience is between the ages of 18-35. About 90 million Russian viewers watch their TV channel, according to the site, and the internet site itself has entered a list of most visited information resources in Russia, with over four million monthly visitors. TVZvezda.ru focuses largely on military or defense-related issues.*

According to the accompanying excerpt, Putin announced increases in military spending during the December meeting. "The Defense Ministry alone will receive next year the equivalent of \$50 billion for the implementation of plans to modernize the army and the navy," according to the article. Other primary topics of discussion include Vostok-2014 (large-scale military drills held in September 2014), the Arctic, Crimea, and "countering military threats from the North Atlantic Alliance," according to the article.

*The second accompanying excerpt, from a smaller-scale and local Progorodnn.ru (About the City of Nizhniy Novgorod), cites Putin commenting on the "new look" that the Russian Army is gaining, modernizing and "ready to perform the most difficult tasks." The results of surprise inspections held in 2014 confirm this perception, according to the article, which also complements the positive outlook on the state of the Russian military Putin projected during the Defense Ministry meeting, as described by TVZvezda.ru. Together, these excerpts present a view from the Russian-language press on the official positive outlook on the state of the Russian military at the end of 2014 and looking ahead into 2015. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***

Source: "От Арктики до Крыма: какое вооружение получила армия России в 2014 году" (From the Arctic to Crimea: What Armaments the Russian Army Received in 2014), TVZvezda.ru (TV Star), 19 December 2014. <http://tvzvezda.ru/news/forces/content/201412191203-wpgp.htm>

... According to the president [Vladimir Putin], the Defense Ministry alone will receive next year the equivalent of \$50 billion, for the implementation of plans to modernize the army and the navy. This was discussed at the annual Board of Defense Ministry...

According to TV channel STAR, the president's topics for discussion with the military will be what all recent boards would consider traditional. This is the results of unscheduled inspections of the army's combat readiness and results of exercises "Vostok-2014" [East 2014]. The development of military infrastructure in the Arctic, strengthening the Southern Military District after Crimea's entry into Russia. Providing soldiers with official and permanent housing. Supplementing the army with contractors, as well as NATO's intensified presence on the border with Russia...

... In the last maneuvers of "Vostok-2014", as Sergei Shoigu announced, 155 thousand soldiers had participated, about 8 thousand pieces of weapons and military equipment, including more than 4 thousand armored combat vehicles, 632 aircrafts and helicopters, 84 ships

... The second important task in front of the Defense Ministry this year is the deployment of military infrastructure in Russia's Arctic zone and in Crimea. For the protection of national interests in the Arctic, an interspecific grouping of troops (forces) is being created. At present, the formation of a separate motorized rifle brigade (Arctic) in the Murmansk region is being concluded. The second Arctic team will be formed during 2016 in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District...

... A separate topic of the Defense Ministry's Board will be devoted to countering military threats from the North Atlantic Alliance. Air Force Commander Colonel General Vladimir Bondarev said that NATO is actively using airborne early warning system and using aircraft AWACS to monitor the air traffic situation over the western part of the Black Sea, Ukraine and Western Russia...

Source: "Путин заявил, что армия России обретает новый облик" (Putin Announced that the Russian Army is Getting a New Look), Progorodnn.ru (About The City), 20 December 2014, <http://progorodnn.ru/news/view/94685>

According to the head of state [President Vladimir Putin], recent events have shown that the Russian army is gaining a new look. It becomes modern and is ready to perform the most difficult and important tasks. Putin added that this is confirmed by the results of the surprise inspections held in 2014, and the results demonstrated by the formations and units during the course of more than 3.5 thousand exercises and trainings....

Armenia and Russia Sign Agreement to Extend Life of Region's Only Nuclear Power Plant

OE Watch Commentary: On 20 December Russia and Armenia signed an agreement to extend the life of Armenia's nuclear power plant, specifically its second unit—the only functional reactor. The accompanying excerpts from the regional Russian-language press report on this topic. The first, from Panarmenian.net, reports on the agreement, and the second, from Blackseanews.net, provides a brief history of the power plant.

Armenia is located in a region high in seismic activity, but it is highly dependent on nuclear energy. The Armenian nuclear reactor referred to in the excerpts is the only functioning one of its kind not only in Armenia, but also in the entire region. Nonetheless, according to the World Nuclear Association, it supplied 33 percent of Armenia's energy in 2011.

Sometimes referred to as the Metsamor Power Plant, it is located 30 kilometers south of Yerevan, near the town of Metsamor. It is among Russia's power plants, commissioned in 1980, but shut down due to safety concerns in March 1989 after a powerful earthquake in December 1988 in Spitak Northwestern Armenia killed 25,000 people. Although Metsamor was 75 kilometers from the earthquake's epicenter and appeared to continue to operate normally, concerns over seismic vulnerability took precedence. Metsamor reopened in 1995, when Armenia faced an acute energy crisis, and has been open ever since, albeit not without some controversy.

The second accompanying excerpt notes that the European Union has been insisting on closing this plant, because Metsamor, as it stands, has been a safety concern for not only the EU, but also Armenia's neighbor Turkey—another country vulnerable to seismic activity. Armenia had signed an agreement with the EU in 1999 to shut down Metsamor, provided a replacement becomes available. The accompanying excerpts note that Russia will provide loans to upgrade the plant, including, presumably, its safety, although such loans would also increase Armenia's already deep and multifaceted dependence on Russia. Indeed, in 2007 Armenia undertook a new energy policy aimed at diversifying its energy supply precisely to move away from energy dependence on Russia. It appears such diversification is unlikely with this new agreement, particularly coupled with Armenia's current reliance on imported Russian gas as its chief source of energy. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)**

Source: “Россия и Армения договорились о продлении срока эксплуатации второго энергоблока Армянской АЭС” (Russia and Armenia have agreed to extend the life of the second unit of the Armenian NPP), PanArmenian.net, 22 December 2014. <http://www.panarmenian.net/rus/news/186510/>

Russia and Armenia signed on December 20 an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in extending the life the Armenian nuclear power plant's second unit, said on December 22 the state corporation Rosatom's Department of Communications.

The duration of exploration of Armenian station's second unit will expire in September 2016. The agreement provides for extending the work of its exploration.

“The result of these actions should be a license to extend the service life for 10 years, until September 2026,” said in a statement...

The parties agreed that financing for the work will be done at the expense of a credit, which Russia will provide to Armenia. Parameters and conditions of the loan are currently coordinated by the finance ministries of the two countries, according to the press release...

Source: “РФ и Армения подписали соглашение о продлении работы II энергоблока Армянской АЭС” (Russia and Armenia Signed an Agreement to Extend the Work of the Second Armenian NPP Unit), Blackseanews.net, 23 December 2014. <http://www.blackseanews.net/read/92776>

...The Armenian Nuclear Power Plant, the only one in the region, is located 30 kilometers south of Yerevan. It was commissioned in 1980 and shut down in March 1989, after the incident in December 1988 of the Spitak earthquake that took the lives of 25,000 people. NPP re-launched in November 1995 in connection with the most acute energy crisis in the republic. Currently, only the second unit, with capacity of 407.5 MW [megawatts], is functioning.

According to experts' estimates, the NPP can function until 2016, however, the European Union insists on the termination of the operation of this plant.

On September 3, 2013, Russian President Vladimir Putin said after talks with his Armenian counterpart Serzh Sargsyan that Rosatom together with Armenian experts agreed to work on a project to extend the life of existing power unit of the Armenian NPP for 10 years - until 2026.

Russian Polls Show High Approval for Putin, but Predict Protests

24 December 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *As Russia's economy worsens, the Russian press continues to discuss Russian President Vladimir Putin's approval ratings. The first accompanying excerpt, from RBC.ru, cites a recent Levada Center poll. It shows that Putin's approval ratings remain high, at 85 percent, even as the Russian ruble is plummeting. Levada is generally considered one of the most authoritative polling sources in Russia.*

Consider these findings together with the second accompanying excerpt, from Moskovskiy Komsomolets (Moscow Komsomolets), which cites another recent and credible sociological study by former Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin's Committee of Civil Initiatives. Titled "Monitoring Political Sentiments of Russian Citizens," it predicts another wave of protests in Russia, this time based on an upcoming economic crisis. The study also provides deeper insight into Putin's high approval ratings.

The Committee for Civil Initiatives, according to Moskovskiy Komsomolets, had predicted the most recent protests that took place in Russia in 2011-2012—the largest since the break-up of the Soviet Union. This most recent study finds that another wave of protests in Russia is likely once an economic crisis ensues in Russia.

In terms of Putin's approval, the study found that "perceptions of President Vladimir Putin are changing – the country's residents still do not see an alternative to him, but subconsciously trust in him decreases..." This is important information that probes further than traditional approval ratings surveys and provides deeper insight into Russian citizens' feelings towards Putin. The majority of Russians may approve of Putin on some level, but the word "approval" should be understood in deeper context—for one thing, it is not intrinsically connected to stability.

The study's other findings are also interesting. For instance, although the majority of Russians continue to primarily trust official media, especially television (on which the state maintains the firmest grip), economic troubles are increasingly forcing citizens to look for alternative sources of information, such as the Internet and social networks, which have

Source: Vladislav Gordeev, "Валютный кризис не отразился на рейтинге Путина" (Currency Crisis Has not Affected Putin's Ratings), Moskovskiy Komsomolets (Moscow Komsomolets), RBC.ru, 24 December 2014. <http://top.rbc.ru/politics/24/12/2014/549ac0f59a794719bd44450a>

Levada Center's research, which RBC has reviewed, showed that approval rating of President Vladimir Putin remains high – at 85% level. In November, before the crisis in the currency market, social scientists have recorded the same level of approval of the head of state.

Vladimir Putin began 2014 with approval rating of 65%, in March, during the Crimea, it rose above 70%, and from April steadily kept at a level exceeding 80%. Putin's rating record ratings were recorded at the beginning of August (87%) and by the end of October (88%)...

Source: Liza Dubrovskaya, "Эксперты комитета Кудрина: экономический кризис может вызвать новую протестную волну в РФ" (Kudrin's Committee Experts: the economic crisis could trigger a new wave of protest in Russia), Moskovskiy Komsomolets (Moscow Komsomolets), 24 December 2014. <http://www.mk.ru/politics/2014/12/24/eksperty-komiteta-kudrina-ekonomicheskij-krizis-mozhet-vyzvat-novuyu-protestnuyu-volnu-v-rf.html>

Experts of Alexei Kudrin's Committee of Civil Initiatives, who predicted the mass protests of 2011-2012, predict a new wave of popular discontent in Russia...

The study "Monitoring political sentiments of Russian citizens" was carried out for Alexei Kudrin's Committee for Civil Initiatives by a group of sociologists led by Mikhail Dmitriev and Sergey Belanovsky. The study was conducted from 6 to 14 December, among 14 focus groups in Moscow, Vladimir and Gus-Khrustalnyi of Vladimirskaya oblast. And this time not only sociological, but also and psychological methods were used...

According to report's findings, the majority of Russians trust the official media, especially television, but only when it comes to coverage of Russia's foreign policy, and supports Moscow's position on the Ukrainian crisis. However, the growth of negative trends in the economy forces them to look for alternative sources of information on this issue - the Internet and social networks.

In addition, perceptions of President Vladimir Putin are changing – the country's residents still do not see an alternative to him, but subconsciously trust in him decreases...

Another effect of the year revealed in yet another psychological survey: on a scale of one through five, citizens evaluated main threats [to the country]. The strongest phobias were the possibility of war and fear of high inflation. The fear of war is likely irrational: the respondents do not believe in the possibility of drawing Russia into full-scale military conflict.

Based on their research, sociologists predicted a high probability of economic and social protests...

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Continued: Russian Polls Show High Approval for Putin, but Predict Protests

a greater chance of providing alternative viewpoints. Another interesting finding is that one of the chief fears among Russian citizens today is that of inflation. This is not surprising, as many Russians still remember vividly the turbulent years of hyper-inflation in the 1990s. Indeed, Russia's economic policy for years has been geared towards reducing inflation precisely to alleviate citizens' historical fears. Russia's official inflation has already risen sharply in recent months to at least 9 percent, and experts predict further inflation increases into the double digits in 2015. In this context, it is not surprising that inflation is among the top concerns for Russian citizens right now.

*These findings also help explain why the study's authors predict a new wave of protests in Russia as the economic crisis in the country deepens. Taken together, the Levada Center poll and Committee for Civil Initiatives' study complement each other in providing a nuanced picture of the political climate in Russia and of Putin's approval ratings. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***



Biographical Sketch: Dmitry Rogozin and Russian Nationalism

By Ray Finch, FMSO

Since the collapse of the USSR, Russia has struggled with developing a new national idea. The political and economic trauma of the 1990s discredited the idea of liberal democracy, and for the past decade Russian nationalism has become more prominent. While there are a number of Russian leaders who have been lifted up on this wave of nationalism (to include the current president, Vladimir Putin), few have been as successful in riding this surge as Russia's new Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the country's military-industrial complex, Dmitry Rogozin. This paper briefly reviews Rogozin's biography, and in particular, the implications of his increasing political power for Russia and the United States.

<http://fms.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Rogozin.pdf>

Source: Olga Bozhyeva, “Война шестого поколения: как мы глушим чужие локаторы, спутники и компьютеры” [Sixth-Generation Warfare: How We Will Deafen Foreign Radars, Satellites and Computers], MK Online, 2 January 2015. <http://www.mk.ru/politics/2015/01/02/voyna-shestogo-pokoleniya-kak-my-glushim-chuzhie-lokatory-sputniki-i-kompyutery.html>

OE Watch Commentary: *To justify their recent increased military expenditures, Russian military commentators often argue that their country's armed forces fell technologically behind their probable rivals after the collapse of the USSR, particularly in the realm of electronic warfare (EW). As Western armies were fielding new highly accurate and responsive EW systems, the Russian military was struggling to merely pay salaries and to keep the lights on. Their increased defense spending today reflects the need to close this gap. As the first excerpt points out, the situation has improved over the past decade (particularly since the reforms initiated after the August 2008 conflict with Georgia), as military modernization remains a top Kremlin priority. Having invested considerable resources to strengthen its military-technological prowess, “today Russia occupies a leading position in the world of EW.”*

After describing how EW assets have become a key weapon in modern conflict, the first article lists many of the new EW complexes which will soon enter or have already entered the Russian military inventory. Besides the Moskva-1, Gimalai, Krasukha-2, and President-S systems, the article refers to the “Khibiny” EW complex, which allegedly turned off all the electronics on the USS Donald Cook in March 2014 (for background on this incident, see: “Russian EW or IW?,” Dec 2014 OEW, and “Russia’s Magic Radar,” Jan 2015 OEW). Asserting that the Russian claims are true regarding the Donald Cook attack, the first excerpt concludes “the global confrontation of Russia and the United States for the mastery of technologies of the future has begun, first of all in the interests of electronic warfare.”

The second excerpt describes yet another new EW development, the “Alabuga system,” which purportedly “consists of a missile with a warhead comprising a high-frequency generator producing a very strong electromagnetic field.” In essence, the weapon creates an electromagnetic pulse which

...In the contemporary world, the emphases in countries' confrontations are increasingly shifting to the sphere of high information technologies. This also applies to armed combat and electronic warfare (EW) has become one of its key factors.

EW capabilities totally change the balance on the battlefield: Even when one of the sides has overwhelming superiority in high-tech weapons, it cannot win if its command and control structures are suppressed by EW systems. As a result, the most state-of-the-art weapons are transformed into a useless heap of scrap metal....

...In our country, a powerful impetus for the development of EW was received quite recently, after the 5-day Georgian War, when it became obvious that gaining air superiority – is largely a question of EW....

...With the accession of the new military leadership headed by Sergey Shoygu, the issue of the development of EW was immediately made a priority, which is absolutely correct, because today the impact from EW is comparable to the employment of the latest precision-guided munitions and even surpasses it based upon certain indicators....

For a long time, it was thought that our Army seriously lags behind the United States and Europe in the development of EW. But the situation has fundamentally changed in recent years. Today Russia occupies leading positions in the world in the EW theme, which even Western experts have been compelled to acknowledge now. Russians proudly state: We are proceeding neck-and-neck with the United States based upon the EW equipment, which is installed on aircraft, and we have the best in the world today with respect to ground-based EW equipment....

...For example, take the new Krasukha-2 EW complex. It is capable of totally depriving the AWACS of its combat capabilities – the aircraft with radar early warning and battle management systems. Therefore, the developers of the Krasukha-2 jokingly call the complex the cap of invisibility: it “covers” all enemy radar systems and those systems cease to see targets already beyond 250 kilometers.

But that is also not the limit. The Moskva-1 EW equipment will enter the inventory in the near future. It is passive, that is, in general, nothing radiates, but operates exclusively on reception. It is fundamentally impossible to detect it. But then again, it easily “sees” the enemy and issues commands to weapons, which destroy the enemy.

No state-of-the-art model of weapons is already being accepted into the troops without EW equipment, which increases the equipment's survivability by 30-35 times. So, the innovative Gimalai EW complex – a system of active and passive radar and optical stations, which have been integrated into the aircraft's body and that accomplishes the function of a “smart skin” - has been developed for the T-50 fifth-generation aircraft.

Similar systems are also being developed in Russia for civil aviation. By way of illustration, there is already a model of the President-S complex. It independently detects a missile, determines the degree of threat, and activates passive and active electronic jamming, after which the missile “sees” only decoy targets and misses....

potential enemy.

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Continued: Russian EW Developments

destroys digital signals. The nonnuclear warhead “detonates at a height of 200-300 meters and cuts off electronic equipment within a 3.5-km radius,” effectively blinding one’s opponent and rendering any digital weapon systems inoperable. The third excerpt claims that the Russian military has already fielded unmanned aerial vehicles at the tactical level “for the electronic suppression of ‘foreign’ apparatus,” capable of “causing a cell phone communications blackout.”

*These excerpts illustrate a number of alleged technological developments in the sphere of Russian EW. As discussed in the above-mentioned January 2015 OEW commentary, it is extremely difficult to verify these claims. There is no question, however, that the Russian military is focusing considerable attention on researching, developing and fielding a host of new EW systems. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)***

...The American Destroyer Donald Cook entered the Black Sea on 10 April: 130 tonnes of expensive Kevlar and armor made from high-tensile alloys, radar emissions absorbent materials... Plus four super-radar antennas, up to 100 Tomahawk [missiles] and air defense missiles and the latest Aegis combat information management system.

On the third day of the destroyer’s stay, a Russian Su-24 frontal aviation bomber flew up to the destroyer and completed a fly-by (in general, an ordinary event – the aircraft and ships of the probable enemies frequently approach each other in neutral waters).

Based upon the information of the American military themselves, the Su-24 did not pose a threat because it was not armed. Only a canister with the “Khibiny” EW complex was suspended on its belly. The pilot turned it on and simulated a missile attack on the ship.

One of the seamen later described on a social network what this looked like. “...We tracked the Russian radar until it reached the kill zone in order to later ‘jam it’. But, when it entered into the fringing zone, the mysticism began. Our radars were the first to be jammed and later the Phalanx target designator shut down and the entire Aegis became inoperable. Our marvelous Donald Cook was rocking on the waves like a dead turtle. It turns out that this damn Russian scrap metal turned on the electronic jammer and the pride of our Navy was transformed into our disgrace! And the Russian began to openly sneer at us....

...It seems that the United States will once again have to be amazed by the capabilities of the Russian EW system, which is making confident steps along the path of mastering

advanced technologies. A project on the development of new-generation equipment based upon radiophotonics was recently launched in Russia. That same research has also begun in the United States. From which one can arrive at the conclusion: the global confrontation of Russia and the United States for the mastery of technologies of the future has begun, first of all in the interests of electronic warfare.

Source: Andrey Kots, “Русская ракета «Алабуга» выключает любой телевизор” [Russia’s Alabuga Missile Switches Off Any Television Set], Vechernyaya Moskva Online, 24 December 2014.

The wars of the 21st Century differ substantially from the global conflicts of the previous century. The rapid development of computer technologies and means of communication, radio warfare, navigation, and concealment is gradually transforming armed confrontation into push-button warfare -- whoever pushes the button first win. And the ordinary soldier is gradually turning into a futuristic and unwieldy “cyborg” festooned -- like a Christmas tree -- with electronics.

In the circumstances of the wholesale computerization of the armies of the future, the need has arisen to create weaponry capable of swiftly and effectively neutralizing such an army. Systems such as these have been under development by the leading world powers since Cold War times. One of the damage-producing elements of a nuclear burst -- the electromagnetic pulse -- was adopted as the basis of the new technology. It effectively and swiftly disables electronic apparatus, electrical instruments, power transmission lines, and radio communications across a fairly large territory....

...At this very moment Russian specialists are putting the finishing touches to a domestically manufactured “silencer” -- the Alabuga system. It consists of a missile with a warhead comprising a high-frequency generator producing a very strong electromagnetic field. This “little gift” detonates at a height of 200-300 meters and cuts off electronic equipment within a 3.5-km radius. As a result, the adversary’s subunits are left without communications and means of control and guidance. With your bare hands you can take a foe accustomed to computers, satellite navigators, and electronic sights....

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Continued: Russian EW Developments

Source: Yuriy Gavrilov, “А глаз, как у орла: Поставки в войска современных беспилотников выросли в четыре раза” [Eagle-Eyed: Deliveries of State-of-the-Art Unmanned Air Vehicles to the Field Have Increased Fourfold], Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online, 16 December 2014.

The Russian army’s arsenals are increasingly actively registering the influx of military unmanned air vehicles. At a stroke, the volume of deliveries of the Orlan-10 aerial reconnaissance and surveillance system to the Armed Forces has risen by a factor of four this year....

...Let me recall that unmanned air assets are now available to practically all ground troops brigades and divisions in the Russian army.... In addition, provision has been made for mandatory training for operators at the General Staff’s Interservice UAV Center -- it is situated in the Moscow Oblast city of Kolomna.

...As far as the Russian army is concerned, though, the military are making active use of so-called drones also for the electronic suppression of “foreign” apparatus. For example, with their aid it is possible to cause a cell phone communications blackout....

Sergey Shoygu: Russia’s Emergency Defense Minister A Bio-Sketch

By Ray Finch, FMSO

This paper briefly examines the background of Russia’s Minister of Defense, Sergey Shoygu, the speculation behind his sudden appointment in November 2012, the challenges he faces, his efforts thus far within the Defense Ministry, and possible future implications -both military and political – surrounding his selection as Russia’s chief military representative. This paper posits that should the stars align correctly, as a close friend of President Vladimir Putin, Shoygu could become the next leader of Russia.

<http://fms.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Finch-Shoygu.pdf>



OE Watch Commentary: Much has been written over the past month regarding the significance of Russia's recently updated military doctrine (December 2014). As relations between Russia and the West remain strained over the continued violence in SE Ukraine, Western analysts have examined the new doctrine for clues regarding Russia's future strategy in the region. While the new doctrine makes no mention of the conflict in Ukraine, it does claim that "the expansion of NATO's military infrastructure to the borders of the Russian Federation" is Russia's primary threat. As relatively recent members of NATO (2004), this type of rhetoric has raised significant concerns in the Baltic countries.

In the first brief accompanying excerpt, the Lithuanian defense minister questions the Russian rationale behind labeling NATO "as the top threat to Russia." He claims that the Kremlin leadership has put "the cart before the horse" and is mistaken with interpreting NATO expansion as a threat. From the Lithuanian perspective, it has actually been recent Russian bellicose actions and statements which have aggravated Russian-NATO relations. According to the Lithuanian defense minister, it was the Kremlin that threw the first stone in Georgia in 2008, then again in Ukraine in 2014, and that NATO has been merely responding to Russian aggression.

The second excerpt (from a recent interview given by the Russian ambassador to Lithuania) provides the Russian counterpoint to this argument. From the Kremlin's perspective, NATO enlargement has been the key impetus behind increased Russian military activity along its western border. According to the ambassador, Russia is deeply concerned over "US and NATO plans to deploy missile defense systems near our borders, which creates a real threat to Russia." He goes on to complain that increased NATO activity has been responsible for escalating tension in the region, but that Russia has no intention of "attacking the Baltic countries."

The threat of NATO enlargement was one of the primary pretexts behind the Kremlin's conflict with Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014. Kremlin officials have justified the seizure and annexation of Crimea in March 2014 based

Source: "Russia's Military Doctrine Confuses Causes, Consequences -- Lithuanian Defense Minister," Baltic News Service, 29 December 2014. <http://www.bns.ee>

Russia is trying to justify its own aggression by mixing the causes and consequences in its new military doctrine naming NATO the key threat, Lithuanian Minister of National Defense Juozas Olekas said on Monday [29 December].

The minister called the document, signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday, an adaptation of the 2010 doctrine "to Russia's existing actions and the response of democratic countries", by means of which Moscow "is trying to claim that Russia has alternative values to those of the Western world."

The doctrine names "a buildup of NATO military potential and its empowerment with global functions implemented in violation of international law, the expansion of NATO's military infrastructure to the borders of the Russian Federation" as the top threat to Russia. The document also states that the deployment of foreign military forces on the territory of Russia's neighbors could be used for "political and military pressure."

According the Lithuanian defense minister, Russia is trying to identify NATO's additional security measures in Eastern Europe as a cause, despite it being quite the opposite.

"It's like putting the cart before the horse. When NATO was not taking additional action, they militarized Russia's western edge, the Kaliningrad region and annexed neighboring countries. And now, when NATO is deploying capabilities for the defense and deterrence purposes, they are trying to say that it's the cause why they did that in Georgia eight years ago and in Ukraine a year ago. It's a complete confusion of the cause and the consequence," Olekas told BNS....

Source: Ricardas Cekutis, "Russia Says That It Does Not Want War," Respublika, 9-15 January 2015.

... **[Cekutis]** Many people in Lithuania are concerned with the Russian military maneuvers that are taking place close to our border on a regular basis, every day we hear reports about Russian military aircraft flying over the Baltic countries or war ships showing up in the Baltic Sea near the Baltic countries' territorial waters. If these reports are true, what are the objectives of such actions?

[Udaltsov] If I understand you correctly, you have in mind the Kaliningrad region? Then, first of all, I would like to remind you that this region borders with two NATO countries. And we certainly cannot call this block "friendly" to Russia... As for military exercises, including the unplanned exercises, it is an efficient and well-proven method to check our army's combat readiness.... If we are talking about the increase of the number of weapons in the Kaliningrad region, we are not trying to scare or intimidate somebody. First of all, this is an adequate response to the US and NATO plans to deploy missile defense systems near our borders, which creates a real threat to Russia. By the way, in the past year, according to the Pentagon spokesman, US and NATO military aviation activity over the territory of the Baltic countries increased drastically, also the number of US fighter jets in the countries bordering with the Kaliningrad region has

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Continued: Baltic vs. Russian Perspective on New Military Doctrine

on the alleged fear that the region, under the new pro-West government in Kiev, might come under NATO control. The Russian ambassador claims that “there was the coup in Ukraine... which clearly put human rights and freedoms at risk; therefore, the Crimean population decided in a referendum to withdraw from Ukraine and to join the Russian Federation.” He also goes on to assert that “Russia did not attack Ukraine, it did not use force against it, and it did not threaten the Ukrainian state borders with any actions...”

*In the previous version of Russia’s military doctrine (2010), NATO was considered a major threat, but since the events in Ukraine, it has now been elevated to Russia’s main threat. Not only does Russia’s new military doctrine help to explain its aggression against Ukraine, but it also could, despite the Russian ambassador’s assurances, be used to justify future hostility toward the Baltic countries. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)***

increased under the pretext of patrolling. Here it should be noted that NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has admitted that there are now five times more military aircraft in the Baltic countries than a year ago. We have also registered many joint military exercises in Poland and the Baltic countries, US and Hungarian land forces have also been deployed on a rotational basis, not to mention the Rapid Response Force that is being created in Lithuania. Of course, we could not ignore the announced plans to buy new weapons for the tens of millions of litas [LTL], the possible acquisition of Patriot missile complexes, the NATO warships constantly coming close to the Lithuanian shore... You will agree that these facts do not make one willing to disarm. Therefore, in this situation, we will respond promptly and adequately. But I would like to deny what various politicians have been saying that Russia intends to attack the Baltic countries. These are just delusions. We are not interested in provoking tensions in the region and a new arms race, which would not make Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia safer...

... **[Cekutis]** In the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, Russia guaranteed the territorial integrity of Ukraine, but now it has annexed Crimea. Is it not a direct violation of the memorandum?

[Udaltsov] Moscow did not annex Crimea. Crimean residents themselves took advantage of the UN Charter, which establishes the right to the people’s choice. There was the coup in Ukraine, the changes in the political situation, which clearly put human rights and freedoms at risk; therefore, the Crimean population decided in a referendum to withdraw from Ukraine and to join the Russian Federation. As for the Budapest Memorandum, it does not oblige Russia to force Crimea to stay in Ukraine. Russia did not attack Ukraine, it did not use force against it, and it did not threaten the Ukrainian state borders with any actions....

“I was told by Pyatigorsk Cossacks that the pay in places is as follows: the enlisted personnel get about R60,000-90,000 a month, the senior command personnel, R120,000-150,000. Now, they say, the pay has risen to R240,000.”

OE Watch Commentary: *As of mid-January 2015 the fighting between separatist and Ukrainian forces in the Donbass region of Eastern Ukraine shows little sign of tapering off. Buoyed by support from the new pro-Western government in Kiev, the Ukrainian military has again stepped up its efforts to prevent any further separatist advances and regain control over these breakaway regions. The new government in Kiev has growing concerns that the separatist forces will not only consolidate their positions, but also possibly expand fighting to secure a land route into Crimea.*

Separatist forces in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions (self-described as the Donetsk People's Republic/DNR and the Luhansk People's Republic/LNR) appear to be equally committed to defending their quasi-independence. Besides moral and political support, they continue to receive military supplies and reinforcements from Russia. Negotiations to hammer out a genuine ceasefire agreement, possibly moderated by Russian and EU officials, and work toward a political resolution have been repeatedly delayed.

US and EU economic sanctions against the Kremlin leadership (combined with a decline in fossil fuel revenues) have weakened the Russian economy. Western leaders have also taken steps to isolate Russia politically (e.g., cancelling Russia's participation in the G8). However, there has been little indication that these measures have decreased Kremlin support for the Ukrainian separatists. Russia continues to supply the separatist regions, referred to as “Novorossiya” (New Russia) in Kremlin parlance, with humanitarian and others form of aid.

Separatist leaders have repeatedly claimed that they are not receiving military support from the Russian military. Russian security representatives have been equally adamant in denying official military involvement in this conflict. These claims, however, are belied by documented evidence that Russian military equipment has been transferred to the separatist regions. Nor is it just Russian military equipment. Russian citizens have also been fighting alongside the separatists. Ethnic Russians who have been wounded, killed or captured in the fighting have been labeled as “volunteers” who joined the separatist cause from patriotic motives. Kremlin-sponsored media have, indeed, enflamed Russian nationalistic sentiments, but patriotism alone cannot explain the continued presence of thousands of Russian volunteers in the region.

The accompanying excerpt points out that economic opportunity may be attracting some Russians to volunteer to fight for the separatist cause. According to the article, Russian volunteers are paid anywhere from 60,000-240,000 rubles (\$1,000-\$4,000) per month, depending upon their rank and specialty. This level of salary would be appealing among many of the economically depressed regions of Russia.

*The article does not elaborate on the precise source of this funding, suggesting instead that some of the monies are channeled through nongovernmental organizations, such as the “Fund for Handicapped and Veterans of Special Forces and Special Units of the Russian Federation and the Former USSR.” Given that conservative estimates posit that there are nearly 5,000 Russian volunteers currently fighting in SE Ukraine, these salaries beg the question as to the ultimate source of this funding. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)***

Source: Aleksandr Golts, “УРАЛЬСКИЙ ВЕРБОВЩИК НАЕМНИКОВ ОПОБЕРГАЕТ ПУТИНА” [A Urals Recruiter of Mercenaries Refutes Putin], *Yezhednevnyy Zhurnal*, 29 December 2014. <http://www.ej.ru/?a=note&id=26786>

...Just over a week had elapsed, and one Vladimir Yefimov, heading up, he says, the Fund for Handicapped and Veterans of Special Forces and Special Units of the Russian Federation and the Former USSR, granted the Yekaterinburg E1.ru Internet publication an interview.

He says that he has dispatched no fewer than six 15-30-man groups. He issues these people special certificates to the effect that they are “volunteers”. Yefimov believes that these papers spare those who are dispatched to fight in the Donbas criminal prosecution. He says ingenuously here that the “volunteers” were dispatched at first “in the guise of the Red Cross. They received from the local branch papers indicating that they were an escort. When they arrived, folks stayed. They were given weapons and set combat missions. We now likewise load the boys into a vehicle with humanitarian aid and dispatch them.”

Yefimov disclosed entirely candidly that now “there are even unofficial pay rates. I was told by Pyatigorsk Cossacks that the pay in places is as follows: the enlisted personnel get about R60,000-90,000 a month, the senior command personnel, R120,000-150,000. Now, they say, the pay has risen to R240,000.” The head of the special forces’ handicapped and veterans organization confidently also describes the conditions under which Russian military personnel in Ukraine operate: “But you understand that the state has considered everything: if someone gets nabbed there, he will have been discharged long before this and he will even have sent in his papers ahead of time, possibly.”...

Equipping Russian Arctic Security Forces: Bring in the New! Bring in the Old!

OE Watch Commentary: *Russia continues to upgrade and test new equipment in the Arctic. The catapult-launched Orlan-10 UAV is currently deploying into the northern Far East. This propeller-driven aircraft has a reported operating flight time of up to 15 hours, a service ceiling of 7,000 meters and an operational range of 600 kilometers.*

Russian air defense continues to improve, with the upgrading of medium-to-long range S-400 "Triumph [SA-21 Growler] and the Pantsir-S1 [SA-22 Greyhound] short-to-medium range combination SAM and antiaircraft automatic cannon systems. The S-400 employs a family of missiles with reported ranges of 40-400 kilometers. Additional air defense units are scheduled for deployment to the far North.

*Finally, the Russian police forces are considering the return of an old ally for northern mobility - the reindeer. As the mule is still essential to serious mountain operations, the reindeer is still essential for Arctic mobility. The question is, can Rudolph's nose be fitted with a flashing unit and siren? **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)***

Source: Eastern Military District Press Service Report, Moscow Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, <http://www.mil.ru>, 31 December 2014

Orlan-10 UAV Unit to Be Stationed on Chukotka in 2015

Headquarters personnel and the controller/operators for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) of the Eastern Military District stationed on Chukotka finished their specialized training for piloting UAVs at a training center in Moscow Oblast. Technicians, along with several Orlan-10 UAV systems, are now deploying to their permanent duty station in the Russian Far East—Anadyr's Ugolnyy Airport. They will join their unit which is already on site at full manning.

Early in 2015, the unit will conduct initial test flights of the Orlan-10 under frigid Arctic conditions. Initially the operation and servicing of the drones will be performed jointly with representatives of the manufacturer enterprise, and subsequently by the unit's military technicians.

UAV missions will include terrain-feature monitoring, observance of maritime traffic in the constricted Pacific/Arctic Ocean maritime zones, and flights supporting Arctic units stationed on Wrangel Island and Cape Otto Schmidt.

Source: Northern Press, Information Agency, <http://sever-press.ru>, 12 January 2015

The New "Triumph" Air Defense Missile System Guards the Skies of the Russian Arctic

An air defense missile battalion defending the Northern Fleet has been equipped with the new S-400 "Triumph". In the near future, the far northern air defense forces will be upgraded with these missiles. An air defense missile regiment will be stationed on the Novaya Zemlya Archipelago. Vadim Serga, the chief of the Northern Fleet Press Service stated "In the summer, a northern air defense battalion will conduct test firing in Astrakhan Oblast [far south on the Caspian Sea] and then return to its air defense mission in its zone of responsibility." In addition, the Zapolyarnya Air Base will receive a Pantsir-S1 antiaircraft and missile defense battery.

Source: Trude Pettersen, Barents Observer, <http://barentsobserver.com>, 21 November 2014

Russian Authorities Are Considering Establishing a 'Reindeer Police Force' to Help Combat Crime in the Yamalo-Nenets Tundra Region.

Police in Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug complain that most of the crimes in the region are being committed by people who hide from the police on the tundra and in other out-of-the-way places. They escape on reindeer-drawn sleighs. In order to pursue and transport criminals and quickly respond to crime, the police want to have reindeer in their own "garage".

The issue of service reindeer came up, after the latest crime data from the region was published. Of the 163 registered crimes during the first nine months of 2014, 127 were committed by native peoples. Most cases are domestic crimes such as hooliganism, fights and thefts and are fueled by alcoholic inebriation. "Of course, we have snowmobiles in service, but one should understand that machinery is machinery. A snowmobile can break down or get stuck in the tundra while reindeer will run all the time," a police representative told Izvestia. "The reindeer

(continued)

Continued: Equipping Russian Arctic Security Forces: Bring in the New! Bring in the Old!

could be useful for district police officers to get around in remote areas.”

Snowmobiles are essential in police work on the tundra. Local police also provide assistance to citizens and transport sick persons from the tundra. The authorization to purchase service reindeers was included in police legislation in 2012. According to a ministerial order, service reindeer must be provided daily with one kilo of bread made of rye and wheat and six kilos of reindeer moss (lichen).

RESTRUCTURING THE TACTICAL RUSSIAN ARMY FOR UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

By Lester W. Grau, PhD, TRISA Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO)

Russian wars in Afghanistan (1979-1989) and Chechnya (1994-1996 and 1999-2006) reintroduced their ground forces to nonlinear warfare that lacked a clear front line and a rear area. This paper examines how this combat was fragmented into close-combat fights, and how battles were fought both within urban centers and remote locations.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/restructuring-for-unconventional-warfare.pdf>



OE Watch Commentary: *Despite economic problems, Russia continues to expand its military presence in the Arctic and build and improve infrastructure to support this expansion. Air Force, Navy and Army facilities are being upgraded.*

Additional reports indicate that Border Guards facilities are also being upgraded. The Border Guards belong to the Federal Security Service (FSB, successor to the KGB). During Soviet times the KGB was a major stakeholder in the Arctic. End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)

Source: Moscow Interfax, <http://www.interfax.com/> 13 January 2015

Defense Ministry: 14 Military Airfields to Be Ready in Arctic by Year's End

Ten Russian military airfields will be renovated in the Arctic before the end of 2015, Deputy Defense Minister Gen. of the Army Dmitry Bulgakov told reporters. "We will reconstruct ten airfields in the Arctic zone this year; in all, 14 Arctic airfields will be ready for work," he said during the first teleconference held by the Defense Ministry in 2015.

Source: Moscow Interfax, <http://www.interfax.com/> 12 January 2015

Russia Plans to Open Two More Rescue Centers in Arctic in 2015

On 5 January, Minister Vladimir Puchkov of Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry announced that it will open two more rescue centers in Arctic areas in Siberia and the Russian Far East this year. This will bring the total number of Arctic rescue centers to 10. "In addition, we are reinforcing the group that is working in the Arctic today. New, unique technical devices, equipment and everything else that is necessary for further development are being supplied. We are modernizing our equipment and introducing new practices and methods of training rescue workers for work in difficult Arctic environments. To this purpose, the first Arctic rescue training and research center was opened in Vytegra last year to train rescue workers. We also want to sign an agreement between the Nenets Autonomous District and the Ministry of Emergency Situations," Puchkov told reporters during a visit to Naryan-Mar.

Source: Murmansk b-port.com in Russian, <http://www.b-port.com/> 25 December 2014

Northern Fleet Commander Inspects Progress on Arctic Brigade Alakurtti Camp's Construction

Northern Fleet Commander Admiral Vladimir Korolev inspected progress in completing the construction of infrastructure facilities at the military camp of the Northern Fleet Arctic Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade which is being formed at the Alakurtti settlement, Murmanskaya Oblast. While inspecting the military camp at the Alakurtti settlement, the Northern Fleet commander noted that "the creation of comfortable living conditions for the personnel of the Arctic Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade, which is being formed is under the Russian Defense Ministry's special supervision, demands a responsible approach on the part of both the construction organizations and the command of the brigade that is accepting the completed facilities."

Admiral Vladimir Korolev inspected the progress of repair and construction works at 11 of the military camp's facilities and tasked Brigade Commander Colonel Ilya Pavlovskiy to supervise rigorously the acceptance of the completed facilities from the builders and to immediately report any flaws in the construction work that are discovered.

During the inspection, the fleet commander devoted particular attention to the preparations for the personnel's acceptance of two barracks, which are in the final stage of construction, and of the mess hall. According to the Northern Fleet commander's instructions, the monitoring of the repair and construction works at the military camp's facilities at the Alakurtti settlement is being conducted in real time by the Northern Fleet regional defense command and control center. This enables the Northern Fleet command to keep track of any occurring changes and to quickly resolve any issues that arise.

In accordance with modern requirements, the barracks for Arctic Brigade servicemen have been equipped with tea rooms and relaxation rooms for the personnel. The barracks have also been provided with utility rooms with washing machines, and shower stalls have been fitted. For the purposes of economical water and electricity consumption, consumers usage is metered.

Serious Testing to Determine the Optimum Russian Arctic Ground Military Vehicles

“Defense Ministry sends vehicles developed for the Arctic back for further work. Some models of motor vehicles developed for the north failed to pass the first Arctic tests since Soviet times.”

Source: Moscow Izvestiya Online in Russian, <http://www.izvestia.ru/> 13 January 2015

OE Watch Commentary: *The Russian Arctic ground force requires equipment optimized for the weather and terrain of the Arctic. Making do with equipment designed for general use is not an option.*

*The military and industry have conducted serious testing of production and prototype vehicles to determine which will have a place in the Northern Force. Some of the vehicles did not make the cut and were sent back for upgrades and rebuilds. With the significant pivot of the Russian military to the North, the Ministry of Defense is investing a lot of talent and rubles in creating a first-class Arctic military ground combat capability. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)***

Russian Defense Ministry Orders Further Work on Arctic Vehicles Following Murmanskaya Oblast Tests

Experts from the Ministry of Defense and industry tested more than 25 models of wheeled and tracked snow and swamp vehicles developed specially for the Arctic. Tests under Arctic conditions were held for the first time since the end of the Soviet era. The military sent some of the models back for further work.

“In the course of a winter expedition the main objectives and tasks under the test program were carried out in full,” military department officials explained. “During a trek across the territory of the Rybachyy Peninsula (Murmansk Oblast), these vehicles traveled between 180 and 1,000 kilometers, in individual tests which were determined by the operating conditions and their technical condition.”

Industry developed the specialized vehicles for work in Arctic conditions in accordance with Defense Ministry requirements. It is still unclear which of the tested models will enter service. There were some vehicles that the military department did not sign off on -- they have been sent back to industry for further work. For example, the fueling system of an army snow vehicle with a heated cabin failed. Tests based at the Defense

Ministry’s Third Central Scientific Research Institute and the factory will continue after all the defects have been eliminated.

Low-mass, tracked, articulated chassis transports – the GAZ-3344-20 and DT-3PM -- require improved reliability and terrain handling.

“We are talking about the ability to negotiate water obstacles, complete treks over long distances through snowdrifts, and negotiate ice ridges. This entails a significant range of characteristics, including wider caterpillar tracks to negotiate powdered snow and swamp,” is how military expert Viktor Murakhovskiy, chief editor of Arsenal Otechestvo magazine, explained the need for further development. “Arctic requirements envision the possibility of constant operations at temperatures down to minus 65 degrees Celsius.”

In addition, according to information from a source in the military department, the Defense Ministry considers it necessary to develop evacuation and equipment repair and servicing systems based on articulated chassis tractor-transports, including those with a large lifting capability.

“The lack of such equipment in tactical units requires that they stick to general-use roads and significantly reduces their maneuverability and autonomy,” the source explained.

“Compact” equipment also underwent tests on the peninsula, including four-wheeled ATVs and snowmobiles capable of operating for three days away from base at a temperature of minus 65 degrees. As representatives of the design bureau said, such snowmobiles are fitted with a large baggage compartment, heated handlebars and controls, hand protection against cold air, and a wide windshield. The Defense Ministry positively assessed the possibility of utilizing snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles but noted the need to reduce their “thermal signature,” add night-vision devices, and meet a number of other requirements.

A Defense Ministry representative told Izvestiya that the next expedition involving military vehicle tests will take place next winter. There will be an increase in the number of vehicles. Among the things that will be done in the course of the year will be to check on how the defects noted during the current expedition have been eliminated.

OE Watch Commentary: *Although Russia's traditional focus on defense spending is unsurprising, the year 2015 is expected to see an unprecedented level of funding for military equipment upgrades and renovations. As reported by the accompanying article, Russia's Ministry of Defense will allocate 1.74 trillion rubles for military equipment upgrades, more than half of the 3.3 trillion rubles allocated for defense spending in 2015. Since 2013 the percentage of Russia's defense budget has increased each year, and this trend is expected to continue, growing from 37% in 2013 to a projected 58.8% in 2017. Additionally, the 3.3 trillion ruble defense budget itself is a record, as it is a 20-billion-ruble increase and represents 4.2 percent of Russia's GDP.*

Much of the military equipment budget is allocated to upgrades and delivering new vehicles to Russia's military branches. Russia's Ground Forces plan to renew their previously suspended order of BMP-3s, an amphibious infantry vehicle. The Army is also expecting new BTR-82A infantry personnel vehicles and modernized T-72B3 tanks. Additionally, the southern and eastern military districts are planning to build two "Iskander-M" rocket compounds. For the Air Force, the planned upgrades are focused on providing soldiers with new helicopters, radar equipment, and anti-aircraft missile systems. In the planned Russian naval upgrades, the Black Sea Fleet is projected to receive new patrol ships and submarines over the next two years. Six of these vessels will be available by 2016. Additionally, a new class of ships will be built to replace the Black Sea Fleet.

Russia's initiatives and perceived threats to its security in the past year present obvious motivations for the budget increase. Aside from Russia's political and military security worries, however, it seems that the floundering economy is also a motivation for Russia's record defense-spending levels. According to First Deputy Chairman of the Duma Committee on Industry Vladimir Gutenev, the program is important for economic development, as well as military and political security. However, the possibility of a sequester on military spending could hinder these planned rearmament upgrades, as reported by Igor Korotchenko, a member of Russia's Ministry of Defense's Public Council.

Whether motivated by economic woes or national security concerns, the increase in military spending indicates a possible attempt by Russia to kill two birds with one stone by both ramping up defense capabilities and stimulating an industrial boost to the economy.

End OE Watch Commentary (Kangas)

Source: "Минобороны потратит 1,74 трлн рублей на военную технику в 2015 году" [Defense ministry will spend 1.74 trillion rubles on military equipment in 2015], Izvestiya, 26 December 2014. <http://izvestia.ru/news/581362>

More than half of the budget for the Ministry of Defense in 2015 will be allocated towards the state program to update equipment, reported "Izvestia."

The percent of the budget on military equipment increases from year to year- from 37% in 2013 to a projected 58.8% in 2017- explained the Ministry. The entire defense spending budgeted for the year is expected to be 3.3 trillion rubles.

In the next year, the ground forces will resume purchases of the BMP-3 supply, which was suspended for nearly a year by the ex-Minister of Defense Anatoliy Serdkyukov. The troops will also receive BTR-82A's and modernized T-72B3 tanks.

A member of the public council for Russia's Ministry of Defense Igor Korotchenko believes that the potential sequestration on military spending, particularly on the Air Force, could seriously hit the process of rearmament.

"Increasing the defense budget into not only for reasons of military and political security, but also purely pragmatic economic reasons- said the first deputy chairman of the Duma Committee on Industry Vladimir Gutenev.

“The main Defense Ministry priorities in 2014 went to building up Armed Forces combat capabilities, their outfitting with state-of-the-art arms and equipment, personnel manning, intensive near-combat training, and questions of servicemen’s social support.”

OE Watch Commentary: Each December Russia offers a summary of events that transpired over the past 12 months. This year’s list appeared on the website of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation.

Topics covered included the following: Building up the Armed Forces Combat Capabilities; Outfitting with State-of-the-Art Arms and Military Equipment; Manning the Armed Forces with Contract and Conscripted Servicemen; Ensuring Security of Russian Facilities and the Civilian Population of Crimea; Snap Inspections of Troop Combat Readiness and Operational Training; Combat Training; Upgrading the State and Military Command and Control System; Military Education System Development; Development of Innovative Technologies; Upgrading the Logistic Support System; Increasing the Level of Social Protection and Medical Support; Armed Forces Basing System Development; Basic Direction of International Military Cooperation; Armed Forces Participation in Resolving Crisis Situations; and Openness to Society and Patriotic Indoctrination of Citizens.

The excerpts selected below include highlights of the advances made in building up combat capabilities, which were quite impressive, and a few items from the section of state-of-the-arms equipment. Those items highlighted in **bold font** appeared that way in the original Russian text.
End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)

Source: Report at an Expanded Russian Defense Ministry Collegium on Results of Activities for 2014, Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, 19 December 2014.

Three missile regiments equipped with new Yars missile complexes went on alert duty in the Strategic Missile Troops. **Seven** modernized Tu-160 and Tu-95MS strategic missile-armed aircraft were introduced to the Long-Range Aviation order of battle, and the newest submarine missile cruiser Yuriy Dolgorukiy was introduced to the makeup of Navy permanent readiness forces.

In the general-purpose forces a self-sufficient grouping of troops has been deployed in Crimea. **Seven formations [soyedineniye] and eight military units** for various purposes have been established on the peninsula to supplement existing forces and assets.

Fourteen unmanned aerial vehicle [UAV] subunits have been activated. During the year **179** complexes with UAV’s have been delivered to the troops. The Defense Ministry State Unmanned Aviation Center has been established.

A composite air division and an air defense division were activated in the Air Force. All aerospace defense brigades were transferred to a division structure.

Navy combat capabilities are increasing through the deployment of a separate submarine brigade in Black Sea Fleet by the end of the year.

A Joint Strategic Command based on Northern Fleet has been established in the Arctic. A PVO [air defense] division and naval infantry brigade have been deployed additionally in its makeup, and activation of an Arctic motorized rifle brigade is concluding. A tactical group has been stationed on Kotelnyy Island.

High-plant-readiness radars in the Aerospace Defense Troops have been placed on alert duty in the cities of Kaliningrad and Irkutsk, and two other such radars have begun experimental alert duty in Barnaul and Yeniseysk.

Combat potential of the Airborne Troops is being built up. Thus, the **45th** Spetsnaz Regiment has been reorganized as the **45th** Spetsnaz Brigade.

Two brigade suites of Iskander-M operational-tactical missile complexes, **294** modernized tanks, **296** other armored fighting vehicles, **2** S-300V4 SAM systems of Ground Troops air defense, and around **5,000** automotive vehicles were supplied to the Ground Troops.

The Air Force received **142** aircraft, including **53** Su-30 and Su-35S multipurpose aircraft; **16** Su-34’s; **28** transport and training aircraft of various makes; **18** modernized MiG-31BM fighter-interceptors; **135** helicopters, among them **46** combat and **72** assault transport helicopters; and **7** S-400 SAM complexes.