

Foreign Military Studies Office OEWATCH



FOREIGN NEWS & PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT



Special Essay:

Kidnappings of the Chibok and Aboke Girls

TURKEY

- 3 Turkey's Presidential Election
- 4 Turkey-China Missile Deal on Hold
- 5 Turkey and the KRG's Increasing Power

MIDDLE EAST

- 6 Iran Opposes Iraqi Kurdistan Independence
- 7 Iran: "The Basij Abroad is the Revolution's Third Child"
- 8 Iran Unveils Night Vision Drone
- 9 Bracing for the Islamic State in Lebanon
- 11 National Recruitment and Mobilization in the Gulf
- 13 The Fall of the Yemeni Army's 310th Brigade

AFRICA

- 15 Fighting Over Oil Fields Helps Fuel Somalia's Balkanization
- 17 The Central African Republic: "Forgotten Crisis"
- 19 The Gendered Dimensions of Boko Haram
- 21 Nigeria Looks to Non-Traditional Spaces as Security Threats
- 23 African Perspectives on US Presence on the Continent

LATIN AMERICA

- 25 Things are Not Going Well in Venezuela
- 26 Communism is Still a Threat; Anti-Communism is Not
- 27 Narco Babies: The New Generation of Drug Traffickers in Colombia

28 Fuel Theft Generates Massive Profits for Mexican Drug Cartels

- 30 Brazilian Foreign Ministry Leaks Reveal Complicity in Bolivia in 2007-08
- 31 Russia Looks to Brazil, BRICS | in Order to Break its International Isolation

INDO-PACIFIC ASIA

- 32 Regional Reaction to Missing Malaysian Airliner
- 35 Brutality Prevails in Burma with an Unrelenting Federal Government

CHINA

- 37 China Publishes a Sailing Guide for the Northeast Passage
- 38 The PLA Establishes a Cyberspace Strategic Intelligence Research Center
- 39 South China Sea Opponents Building New Ground in Their Conflict
- 41 China's Counter-terrorism Strategy Focuses on the Internet

CENTRAL ASIA

- 42 Kazakhstan's Space Agency Launches another Satellite
- 43 The Kyrgyz-Tajik Border Dispute Continues
- 44 The Market for Private Security in Kazakhstan
- 45 Iran and Kyrgyz Relations Aim at Theoretical Security and Practical Infrastructure

EASTERN EUROPE

- 46 Ethnic Protest Turns Violent in Macedonia over Terror Trial Verdict
- 47 Bulgaria Backs Controversial Russian Pipeline

RUSSIA

- 48 Sending a Message: Russia Airlifts VDV Division and Brigade
- 50 Russia Expands Electronic Warfare Capabilities
- 51 A Growing Rift over Special Operations Aviation?
- 53 What are China's Real Intentions in Russia's Far East?
- 55 Ukraine Crisis Continues to Echo in the North Caucasus
- 56 Voices of Disapproval of the Kremlin's Actions in Ukraine
- 57 Military Mobilization Muddle
- 59 Dangerous Corruption Fight
- 60 Russian Military Chaplains
- 62 More Military Police Power to Reduce Abuse in Russian Military
- 64 Russia tests Canadian Arctic Air Defense
- 66 Busy Naval Destroyer
- 67 Science and Future War Technologies in Russia

SPECIAL ESSAY

- 69 Kidnappings of the Chibok Girls and Aboke Girls

The Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, is part of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command G-2's Operational Environment Enterprise and for over 25 years has conducted open source research on foreign perspectives of defense and security issues, emphasizing those topics that are understudied or unconsidered.

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Turkey's Presidential Election

6 July 2014

OE Watch Commentary: On 10 August millions of Turks will go to the polls to cast their vote in Turkey's first popularly elected presidential race. On 1 July Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan formally announced his candidacy for president, leading to a flurry of debate in the Turkish media about what an Erdoğan presidency would mean for Turkey's future, its fragile democracy, secularism, and its foreign policy. The accompanying passages from the Turkish press summarize this debate, as many express that it is a foregone conclusion that Erdoğan will be leading the country as President for the next ten years (the president can serve two five-year terms).

There are two other candidates: Prof. Ekmelledin İhsanoğlu, the joint candidate of two opposition parties (CHP and MHP), and Selahattin Demirtaş, the pro-Kurdish candidate. If nobody wins a simple majority on 10 August, there will be a second round of voting on 24 August, in which the top two candidates will compete. While it is not certain that Erdoğan will win the first round, most believe that he will easily win the second round and become Turkey's president until 2014.

As both passages point out, Erdoğan's candidacy speech was laced with Islamic metaphors, revealing that his Islamic inclinations are likely to continue in both domestic and foreign policies. They also claim that the Islamic references and some of the rhetoric in his speech indicate that the Turkey Erdoğan envisions is one that would undo its Westernization efforts, a concern for many. In addition, the second passage also points out that we are likely to see more of the authoritarian tendencies that we have seen from Erdoğan recently, stemming from a problematic understanding of democracy that is more like majority rule than a pluralistic rule. The passage nicely summarizes what many in the Turkish press have been lamenting for a few years now: that Erdoğan appears to believe that winning elections gives him full authority to rule the country as he wishes, without any real concern for democratic values. Thus there is real concern regarding the direction in which he would take Turkey following a presidential election win. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**



Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan wants to be Turkey's first popularly elected president.
Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jun/01/gaza-flotilla-raid-turkey-prime-minister-israel>

Source: Soli Özel, "Cumhurbaşkanlığı seçimlerinin ötesinde (1)" (Beyond the Presidential elections (1)), Haberturk.com.tr, 6 July 2014, <http://www.haberturk.com/yazarlar/soli-ozel/966010-cumhurbaskanligi-secimlerinin-otesinde-1>

"There are many points to pontificate on regarding the speech that Prime Minister Erdoğan gave upon his party's nomination of him as their candidate for president... To me, there are particularly two points that are very significant: The first is that, this is the first time that Prime Minister Erdoğan has, this openly, defined Turkey's future and its future order within a framework of a 'struggle' to undo the mistake of Turkey's 200-year Westernization. The second point is the fact that he repeated his views of the president as a politician who has received authority from the nation, and one who is responsible of the executive [branch]....

The new republic is being conceived as a 'religious republic'... Today's version of this 'religious republic'... is a condition of majoritarianism that does not care about liberal values..."

Source: Semih İdiz, "Batı Erdoğan'ın cumhurbaşkanlığından ne beklemeli?" (What should the West expect from Erdoğan as president?), Al-monitor.com, 4 July 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/originals/2014/07/idiz-turkey-presidential-elections-erdogan-foreign-policy.html#>

"...Erdoğan's nomination speech on July 1 provides reasons for concern regarding [Turkey's foreign policy] when evaluated from a Western perspective, revealing that his Islamist inclinations remain as strong as ever. Praising Allah as the one "who brought this cause, this movement, this struggle to the present day," Erdoğan said he had also pursued his political goals until now for the sake of the downtrodden people of Palestine, Egypt, Somalia and Afghanistan.... The only reference to ties with the West in his long speech – which was laced with heavy Islamic terminology and historic imagery as well as negative references to the Egyptian and Syrian regimes – was a passing remark about working harder as president to make Turkey a member of the European Union.

...Erdoğan appeared to be castigating Turkey's Western orientation, ... 'For 200 years, they tried to tear us away from our history and from our ancestors. They tried to get us to disown our claim,' he said angrily, clearly suggesting that his presidency would put an end to those efforts."

Turkey-China Missile Deal on Hold

1 July 2014

OE Watch Commentary: Signs are emerging that Turkey may be stalling on its decision to co-produce a long-range air and missile defense system with a Chinese company. The accompanying article from the Turkish press discusses that the deadline for evaluating bids has now been extended until 31 August 2014, and European and American bidders continue to be considered as possibilities.

On 26 September 2013 Turkey had announced its decision to start talks with a Chinese firm to co-produce such a system. The contract was awarded to the China Precision Machinery Export-Import Corp. (CPMEIC), a company that the U.S. has sanctioned for violating the Iran, North Korea and Syria Nonproliferation Act. NATO and the U.S. had expressed concern and warned of compatibility issues between the Chinese-made system and the NATO systems. Turkey then moved to keep the competition open to other bidders by requesting European and U.S. bidders to extend the validity of their bids. A final decision was to be made on 30 June. However, on 1 July Turkey announced that it was extending this deadline until 31 August, suggesting that it is having second thoughts on the Chinese deal.

As the accompanying passage from the Turkish daily *Hürriyet* discusses, Turkey had accepted the Chinese missile based on a condition of 50 percent domestic participation and technology transfer. While it claims that the details of this are still being worked out, it also notes that this is the fourth time that the deadline has been extended. Meanwhile, it cites that the undersecretary for the defense industries has recently travelled to France to obtain information about European options, claiming that this would be the second option if the Chinese negotiations fail. The article goes on to claim that even American Patriot missiles might be considered if the first two options fail, signaling that Turkey's decision to go with CPMEIC is still not a done deal.

In late September-early October 2010 Turkey and China held a bilateral military exercise in Turkey, the first such exercise that China conducted with a NATO member. This, coupled with the numerous high-level diplomatic and military visits between the two countries since 2009, has led to talk of a new strategic partnership between Turkey and China. While it is debatable whether the two countries are at the level of a strategic partnership, this deal would be an important one in the realm of increasing defense cooperation between them. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

For background reading on Turkish-Chinese relations, see FMSO Monograph, "Turkey and China: Unlikely Strategic Partners" May 2013, <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Turkey-and-China.pdf>

Source: Cengizhan Çatal, "Çin füzesine teknoloji transferi uzatması" (Extension in the Chinese missile technology [deal]), *Hürriyet.com.tr*, 1 July 2014, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/26718094.asp>

"The 30 June deadline to evaluate bids on the 'long range air defense missile', on which Turkey and China continue to conduct discussions, has been extended until 31 August. In the \$3.4 billion bid, Turkey is trying to complete the technology transfer process with China. Turkey and China are negotiating which and how much of the parts and software pertaining to the missile will be built in Turkey versus China.

The negotiations will result in an agreement regarding the terms of the co-production and technology transfer conditions. With this extension, the negotiations' deadline has been extended for a fourth time. Turkey had accepted the Chinese missile based on a condition of '50 percent domestic participation and technology transfer.'

Following the Chinese missile decision, NATO, the U.S. and European quarters had made statements which included intense pressure and criticism regarding Turkey's decision. Defense companies which rival China have been meeting with Turkey's big defense companies and urging them to persuade the government to rethink its decision.

The main reason that NATO and the U.S. are opposed to the Chinese missile is thought to be 'the risk of military spying'. The radars on the Chinese missiles are being defined as 'multi-dimensional intelligence sources' and their presence in Turkey is feared due to the risk of China's acquisition of critical information regarding bases and weapons that belong to NATO and the U.S. that are located in Turkey. Thus military experts prefer that European and U.S. missiles are chosen for the deal, which would be compatible with NATO's other equipment and which do not pose a risk of [information] leakage. Turkish officials continue to express at every opportunity that the missiles to be purchased from China can be made to be compatible with NATO but they are not able to convince [them].

The Undersecretary for the Defense Industries Ismail Demir held talks in China and France regarding the Chinese missile decision. In China, Demir discussed the 'technology transfer' process. In France, he received information from European missile producers. Officials for the Undersecretariat of Defense Industries say that if the discussions with China do not result in a deal, then discussions with the European Eurosam SAMP/T missiles would start, and if those do not produce a deal, then the third option, American Patriot missiles would be considered."

Turkey and the KRG's Increasing Power

25 June 2014

OE Watch Commentary: Following the advance of Islamic militants from the Islamist State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) and the retreat of Iraqi forces from the oil-rich city of Kirkuk in mid-June, the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) took over Kirkuk. This means that more oil exports are now under the control of the KRG, providing them with the economic infrastructure that could potentially strengthen their position regarding an eventual independent Kurdish state. In early July, the KRG President Massoud Barzani announced that they would soon be holding a referendum on independence from Iraq.

While this would have been an unacceptable scenario for Turkey until just a few years ago, many claim that things are much different now. Turkey historically feared that an independent Kurdish state would trigger its own Kurds to secede. Even uttering the word “Kurdistan” was taboo in Turkey, which considered a Kurdish autonomous region in northern Iraq as an existential threat to its territorial integrity. However, a paradigm shift has taken place in Turkey on the issue, suggesting that it is much more open to the idea of economic power for the KRG, due to the opportunities it provides Turkey to boost its energy security. In fact, as the first passage points out, Turkey now considers the KRG a strategic partner. Nevertheless, it is still debatable whether Turkey is ready to be neighbors with an independent Kurdish state on its southeastern border.

The accompanying two passages by Ruşen Çakır, a Turkish expert on the issue, claim that while Turkey is not as afraid of the idea of an independent Kurdistan as before, it is still concerned that such a state next door would renew the idea of a separate state in the minds of the Kurds in Turkey. Çakır claims that in order for Turkey to preserve its territorial integrity, it needs to press forward the peace process it has initiated and address Kurdish demands for more rights and autonomous status. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

Source: Ruşen Çakır, “Ankara bağımsız Kürdistan’dan artık neden korkmuyor?” (Why isn’t Ankara afraid of an independent Kurdistan anymore?), Gazetevatan.com.tr, 5 July 2014, <http://www.gazetevatan.com/rusen-cakir-655316-yazar-yazisi-ankara-bagimsiz-kurdistan-dan-artik-neden-korkmuyor/>

“...Following the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in Iraq, it would not be realistic to expect the Kurds in Turkey to be satisfied with no status of their own. The establishment of an independent Kurdistan, will no doubt renew the idea of a separate state in the minds of the Kurds in Turkey.

...If a break-up of Turkey is to be avoided, the peace process should be rapidly resolved in a way that would give the Kurds a status that would satisfy them; and while all of this is being done, the Kurds in Iraq, Syria and even Iran should be taken into account.”



Map showing Turkey, the Kurdistan Regional Government and oil pipelines.

Source: <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21568760-governments-turkey-iraq-and-iraqi-kurdistan-play-dangerous-game>

Source: Ruşen Çakır, “Türkiye bağımsız Kürdistan’a hazır mı?” (Is Turkey ready for an independent Kurdistan?), Gazetevatan.com.tr, 25 June 2014, <http://www.gazetevatan.com/rusen-cakir-651499-yazar-yazisi-turkiye-bagimsiz-kurdistan-a-hazir-mi/>

“Since the beginning of the Iraq crisis, Ankara has ardently defended that country’s unity and territorial integrity. This position continued even when problems started emerging with the Baghdad regime, but it became less and less influential. What’s more striking is that the Iraqi Kurds, who, for many years were seen as a threat, and sometimes even as an enemy, have now become a friend, in fact a ‘strategic partner’. We know that this partnership which has a very strong economic dimension, bothers Baghdad.

But it may not be correct to conclude from this that Ankara would be warm to the idea of an independent Kurdistan in northern Iraq. No doubt, both the warm relations that have been cultivated with the KRG, and the steps that have been taken to solve Turkey’s Kurdish problem have led to a softening and more flexibility on the issue. However, it would be wrong to expect the Turkish public to be indifferent to the declaration of an independent Kurdish state right next door.”

Iran Opposes Iraqi Kurdistan Independence

6 July 2014

“This talk about breaking apart Iraq is a Zionist plot.”

OE Watch Commentary: The most obvious—and perhaps only—beneficiaries of the June 2014 rampage of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) across central Iraq was Iraqi Kurdistan. Kurdish militias consolidated control over the disputed, oil-rich city of Kirkuk upon the withdrawal of Iraqi central government forces, achieving a decades-long goal.

With Iraqi Kurds controlling nearly all territory they claimed within Iraq, Iraqi Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani and other Kurdish officials raised the possibility of pushing for independence. On 3 July Barzani told his rubber stamp parliament that the Iraqi Kurdish government should prepare for a referendum for independence, although he pointedly did not offer a date for such a vote. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu suggested publicly that Kurds deserve independence, as did many Western commentators. The Turkish government—historically dead set against Kurdish statehood—made clear that they, too, would not oppose Kurdish independence, so long as statehood was limited to Iraqi Kurdistan and did not include Kurdish-populated territory in Turkey. Many Iraqi Arabs suggest privately that it is not worth fighting to keep Iraqi Kurdistan within Iraq, should Kurds choose to declare independence, although Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki suggested that Iraqi forces would return to Kirkuk.

It is against this backdrop that the Iranian foreign minister’s statements in the article excerpted here are of interest, because they are the first public indication that a Kurdish declaration of statehood might not be met with universal acclimation. Iran is historically sensitive to Kurdish separatism, since Iranian Kurds in 1946 sought their own independent republic carved out of Iranian territory. This Mahabad Republic remains intricately linked to Iraqi Kurdistan, since Mulla Mustafa, Barzani’s father, was the Iranian Kurdish republic’s defense minister, and Masoud Barzani resurrected the old Mahabad flag to be Iraqi Kurdistan’s as well.

Blaming Israel for separatism in Iraq is a knee-jerk reaction to any regional development Iran opposes, made easier by Netanyahu’s comments. But Iran’s objection is deeper: Iran hosts its own restive Kurdish population, which might look at Iraqi Kurdish statehood as a model for their own ambition. Amir-Abdollahian’s statement is also a useful reminder that while Turkey might have embraced the Iraqi Kurdistan region as a partner, Iran is unlikely to cede the territory entirely to Turkish influence. One thing is clear: if Iranian leaders fail to prevent Iraqi Kurdistan’s independence, Iran will likely work both to dominate and undermine the new state to prevent it from undercutting Iran’s own security. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**



Hossein Amir-Abdollahian discusses Kurdish independence.
Source: <http://www.isna.ir/fa/photo/93041508926/>

Source: “Amir-Abdollahian: Sokhan Goftan az Estighlal-e Kurdistan Bazgosht beh Chand Dahah Qablast” (“Amir-Abdollahian: To Talk of Kurdistan Independence is to Return to Decades Past,”), Iranian Student News Agency, 6 July 2014. <http://goo.gl/9I8hiX>

To Talk of Kurdistan Independence is to Return to Decades Past

Our deputy foreign minister for African and Arab Affairs, said it is known that the plan to break apart Iraq is a Zionist plan, and commented, “We will never let the dreams of [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] come true in this field.”

According to the Iranian Student News Agency, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, speaking about relations between Baghdad and Tehran, said, “This is a strategic relationship. Any change and action that is terroristic or interventionist in Iraq and which impacts the security of this country, can naturally have an impact on the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran... The Deputy Foreign Minister, commenting on secessionist projects in Iraq, said, “This talk about breaking apart Iraq is a Zionist plot.” Amir-Abdollahian added, “We should not forget that in recent days, the only place that joyfully supported the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan and urged the region to secede was Netanyahu.” He added, “We will never allow the dreams of Netanyahu in Iraq and our region for the breaking apart of the critical region of West Asia to come true.”

Iran: “The Basij Abroad is the Revolution’s Third Child”

30 June 2014

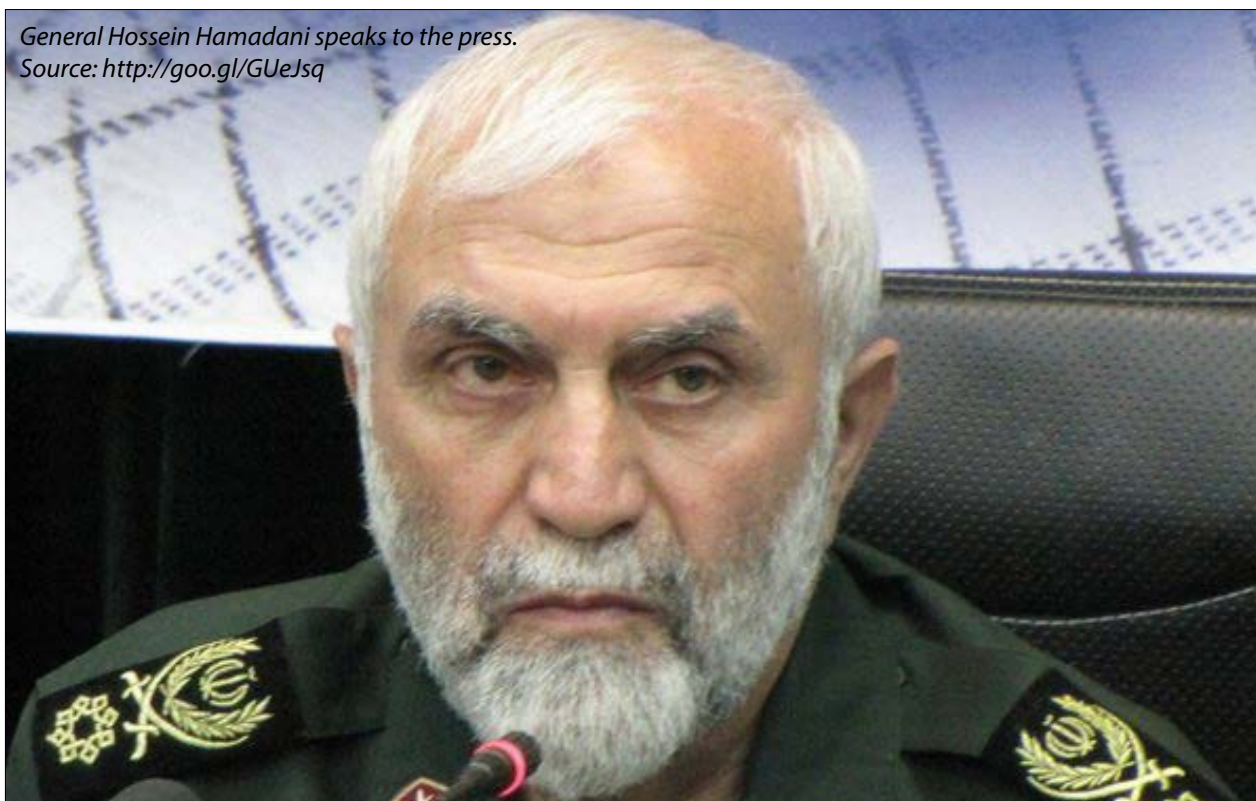
“It is no longer just Iran that says ‘down with America.’ All nations are shouting the slogan in unison.”

OE Watch Commentary: The Basij—a paramilitary force that developed alongside the Revolutionary Guards and against the backdrop of the Iran-Iraq War—continues to be a major symbol of the Islamic Republic. Stories of Basij members running across minefields with plastic keys to paradise dangling from their necks during the Iran-Iraq War symbolized Iran’s revolutionary fervor. Indeed, General Hossein Hamadani’s reference to the Basij as the Revolution’s third child—after presumably the Islamic Republic and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)—attests to the continued importance of the Basij in Iranian society today.

The importance of Hamadani’s speech, however, lies in the acknowledgement that the Iranian regime is expanding the Basij model beyond Iran’s borders and into Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. While Iranian diplomats may at times deny the level of Iranian involvement in other Middle Eastern countries—for example, claiming that young military-age Iranian males captured in Syria were religious pilgrims and not attached to the Iranian military—Hamadani’s acknowledgement of Basij involvement in Syria suggests that Iran is active in forming and utilizing ideological and religious paramilitaries and, indeed, the Basij can both form a model for sustained intervention and be a tool for Iran to export its revolution. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

General Hossein Hamadani speaks to the press.

Source: <http://goo.gl/GUeJsq>



Source: “Tazeh-taren Sokhnan Sardar Hamadani dar Mavard-e Suriya,” (“General Hamadani’s Most Recent Remarks about the Situation in Syria,”), Iranian Students News Agency, 30 June 2014. <http://goo.gl/GUeJsq>

General Hamadani’s Most Recent Remarks about the Situation in Syria

One of the commanders from the time of the Holy Defense [Iran-Iraq War] said, we are the survivors from the Brigade of His Excellent the Imam Ali the Great, and we are responsible for the ideals and the legacy of the martyrs.

According to the correspondent of the Iranian Student News Agency, Gen. Hussein Hamadani, speaking at the memorial service to the commanders, said on June 26...in the garden of the Museum of the Sacred Defense, “...Know that by establishing the Basij the third child of the revolution is being born in Iraq after it was mobilized in Syria and Lebanon. It is no longer just Iran that says ‘down with America.’ All nations are shouting the slogan in unison.”

This commander of the Holy Defense said U.S. generals admit Iran’s power today, but said they don’t understand the source of the power... “We fundamentally believe in total and popular defense. The people’s presence in the scene and the arena is the prescription for resistance. When the people entered alongside the military in Syria, the situation suddenly turned in the favor of the resistance. This is occurring in Iraq. We believe that Iraq must have operationalized its popular mobilization [force] more than this in the past. This Basij includes all minorities, all tribes, and the entire people... God has promised that victory is certainly yours if you resist and are patient. The Basij is presently being formed in Iraq after Lebanon and Syria. Iraqi officials are reaching the conclusion that they must get help from local popular forces... We can see the results of our martyrs today in Syria. We presently have Sunnis among the youthful forces in Syria who have the best managerial and military performances and love the Imam [Khomeini], the revolution, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. A research center has been established in Syria today that compiles and implements the ideals of the Supreme Leader.”

Iran Unveils Night Vision Drone

1 July 2014

“The Ababil-3...is capable of shooting video at night.”

OE Watch Commentary: The Iranian military continues to develop its unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) capability. While Iranian claims to have reverse-engineered a downed American stealth drone appear greatly exaggerated, Iranian UAVs used for surveillance, such as the Sobakbal, are operational, as is the Pehpad, which Iran has equipped with an explosive warhead so that it can be used essentially as a kamikaze drone. Previous models of the Ababil (or “Swallow”) could only fly at a relatively low altitude and were most effective during the day.

The announcement—excerpted here—of a new model of Ababil UAV suggests that Iranian drone technology continues to advance (Iranian Defense Minister General Hossein Dehqan has also announced that Iranian engineers are nearing completion of a new “Fotros” drone, which he claims can be armed with a variety of air-to-surface missiles and remain airborne for 30 hours). The hardline Fars News Agency suggested that the new Ababil-3 “is ready to attack the forces of Abraha,” a reference to a sixth century Ethiopian general who led forces to attack Mecca in 570, the year of the Prophet Muhammad’s birth, but was defeated supernaturally by birds which flocked, swarmed, and dropped rocks on the invading army which sought to destroy the Kaaba, the shrine to which Muslims now flock during the Hajj. This episode is described in the Qu’ran, chapter 105, titled “The Elephant.” Hence, naming the UAV Ababil (“Sparrow”) revives a practice common during the Iran-Iraq War in which Iranian officials assign weaponry names which reference Islamic theology or history. The “long-range Karrar,” for example, adopts a nickname of Imam Ali, while the “Fotros” references a fallen angel from Shi’ite theology. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**



Iran unveils its new Ababil-3 drone.

Source: <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13930410000233>

Source: “Jadidtarin Ababil-e Irani Amadeh Hamleh beh Sepah Abreheh Shod” (“The Newest Iranian Ababil is Ready to Attack the Forces of Abraha,”), Fars News, 1 July 2014. <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13930410000233>

The Newest Ababil is Ready

The specs for the Ababil-3 include a maximum speed of 200 kilometers per hour, and a flight endurance of four hours, a range of 100 kilometers roundtrip, a ceiling of 5,000 meters, and it is capable of shooting video at night... Part of this report read that the Ababil-3 is not similar to its predecessor UAV models. This UAV has a cylindrical body, with wings mounted on top while at the end of the body is an H-shaped twin boom. The wing design is a rectangle which, after half its lengths tapers toward the wing tapes.

Bracing for the Islamic State in Lebanon

10 July 2014

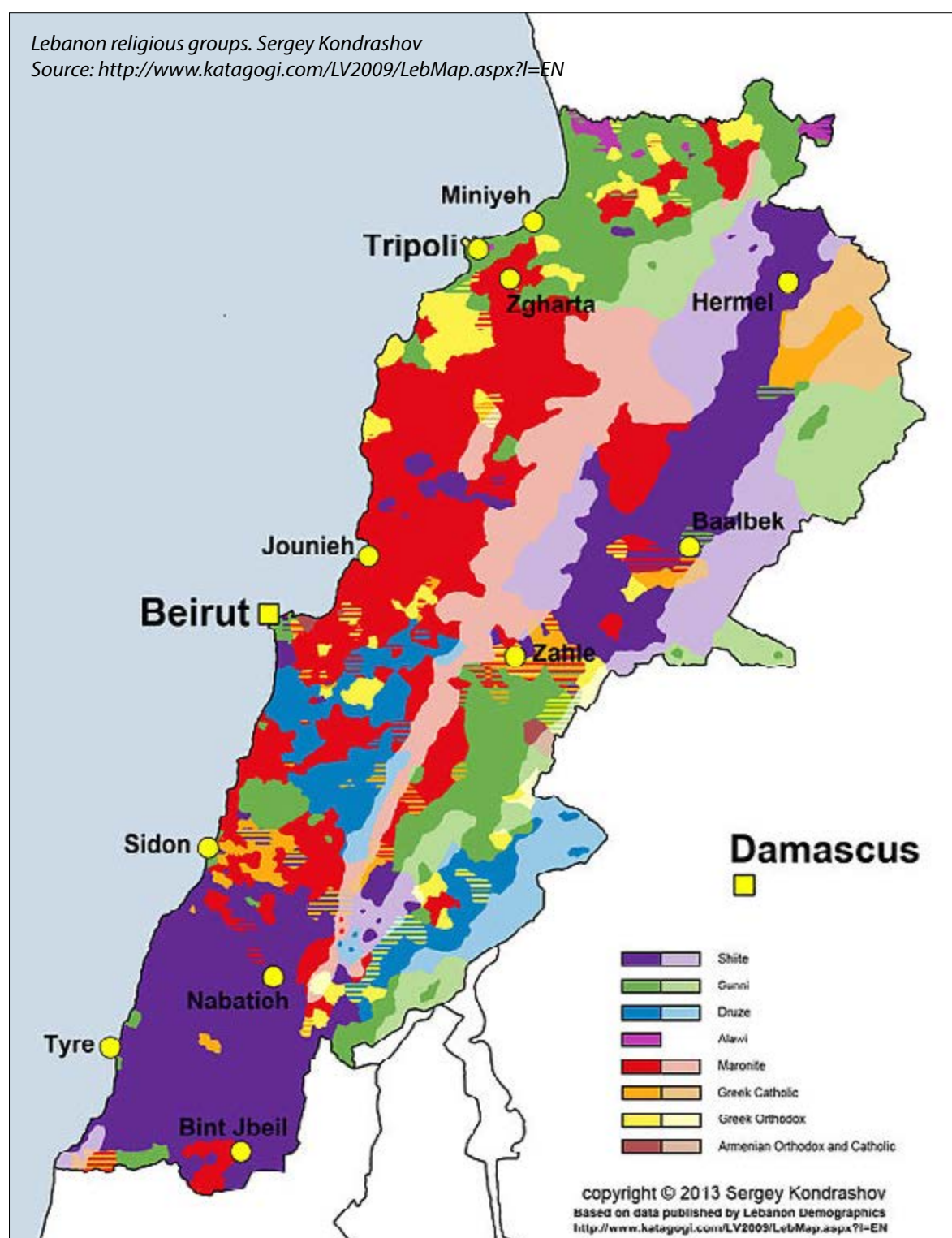
“... the ISIS invasion is not a mere scarecrow ...”

OE Watch Commentary: The Islamic State (IS) and its potential to recruit and mobilize locally is a hot topic in Lebanon these days. Sunni groups that see the IS as a present danger (and not all do, as the first accompanying article shows) usually blame Hizbullah's involvement in Syria for the current state of affairs. Hizbullah and its allies (the March 8 Alliance), in contrast, link the IS threat to the pernicious influence of Saudi Arabia in Lebanon. These disagreements have for the moment been cast aside. Since March 2014 Lebanon's main political factions have effectively worked together to contain Syrian spillover.

The national security plan forced the IS to fire its first salvo prematurely. On 25 June a Saudi national blew himself up in Raouche, an upscale part of Beirut popular with tourists. He did so to avoid detention after Lebanese security forces stormed his hotel room. His actual target had purportedly been a restaurant in the Shi'a-majority southern suburbs of Beirut. His accomplice was captured and in the following week Lebanese security scrambled to contain the rest of the network. On 7 July 28 people of various nationalities were charged with planning bombings in Lebanon and belonging to the IS. Seven of them are in custody.

Lebanon is in the crosshairs of the top IS leadership. The first audio statement by its self-declared Caliph Ibrahim (formerly Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi) announced the launch of a new phase in his group's battle, to begin with a campaign called “Breaking the Walls,” aimed at freeing Islamist prisoners throughout the region. Lebanon's Roumieh Prison was singled out as a priority target.

Three areas in Lebanon are considered particularly vulnerable to Sunni radicalization: the Ein al-Hilwah refugee camp, the northern city of Tripoli and the Sunni-majority areas along Lebanon's eastern border with Syria. In both Ein al-Hilwah and Tripoli the cooperation of existing Salafi groups with the state has been crucial to the security plan's success. Such cooperation is hard to imagine,



Source: Justin Salhani. “ISIS will Not Find Support in Lebanon: analysts,” 27 June 2014. The Daily Star. <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Jun-27/261741-isis-will-not-find-support-in-lebanon-analysts.ashx>

Article #1:

Yet despite this resentment, analysts and Sunni political and religious figures insist ISIS has no presence among Lebanese and will not find a major support base here... although those who spoke to The Daily Star were dismissive of ISIS, many added that the Sunni community felt the law was not being fairly applied to them and that they were being oppressed, similar complaints to those that laid the groundwork for the current Iraq crisis.

(continued)

Continued: Bracing for the Islamic State in Lebanon

absent an understanding between the Salafists and the Future Movement, the country's largest Sunni political bloc and leader of the March 14 Alliance. As the second accompanying article notes, while the Future Movement is crucial to the security plan's success, it will find it difficult to act as the sole representative of Sunni interests in Lebanon.

*Continued collaboration among the state, local Salafi groups and the Future Movement may be sufficient to keep radicalization at bay in Tripoli. This, along with the additional need to coordinate with the various Palestinian factions, could go some way toward maintaining calm in Ein al-Hilwah. The border with Syria, though, is a different matter (see accompanying map). According to the third accompanying article, from the Lebanese daily al-Akhbar, it is here that the IS threat is most palpable. This mountainous area has become a safe haven for rebels fleeing Hizbullah and/or Syrian Arab Army (SAA) offensives in Homs, Qusayr and the Qalamoun Mountains. The area has been a continuing nuisance for Hizbullah and the SAA. It is ripe for IS infiltration. The fourth accompanying article, also from al-Akhbar, claims that some local Jabhat al-Nusra fighters in this area have already switched allegiance to the IS. In short, the next chapter of the Syrian war's Lebanese front is looming. Unlike the three previous chapters (Homs, Qusayr and the Qalamoun), this one will occur mostly in Lebanese territory. The likelihood of it drawing out the IS and spreading to other parts of Lebanon is high. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)***

Source:

Hazem al-Amin. "Lebanon Fights in Syria... Here Is Where ISIS Begins," 7 July 2014. Al-Hayat. <http://goo.gl/xkH6Ia>

لبنان يقاتل في سورية... من هنا تبدأ "داعش"

Article #2:

The responsibility of the Future Movement here is large, as it is the political refuge for Lebanese Sunnis today. It is clear that the Future Movement is a key player in what has been achieved thus far. However, the shores of Lebanon's Sunni lake are vast and no single group can fully contain them.

Source: Jean Aziz. "ISIS Poses Serious Threat to Lebanon," 10 July 2014. Al-Akhbar. <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/isis-poses-serious-threat-lebanon>

Article #3:

Around one week ago, the Lebanese military tried to test the waters even further, by sending an armed patrol deep into the areas east of Ersal. The reply came through heavy gunfire from the other side; warning shots of a possible confrontation before the situation inside Lebanon becomes ripe.... the ISIS invasion is not a mere scarecrow. It is a clear and imminent threat, across from Ersal to be exact.

Source: Radwan Mortada. "Lebanese Jihadis Pledging Allegiance to the Islamic State," 9 July 2014. Al-Akhbar. <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/20521>

Article #4:

Jihadi sources who spoke to Al-Akhbar have confirmed that a group affiliated to al-Nusra Front in Ersal, which includes in its ranks both Lebanese and Syrian nationals, is preparing to go to the IS-controlled Raqqa governorate... The number of al-Nusra militants in the border regions and the mountainous areas between Lebanon and Syria is in the vicinity of 600, according to the jihadi sources. The number of defectors so far has not exceeded 50, they claim, but the state of apprehension on account of the decline of al-Nusra's role and its successive defeats is all too obvious, the sources add.

“...money alone does not provide security...”

OE Watch Commentary: Over the past six months, member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have begun to re-examine their military service policies. In November 2013 Qatari authorities passed legislation requiring men between the ages of 18 and 35 to do at least three months of service if college graduates and four months otherwise. In June 2014 the UAE began implementing a similar law requiring its male citizens between the ages of 18 and 30 to do nine months or two years of military service, depending on whether or not they had a college degree. Rumors that Kuwait will follow suit have been swirling for some time, and the debate over conscription has gained traction in Oman and Saudi Arabia, as well as in GCC-allied Jordan.

Proponents of conscription usually cite two major benefits to military service. One is strategic. The first accompanying article, an op-ed calling for military service in Saudi Arabia, argues that conscription is necessary for Gulf countries to counter any potential Iranian incursion. The other commonly cited benefit of conscription is the discipline and character-building associated with military service. Gulf youth, some believe, easily fall prey to the allure of consumerism and fundamentalism, of sloth and drug addiction, of insolence and hubris. Military service would help remedy this, according to the line of reasoning illustrated by the second accompanying article.

GCC countries are not the only ones worried about the size of their armies. Jordan, a close ally of the GCC, has toyed with reinstating military service. On 26 June Jordan's Public Security Department began requiring males between the ages of 18 and 38 to obtain a valid military service book before traveling internationally, as detailed in the third accompanying article. At the same time, the Jordanian Army has launched a recruitment drive to address a general shortage. Although a routine procedure, as the fourth accompanying article notes, the announcement has drawn plenty of attention, given the ongoing fears that the Islamic State will try to breach the Iraq-Jordan border. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**



Map of GCC countries.
Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/55/Persian_Gulf_Arab_States_english.PNG

Source: الخدمة الإلزامية حق الوطن على المواطن
Abd al-Rahman al-Khatib. “Compulsory Service Is an Obligation by the Nation to Its Citizens,” 3 July 2014. Al-Hayat. <http://goo.gl/A7jtQH>

Article #1:
... money alone does not provide security, it does not buy respect, it does not guarantee stability... it would be most complicated for the Saudi military or the GCC armies at present to hold back an Iranian attack, as the numbers of the armies are lower than what they should be vis-à-vis the size of the Iranian army... For those who have not completed their university studies, we might say that some of the benefits of obligatory military service in Saudi Arabia would include: the best way to care for the young unemployed and protect them from drugs and perverted ideologies. These young men are a time-bomb...

(continued)

Continued: National Recruitment and Mobilization in the Gulf



Emblem of the Jordanian Armed Forces.

Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/2/2d/Jordanian_Armed_Forces_%28emblem%29.png

Source: Saleh al-Shaibany. "Should Oman Introduce Compulsory Military Service?" 23 February 2014. Times of Oman. <http://www.timesofoman.com/News/Article-30165.aspx>

Article #2:

... if Oman could come up with the extra costs should the country decide to send its youngsters to the army, the military exercise would toughen up the normally pampered and sheltered youth. It will also teach some discipline to those young people who are terrorising the roads with their dangerous driving and tame the rough behaviour of the rest. It may even cut down the number of drug users and peddlers among the nationals, whose numbers have sharply increased in the last decade...

Source: "Jordanian Men Urged to Get Military Service Documents Stamped to Ease Travel Procedures," 28 June 2014. Jordan Times. <http://jordantimes.com/jordanian-men-urged-to-get-military-service-documents-stamped-to-ease-travel-procedures>

Article #3:

The Public Security Department (PSD) on Saturday called on Jordanian men born between 1974 and 1996 to check with the conscription department branches in their governorates before travelling abroad.

They have to get their military service document stamped to show that their conscription has been postponed and present them at airports or border crossings to save time and effort, according to a PSD statement sent to The Jordan Times.

Source:

حملة تجنيد في الأردن بعد "إفطار" ملكي مع حرس الحدود ومطالب بعودة "الخدمة الإلزامية"
"Recruitment Campaign in Jordan Following King's Iftar with Border Guards amidst Calls for Bringing Back Compulsory Service," 8 July 2014. Al-Quds al-Arabi. <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=190584>

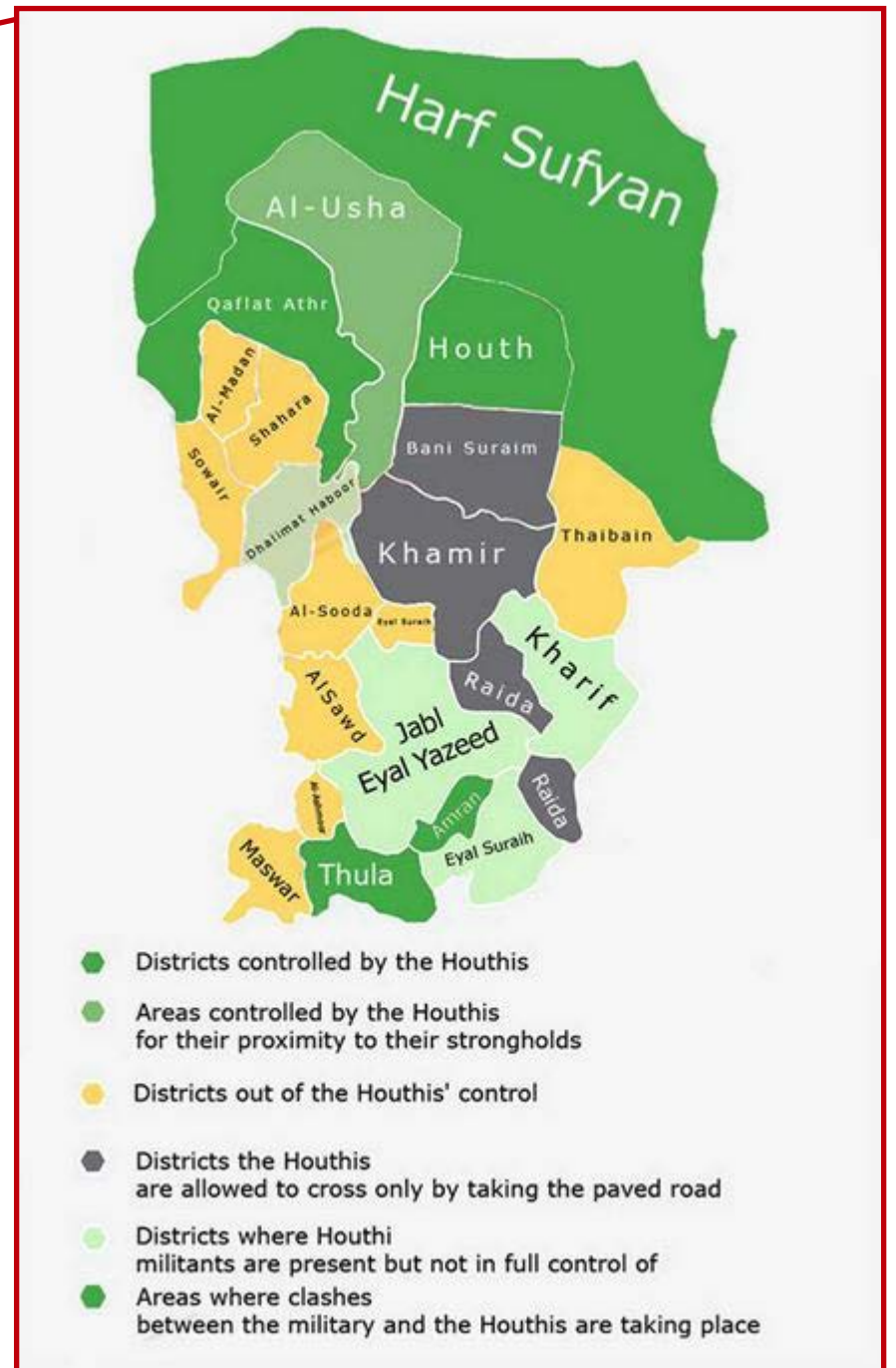
Article #4:

A source who spoke with al-Quds al-Arabi mentioned that the aforementioned announcement as a customary and periodic announcement that does not aim to recruit a large number of cadres. He added that the intention is to fill vacancies in the armed forces, which is an ordinary event that is linked neither to politics nor to specific new threats. The announcement came 24 hours after King Abdullah II had Iftar with soldiers from the border guard stationed on the Iraqi front, where strong precautionary measures have been taken to avoid any penetration or violation of the Jordanian border with Iraq...

The Fall of the Yemeni Army's 310th Brigade

10 July 2014

“... a strategic threat to the Yemeni state as well as to its Saudi neighbor ...”



Map showing control of Amran province.

Source: <http://www.yementimes.com/en/1797/news/4090/Houthis-take-control-of-Amran-city.htm>

OE Watch Commentary: In early July 2014 the Ansarullah rebel movement (aka the Huthis) and their local allies seized the headquarters of the Yemeni Army's 310th Armored Brigade, located in the town of Amran, around 120 km north of Sanaa. Brigadier General Hamid al-Qushaibi, longtime commander of the 310th, called for reinforcements that never materialized and was killed in the fighting. The Ansarullah allegedly distributed the weapons they seized, including dozens of tanks, among emerging frontlines on the outskirts of the capital Sanaa, their stronghold of Sa'dah and other places outside of Amran.

The 310th Brigade has a notorious history. It was formed in 1973 as the 1st Brigade of the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) Army. In 1990 it was joined in Amran by the 3d Brigade of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). Joint basing of this sort occurred in various parts of the north and the south in an attempt to ease the post-unification merger of the two militaries. In April 1994 heavy fighting erupted between the two Amran-based brigades. Slightly over a week later the larger and better equipped PDRY brigade was wiped out by the YAR's 1st Brigade. As the first accompanying article shows, antipathy toward this brigade and its leader remains strong among southern nationalists. The fact that Amran was overrun on the 20th anniversary of the 7 July 1994 capture of Aden (which ended the 1994 civil war) adds a layer of symbolism to the fall of the 310th.

By most accounts, al-Qushaibi and his brigade took orders from General Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar, former commander of the 1st Armored Division. Ali Muhsin's March 2011 defection was key to the forced resignation of then-president Ali Abdullah Saleh. The leaders of most units under the command of the 1st Armored Division, including al-Qushaibi and the

Source:

ما الذي يتذكره الجنوبيون عن العميد حميد القشبي؟
Saleh abu Othl. "What Do Southerners Remember about Brig. Gen. Hamid al-Qubaishi?" 9 July 2014. Aden al-Ghad. <http://adenalghad.net/news/113020>

Article #1:

Al-Qushaibi was killed in the base from which twenty years ago he ordered his forces (the 1st Brigade) to eliminate the southern 3rd Brigade and destroy their massive weaponry. In this way he has drunk from the same cup that the southerners did, only at the hands of the Zaydi Huthis ...

(continued)

Continued: The Fall of the Yemeni Army's 310th Brigade

10 July 2014

310th Brigade, defected alongside Ali Muhsin. Following the fall of the 310th, a number of media outlets accused Defense Minister Mohammed Nasser Ahmed of conspiring against al-Qushaibi and Muhsin. The second accompanying excerpt, taken from al-Jazeera, gives an example of this line of thinking. What is evident is that the fall of the 310th has inflamed divisions within the Yemeni Armed Forces. As the second accompanying article notes, some Yemenis believe that Amran may end up being a preview for a showdown in Sanaa, which will involve not only Ali Abdullah Saleh and Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar, but also “moderate” southerners currently in government, the ever zealous Huthi fighters, and a smattering of tribal militias.

Alarm bells are surely ringing in Riyadh. Immediately after the fall of Amran, Yemeni President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi flew to meet the top Saudi leadership in Jeddah. The following day an editorial in the Saudi newspaper Okaz blandly declared “We will not allow Yemen to be threatened,” while promising unconditional Saudi support to Hadi’s administration. Saudi Arabia has lacked a strong and reliable ally in Yemen ever since the Al Saud turned against the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013. The kingdom is hoping that the Yemeni central government can keep the post-Saleh Saudi-led Gulf Cooperation Council power-sharing bargain afloat. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**



Hamid al-Qushaibi, former commander of the 310th (R), seated next to Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar (L)
Source: http://marebpress.net/news_details.php?sid=100857&lng=arabic

Source:

تساؤلات عن أسباب سقوط عمران بيد الحوثيين
Abdou Ayish. “Questions about the Fall of Ameran to the Huthis,” 10 July 2014. Al-Jazeera.

Article #2:

Adel al-Ahmadi, head of the Nashwan al-Humairi Center for Studies in Sanaa, said that the mediation efforts interim president Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi tasked defense minister Brig. Gen. Mohammed Nasser Ahmed with in order to end the fighting between Huthi militias and the 310th Brigade forces always favored the Huthis. This for him is proof of the complicity of state leadership and the ministry of defense with the Huthis. ... According to al-Ahmadi, the fall of Amran opens the road for the Huthis to move toward the capital Sanaa, a move that represents a strategic threat to the Yemeni state as well as to its Saudi neighbor.

Source:

لن نسمح بتهديد اليمن
“We Will Not Allow Yemen to Be Threatened,” 10 July 2014. Okaz. <http://www.okaz.com.sa/new/Issues/20140710/Con20140710711376.htm>

Article #3:

The kingdom will continue to stand alongside Yemen the state, Yemen the people, Yemen the nation and Yemen the history. It will not hesitate to provide all it can to the brother country...

Fighting Over Oil Fields Helps Fuel Somalia's Balkanization

15 June 2014

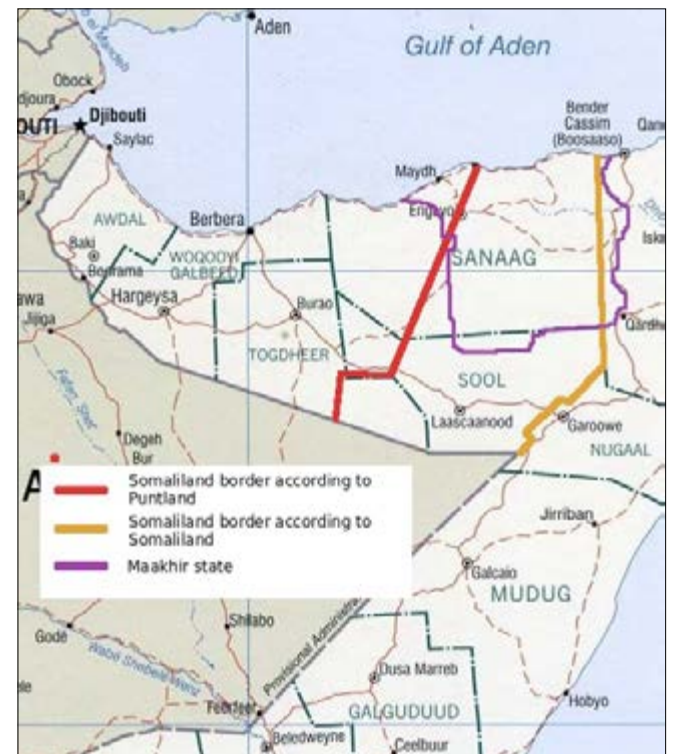
“The President of Somalia’s Semi-autonomous State of Puntland Abdiweli Mohamed Ali Gaas has declared war against the break away region of Somaliland after Somaliland forces seized Taleh town in Sool region...”

OE Watch Commentary: Since 2002 Somaliland, a region in northwestern Somalia that has declared itself an independent nation, though no other country recognizes its sovereignty, and Puntland, an autonomous region in northeastern Somalia, have fought sporadically over the oil-rich Sool and Sarang Provinces, which serve as part of the disputed border between them. As the accompanying articles relate, it appears the two are once again inching towards war. To complicate the matter even further, a third entity, Maakhir, of which a significant portion falls within the disputed region, declared autonomy in 2007. Joining the fray, Khatumo, also in that region, declared itself an autonomous state, thus making for at least four competing, though not entirely overlapping claims.

These are just some of the fractures in Somalia. There are other entities, such as Jubaland, also seeking a degree of autonomy from the Somalia Federal Government, though the Somaliland-Puntland border dispute appears especially likely to lead to fighting, as the economic stakes over oil-rich Sool and Sarang are so high and both regions, especially Somaliland, have relatively strong military forces in comparison to other parts of Somalia.

As the accompanying articles relate, the war of words is heating up, perhaps as a prelude to a war of bullets. Recently Puntland’s president declared war on Somaliland, claiming Somaliland forces attacked the town of Taleh in the Sool Province, killing several people and displacing others, though at the time this article was written no Puntland forces had yet engaged Somaliland forces. This follows other incursions by Somaliland forces into oil-rich regions claimed by both sides. The UN, in attempting to defuse the situation, has asked both sides to exercise restraint and pursue diplomatic means to solve their differences.

Besides both Somaliland and Puntland having military forces capable of waging war, they each have the capacity - or at least they believe they do - to negotiate contracts with foreign entities. Thus, Somaliland and Puntland have signed oil exploration agreements with foreign companies despite the Somalia central government asking them not to do so. With different regions in Somalia having their own governments, standing armies, and other trappings of sovereign states, in essence the world is witnessing the balkanization of Somalia, with the potential for enormous oil revenues helping to drive the conflict-over-borders part of that process. The African Union and Western governments are pushing for an alternative scenario, one where Somalia is united through a very loose federation, a strong central government, or something in-between, hoping that even Somaliland,



Map of disputed Somaliland-Puntland border.
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_somaliland_border_claims.jpg

Source: “President of Puntland declares war on Somaliland after seizure of Taleh,” South Africa Today, 15 June 2014, <http://southafricatoday.net/africa-news/east-africa/somalia/president-of-puntland-declares-war-on-somaliland-after-seizure-of-taleh/>

Speaking at a press conference in the region’s commercial hub Bosasso, President Gaas described Somaliland’s seizure against Taleh and other districts of the region as unacceptable and that his administration will respond.

He called the people of Puntland to resist against the aggression of Somaliland forces.

The call came after Somaliland forces seized on Thursday the town of Taleh in the Sool region where Khatumo administration was holding its third conference.



Flag of Somalia.
Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org>

(continued)

Continued: Fighting Over Oil Fields Helps Fuel Somalia's Balkanization

*which has already declared its independence, can be convinced to join. The thought is that having some form of central government for Somalia could help reduce the tensions among the different regions and the conflict that periodically arises from those tensions. Meanwhile, for any American troops who may find themselves in Somalia in the future, it will be important to remember that not only is there fighting between al-Shabaab and the forces that oppose it, as well as inter-clan fighting, but there is also the fighting that periodically breaks out along the fracture lines - frequently though not always entirely also clan-related - among the different regions. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***

Source: "Somalia: Somaliland Forces take control of Taleh without resistance," Garowe Online, 12 June, 2014 http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia-Somaliland-Forces-take-control-of-Taleh-without-resistance.shtml

Amidst looming threats of instability in the disputed regions of Sool and Sanaag, a fresh incursion into the historic town of Taleh by Somaliland's separatist administration forces has been reported....

Separately, Somaliland yesterday deployed hundreds of its troops in Sanaag region, positioning them in temporary bases near Hingalool district.

On April 25, Somaliland troops seized Holhol village in Sool, with units within the forces seizing strategic oil-rich targets.

UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea warned in 2013 confidential report that Western commercial oil exploration may spark new conflict in Somalia: "These inconsistencies, unless resolved, may lead to increased political conflict between federal and regional governments that risk exacerbating clan divisions and therefore threaten peace and security," the UN report noted.

Somaliland's neighbor to east, Puntland warned of "consequences" in Somaliland's pursuit of oil exploration in Sool and Sanaag regions.

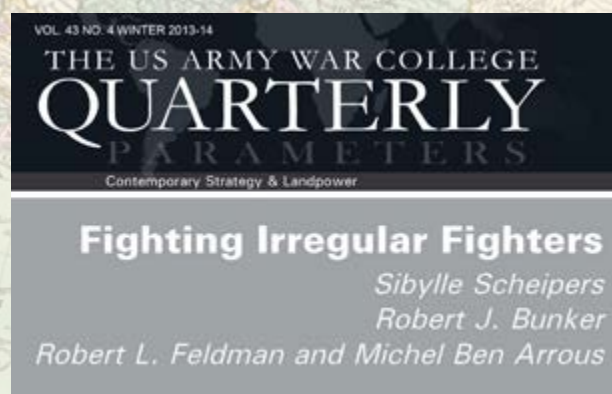
Confronting Africa's Sobels (Soldiers by Day, Rebels by Night)

By FMSO analyst Robert Feldman and noted geographer Michel Ben Arrous

While the sobel phenomenon (soldiers by day; rebels by night) described within these pages may appear to be an African problem, the Western world's increasing involvement in fighting terrorists on that continent make it one America's military forces might encounter. Unfortunately, it could add a significant layer of complexity to US operations as American troops attempt to differentiate allies from enemies. In Africa, sometimes they are one and the same.

Parameters Winter 2013-2014

http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/issues/Winter_2013/7_FeldmanArrous.pdf



The Central African Republic: “Forgotten Crisis”

24 June 2014

“The phenomenon of “forgotten crises,” which find it difficult to attract world attention and funding, is so pervasive that the European Union has an official rating system (Central African Republic is one of the top four, along with Myanmar, Western Sahara, and Chad).”

OE Watch Commentary: For a significant part of 2013 much of the world’s attention was focused on the Central African Republic (CAR), where machetes were swinging and bullets were flying between Muslims and Christians. Since then the crises in Syria and Iraq have diverted the world’s gaze, and, as the first accompanying article relates, the crisis in CAR has, to an extent, become a forgotten one, for while much of the nation is in a state of collapse, the machetes are still swinging and the bullets are still flying, although not as frequently. As the second accompanying article relates, the situation may not get much better until the new UN peacekeeping mission arrives this September.

There had been fighting between the Muslims and Christians before 2013. However, with the coup d’état that year, which brought Michael Djotidia, the leader of a coalition of Muslim rebel militias known as Seleka, to power as the country’s new president, there was hope peace could be achieved. It was not. Despite Djotidia ordering Seleka to disband, the group continued to fight, as did those who supported the president whom Djotidia had overthrown. Thus, a spiraling cycle of violence emerged as Seleka engaged in fighting with militias composed of Christians and animists, known as anti-balaka (anti-machete). Atrocities were committed by both sides, though by the beginning of 2014 anti-balaka was becoming responsible for the majority of these acts, probably in large measure because there are approximately six times more Christians and animists in CAR than Muslims. International peacekeepers struggled to contain the violence, but the news out of CAR for a long time carried grisly images of people who had been attacked by machetes.

Eventually the number of killings began to taper off; it had to, there were fewer people left to kill. Bangui, the capital, had 138,000 Muslims before the fighting began; today it has fewer than 1,000. Many died in the fighting, but many also fled to safer areas of CAR or across the borders to other countries. Still, the

Source: “Central African Republic: Still A Forgotten Crisis (Editor’s Note),” Africa Focus, 23 June 2014, <http://www.africafocus.org/docs14/car1406.php>

The phenomenon of “forgotten crises,” which find it difficult to attract world attention and funding, is so pervasive that the European Union has an official rating system (Central African Republic is one of the top four, along with Myanmar, Western Sahara, and Chad).

In CAR, a UN peacekeeping force, finally approved in April, will not be in place until September.

...as a new report from International Crisis Group notes, the need is not only for security and humanitarian aid, but also for joint national and international involvement in fundamental issues of reconstructing a collapsed state.

... a sure way to guarantee failure and continued crisis is to continue with the pattern of “too little, too late.”



Former Central African Republic president Michel Am-Nondokro Djotodia.
Source: <http://www.levif.be>

(continued)

Continued: The Central African Republic, a Forgotten Crisis

killings continue, though as the accompanying articles relate, at a decreased rate. This move to a relatively chronic low-level conflict, coupled with the outbreaks of marked violence in the Middle East, has diverted the world's attention from CAR. As the first accompanying article relates, the International Crisis Group and others have described the situation in CAR as a "forgotten crisis." Of course, for those on the ground there it is far from forgotten.

*According to the second accompanying article, elections are scheduled for September, 2015. The transitional government, headed by interim president Catherine Samba-Panza, will give way to a democratically elected administration which, it is hoped, will be able to further stabilize the situation. However, that is more than one year away, and with the country's weak government, coupled with actions by its northern neighbor Chad, which withdrew its armed peacekeeping contingent and closed its CAR border, there is concern that not enough international resources are being directed at the forgotten crisis of CAR to prevent it from escalating once again. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***

Source: Magnus Taylor, "Waiting for the Blue Helmets: More gloom from CAR as crisis passes 18 months," African Arguments, 24 June 2014, <http://africanarguments.org/2014/06/24/waiting-for-the-blue-helmets-more-gloom-from-car-as-crisis-passes-18-months-by-magnus-taylor/#comment-41804>

The crisis in the CAR has metamorphosed from a lightening storm of rebellions, coups and emergency military deployment into a low rumbling groan of desperation from a country whose government and institutions have all but collapsed. Its people now await a new UN peacekeeping mission scheduled to arrive in September 2014.

The situation in the CAR currently seems to be stabilizing a little after a period of very rapid change from Dec – March 2014 which included the resignation of President Michel Djotodia, election of Catherine Samba-Panza and escalation of anti-Muslim violence.

In April, Chad withdrew its armed contingent (numbering 850) from the CAR. It has subsequently closed its northern border with the country. Both these actions signaled the end of Chadian-led attempts to move people around, or out of the country – particularly the Muslim population, which the Chadians had been quite effective at managing.

International donors will not attempt a rearmament program [of the national army] until after the elections. However, owing to the current fragile security state of the country it is highly unlikely that these will be held when scheduled.

It was commented that in comparable conflict situations, solutions are greatly dependent on regional actors all 'pulling in the same direction'. In the CAR this has clearly not been the case, most clearly illustrated by the actions and subsequent withdrawal of Chad. However, whilst regional dynamics are important, the real problem in the country has been a lack of long-term governance.

Africa's Brain Drain: Its Impacts on Security and Stability

By Lieutenant Colonel Robert Feldman, U.S. Army Reserve.

Africa is bleeding. Much of its lifeblood, composed of well-educated individuals who could help tackle its toughest problems, is flowing away. This hemorrhaging of engineers, doctors, teachers, nurses, businesspersons, scientists, and others with extensive training constitutes Africa's brain drain. This brief study examines the impact of this loss in the social, economic, political and security spheres.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Africa's-Brain-Drain.pdf>



The Gendered Dimensions of Boko Haram

6 July 2014

“The husbands and fathers of the abducted women were not ready to part with even a single calf as ransom for the release of their wives and daughters.”



Chibok Mothers Protest for Missing Daughters. Source: <http://face2faceafrica.com/article/nigerian-girls-kidnapped#.U806RLGCIAM>

OE Watch Commentary: With the May 2014 kidnapping of some 200 schoolgirls from the northeastern town of Chibok, the issue of gender has become an increasingly important – yet understudied – dimension of Boko Haram’s tactics.

In the aftermath of the attacks, Nigerian women led the #bringbackourgirls protests, which have had lamentably little success in actually compelling action. Yet beyond just the Chibok situation, it appears as though Boko Haram has realized the benefits of targeting a demographic purported to be among the most vulnerable in the world. Indeed, many Nigerian commentators have noted that since Boko Haram lives and dies by the extent of its coverage in the media, tactics that elicit shock – particularly related to women and girls – are imperative for its perpetuation.

Two months after the Chibok girls were kidnapped Boko Haram again resurfaced, abducting twenty young mothers in the town of Garkin Fulani, a mere five miles from Chibok, while the men of the village were grazing their cattle. Boko Haram abductors have been quick to demand ransom for the kidnapped, though husbands, fathers, or other male relatives are put in a precarious situation in potentially paying up. In short, as the second accompanying article details, Boko Haram has demanded forty cattle per abductee in the case of the twenty kidnapped victims from Garkin Fulani. (The Fulani, it

Source: “Nigeria: 63 Abducted Borno Women Escape From Boko Haram.” Premium Times (Abuja), July 6, 2014. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201407070234.html>

Some 63 out of about 70 women abducted in Borno State by suspected Boko Haram gunmen last week, have escaped from their captors, security sources and witnesses said.

The women managed to regain their freedom as their captors mobilised out of their hideout to attack military and police formations in Damboa Local Government Area, Borno State...

Mr. Gava said about five women and two girls still remain under captivity. One of the women is said to be a nursing mother...

The security source said the women who mastered the terrain were able to return home, while some wondered [sic] to the Borno State borders with Adamawa state...

Source: Haruna, Kareem. “Nigeria: 20 Kidnapped Women - Boko Haram Demands 40 Cows Per Hostage.” Leadership (Abuja), June 12, 2014. http://allafrica.com/stories/201406120335.html?aa_source=useful-column

Boko Haram terrorists are reportedly asking for 40 cows as a precondition for the release of each of the 20 abducted Fulani women, whom they had held in captivity for about a week now, husbands of the abducted women and security sources have said.

The insurgents who picked up the women in Garkin Fulani, a nomadic settlement near Chibok town last week Thursday are now reaching out to the husbands of the kidnapped women with what could be described as ransom...

The police source said, the husbands and fathers of the abducted women were not ready to part with even a single calf as ransom for the release of their wives and daughters.

“You know the Fulanis hold their herds more dearly, because without it they have no means of livelihood”, said the police Sergeant. “Most of them have come to report the incident at our offices but they are all saying such demands are not tenable”.

(continued)

Continued: The Gendered Dimensions of Boko Haram

should be noted, are cattle herders. Cattle grazing is their main source of livelihood, the size of one's herd being a marker of social status.) Some men are unable or unwilling to provide such a substantial sum, thus leaving the abducted women in limbo. Indeed, the situation underlines the extent to which some women in Nigeria are being manipulated – and their human rights fundamentally undermined – in a battle in which they have relatively little say.

Yet not all women in the country are victims: as the third article details, a certain cadre of women is actually joining the ranks of Boko Haram. The first major instance of violence by a woman was carried out in early June, when a female suicide bomber martyred herself at an army barracks in Gombe. More recently, as the accompanying article relays, Nigerian security forces have infiltrated a ring of female Boko Haram affiliates. These women, it alleges, assist the group by recruiting other women – sometimes young girls, other times, older women – with promises of marriage. Finally, as the first of the three articles elucidates, other women have been able to escape from Boko Haram, given the group's somewhat lackluster organizational capacities.

*In a country where women have historically been deeply subordinate to men, women are increasingly proving themselves – for better and for worse – to be playing a central role in the country's conflict. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)***

The officer said they were presently handling a particular case...where [a] Fulani man said he would rather stay without his wife than giving out what he does not even have.

“This man in question has a son delivered to him by his abducted wife and presently the man and his son are at the police station in Jakana; he said he was asked to provide 40 cows as ransom for the release of his abducted wife, but the man said he has his son with him; and that if God wills that his wife would return to him, he doesn't need to part with his means of livelihood to secure her back”.

The Fulani man's concern was that “what if he gave out the cows, which are not even up to 40 and then his wife was not released; it means he would lose in both ways. So he would rather keep his herds and his son and pray that his wife returns safely home one day”.

Source: “Nigeria: Troops Uncover More Female Terrorist Members, Nabs Three.” Government of Nigeria (Abuja), July 4, 2014. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201407071854.html/>

In the aftermath of the failed suicide bombing attempt on a military facility by a female terrorist who blew herself up in Gombe recently, troops have arrested three suspected female terrorists who have been secretly recruiting ladies into the female wing of the terrorists group.

... The suspects - Hafsat Usman Bako, Zainab Idris and Aisha Abubakar were intercepted while travelling to Madagali from where they were to transit to the forest to reunite with their cohorts.

“Investigations have revealed that the suspects led by Hafsat Bako have the mission to recruit members into the female wing as well as conduct espionage for the group....

The report informed that the arrested trio suspects were luring ladies, especially widows and young girls by enticing them with male suitors who are mainly members of their terror group for marriage; saying before their arrest, they were on a mission to taking additional briefing from the leadership of the terror group. It stated that the trio has been operating together as members of the intelligence team of the group and their arrest has yielded information which is still being verified by security agencies.

(continued)

Nigeria Looks to Non-Traditional Spaces as Security Threats

4 July 2014

“Football and other sporting activities are unifying factors which keep the adherents of all religions and political divides in Nigeria together- Boko Haram does not want this.”

OE Watch Commentary: With the uptick in violence attributed to Boko Haram, a normally lax Nigerian security apparatus is increasingly taking drastic measures – at least on the surface – to protect its citizens by improving security at some nontraditional sites within the country.

The national capital of Abuja is arguably at the forefront of these measures. This should come as no surprise, since it sits in the “buffer zone” between the insurgent north and the heavily-populated south. As the first article details, various measures are being undertaken there to improve security in a variety of arenas. Perhaps the most laudable is the government’s “Know Thy Neighbor” campaign, which encourages citizens in the relatively new, artificial, and thus sometimes fragmented and institutionalized city to interact with their compatriots. Another laudable measure is the banning of truck unloading at night. Indeed, this is a direct response to intelligence gathered in May and June that suggested that Boko Haram was contemplating car bombings and truck hijackings – particularly of oil tankers – as its next big attack in Abuja. Other measures include registering all hotel guests with the state’s security services, cracking down on the use of illegal drugs (referred to here as “Indian hemp”), and fining owners of abandoned lots that could be used for hideouts. While it is unclear how well any of the tactics work (if they are even fully implemented at all), they do signal at least an ostensible attempt to secure the increasingly beleaguered capital.

Outside of Abuja, other locations, including schools and informal gathering spots for watching sports, seem to be receiving renewed focus. As the second article relays, schools, especially in the Boko Haram-ravaged northeast, are beefing up security in light of the group’s use of kidnapping as a tactic. Soldiers,



Nigerians viewing a football game. Source: <http://www.punchng.com/sports/world-cup-2014/bomb-threat-curtails-nigeria-world-cup-viewings/>

Source: “Insecurity: Minister Orders Hotels in Abuja to Submit Guests’ List to Security Agencies.” 247 Nigeria News Update (Nigeria), July 1, 2014. <http://247nigerianewsupdate.co/insecurity-minister-orders-hotels-in-abuja-to-submit-guests-list-to-security-agencies/>.

Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Senator Bala Mohammed has directed all hotels in the Federal Capital Territory to forward lists of their guests to the FCT Directorate of State Security Services (DSS) and the FCT Police Command everyday.

A statement by the Minister’s Special Adviser on Media, Nosike Ogbuenyi said “hotels are equally required to install their individual security cameras within their vicinity and ensure thorough check of all vehicles entering the hotel and within their surroundings.

The Minister has also directed all residents and resident associations in various parts of the territory to embark on “Operation Know Your Neighbour” campaign....

The Minister further directed that all trailer/lorry operators bringing goods to the city shall no longer be allowed to offload their contents at night....

“Similarly, owners plots of land left fallow for a long period of time and not used for any economic or gainful purpose but taken over by criminals would now face appropriate sanctions”, he said.

The Minister reminded residents that the ban on smoking of Indian hemp and other narcotic substances was still in force in the territory, adding that the Administration has resolved to clamp down on defaulters.

(continued)

Continued: Nigeria Looks to Non-Traditional Spaces as Security Threats

barricades, fences, and more modern security systems have been added to help halt – or at least deter – more attacks.

*Finally, as the third article relays, even casual gathering spot, especially World Cup viewing in local bars or restaurants, was discouraged during the games. In the aftermath of bombings that killed fourteen and injured twenty-six more in the northeastern state of Yobe in mid-June, the federal government has deemed them to be high-risk spaces. Specifically, officials have suggested that Boko Haram is likely to target these areas, since they create a sense of unity for Nigerians, especially around a modern and Western phenomenon, which Boko Haram vehemently opposes. Instead, the government has urged Nigerians to watch the games at home, rationalizing that doing so will not only keep them safe, but also reduce expenditures on alcohol and exposure to secondhand smoke, among other things. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)***

Source: “Nigeria: Boko Haram - States Fortify Security in Schools.” Premium Times (Abuja), July 4, 2014. <http://m.allafrica.com/stories/201407040095.html/>.

.....A recent survey indicated that proprietors of schools are gradually keying into the programme of providing modern security systems to check attacks by criminals.

In compliance with the presidential directive, the Yobe Government said it had erected fences around all public schools in the state as a measure to check attacks by insurgents.

More than 100 students were killed by insurgents last year at Government Secondary School, Damaturu, and Government Secondary School, Mamudo, as well as Federal Government College, Buni-Yadi, and College of Agriculture, Gujba.

The State Commissioner for Education, Muhammad Lamin, said the fences were meant to check trespassing in the schools...

On its part, the Gombe State Government said it had been recruiting retired soldiers to guard public secondary schools...

Some of the schools had also erected barricades at their entrances as a way of checking movement into their premises...

Source: Mba, Frank. “Nigeria: Terror Attacks On Football Viewing Centres - Reversing the Trend.” Daily Independent (Lagos), July 3, 2014. <http://m.allafrica.com/stories/201407040870.html/>

...Today, leisure facilities such as football stadiums and viewing centres, which attract large crowd, are now making the list of terrorist targets. Terrorists see these places as easy killing fields where they can record mass deaths. The recent attack at a viewing centre in Damaturu, Yobe state is a good example of the kind of war terrorists are waging against our national unity. A similar attack as this had taken place in Jos, Plateau state, though unsuccessfully....

The reasons for targeting these places are very clear. Football and other sporting activities are unifying factors which keep the adherents of all religions and political divides in Nigeria together- Boko Haram does not want this. Football is also associated with Western Culture which Boko Haram claims to detest. Sports are tools for projecting national creativity, pride and the Olympian spirit of friendship, love, tolerance, competitiveness, inclusivity and togetherness which are clearly repugnant to the terrorists’ ideologies of extremism and hatred....

...It is strongly advised that Nigerians opt for safer places in viewing or watching football. Doing this at home is more preferable as this will even create opportunities to bond with family members as entrenched in our culture....

African Perspectives on US Presence on the Continent

16 June 2014

“We know that we’re at our lowest and that you Americans have been allowed to come in and help us. But, don’t push it, please.””

OE Watch Commentary: It goes without saying that perceptions of the U.S. around Sub-Saharan Africa can and do vary widely among countries and the social, economic, and religious divisions within them. Nevertheless, a recurring theme that has become prevalent involves ethical considerations regarding the increased U.S. military and diplomatic interest in Africa in recent years. Following are excerpts with perspectives from Nigeria to Zimbabwe to South Sudan to the African Diaspora which demonstrate complaints.

As has historically been the case in a continent steeped in suspicions about foreigners’ interests, the first article expresses a contemporary view of suspicion about the U.S.’s new interests in counterterrorism training on the continent. More specifically, it seeks to explain why populations around the world, particularly of African descent, have, in a sense, let their guard down when it comes to allowing U.S. presence on the continent. Though the argument is more nuanced than presented here, the author suggests that African perceptions of the outside have typically been characterized by a black-white divide: new shifts in the U.S. leadership have, he claims, duped populations into believing that the U.S. now has the continent’s best interests at heart. For his part, the author of the third article also critiques the U.S. for overplaying its role on the continent, using U.S. actions in the process of pre- and post- South Sudan construction as a case in point.

Yet, some analyses are more nuanced. In arguably the most interesting piece of the four, the author of the second article describes the contemporary dilemmas of Nigerian embarrassment regarding U.S. offers of assistance to help fight Boko Haram. In his analysis he suggests that while those Nigerians living outside of the country are quick to advocate protecting Nigeria’s image by turning down



Source: Adam Taylor and Laris Karklis/The Washington Post - <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/05/21/map-the-u-s-currently-has-troops-in-these-african-countries/>

Source: Baraka, Ajamu. “Africa: Iraq, Libya, Syria - Three Reasons African Americans Should Oppose U.S. Intervention in Africa.” Fahamu (Oxford), July 2, 2014. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201407072302.html/>

...There have been two factors that help to explain the relative success of white supremacist capitalist power to construct and impose an historical narrative in which they have been absolved of their criminal activities in Africa: the post 9/11 focus on counter-terrorism, and the election of the first black president of the U.S...

U.S. policy in Africa was consistently pro-white power, from its continued support for the white settler regimes in Algeria, Kenya, Rhodesia, and South Africa to its direct logistical and military support to the Portuguese through NATO to fight against African freedom fighters in Angola and Mozambique...

The assault on historical memory continued and intensified with the election of Barack Obama. Obama’s election not only blurred a critical perspective on U.S. policy in Africa and globally on the part of many in the black communities, but did so at a historical moment when the U.S. state was undergoing a severe crisis of legitimacy and strategic confusion....

We have to do this because it is precisely at these moments that we have to be clear-eyed and not allow ourselves to be manipulated.

Source: Nwaubani, Adaobi Tricia. “Letter from Africa: Nigeria Pride and Foreign Assistance.” BBC News, May 22, 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27473428>.

...Some of the loudest antagonists to foreign assistance [to fight Boko Haram] are from among Nigerians in the ...This group, famous for vehement bouts of “protecting our image”, often seem more worried about the world’s perception of their country, about stereotypes, than about the actual situations leading to those negative perceptions.

Now, some of them appear more worried that the US is expanding its presence in Africa, than

Continued: African Perspectives on US Presence on the Continent

assistance, given that it seeks to show that it is a West African and Pan-African power, those citizens within the country are more eager to accept assistance, though, as he emphasizes, there are indeed limits as to how much the country will be willing to risk its reputation in such a way. Finally, the fourth article, from the government-sponsored Herald in Zimbabwe, is an interesting study in the diplomacy of defeat. The article, which tacitly rejoices about the potential removal of a longstanding U.S. embargo on the country, nevertheless makes sure that it gets in jabs, with an opening emphasizing: "The United States has admitted that the illegal sanctions it imposed on Zimbabwe hurt the country though they have been claiming that they were only targeted on individuals and companies linked to Zanu-PF." End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)

about the missing girls being found by all means necessary.

Nigerians are a typically proud people, often wary of foreign interference of any sort in our affairs. But recent events have forced us to a place of humility. Boko Haram is clearly one burden we cannot bear alone.

Nevertheless, there is just how low we will bow, how much dust we are willing to taste. The reactions to the anthem episode could be a subconscious way of saying: "We know that we're at our lowest and that you Americans have been allowed to come in and help us. But, don't push it, please."

Source: Papa Maury Clark. "American Leadership Values Are to Blame for the World's Chaos, the Case-in-Point - South Sudan." South Sudan News Agency (Juba), July 3, 2014. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201407040523.html/>

South Sudan is the current exemplar of egotistical American policy failure...

The 71 tribal nations of the country now called South Sudan came together for the first time in history to throw out the foreign devils from Khartoum who were attempting to obliterate their cultures, and seize their lands, and natural resources. They threw the "foreign" bums out. And what did they get instead? Different foreign bums!

Nobody thought to ask if the 71 tribes wanted a centralized, over-arching political and leadership structure. While that may be necessary for modern international involvement. Nobody asked these People if they wanted to give up generations of cultural independence. Nobody thought to ask if tribes would submit to some geographically distant "dictator" whose rule was defined by his (any culture other than mine) tribal and cultural loyalties. Nobody thought to ask what fundamental difference existed between foreign dictatorship from Khartoum and "foreign" dictatorship from Juba. Both choose to dictate rules for living under an alien, geographically disconnected political, economic, and cultural world...

Source: "Zimbabwe: U.S Admits Embargo Impact." The Herald (Harare), July 9, 2014. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201407090826.html/>.

The United States has admitted that the illegal sanctions it imposed on Zimbabwe hurt the country though they have been claiming that they were only targeted on individuals and companies linked to Zanu-PF.

According to the Zanu-PF manifesto for the July 31, 2013 harmonised elections, Western countries' illegal economic sanctions regime cost Zimbabwe at least US\$42 billion since 2001, with negative effects on vulnerable groups that saw their livelihoods decline to pitiable levels.

The US passed into law Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act in 2001 with the then President George W. Bush saying the development was meant "to effect peaceful democratic change, achieve economic growth, and restore the rule of law" in Zimbabwe."

Speaking at an Editors' luncheon, he hosted in Harare yesterday, US Ambassador to Zimbabwe Bruce Wharton acknowledged the illegal sanctions his country imposed on Zimbabwe had "served the purpose". To some extent, I think they have been successful in that it remains a huge talking point. People talk about sanctions all the time which indicate that it succeeded at least in getting people's attention."

Things are Not Going Well in Venezuela

8 July 2014

“[T]he struggle of the opposition in Venezuela is the principal reason why that country will not become a second Cuba.”

OE Watch Commentary: According to many Colombian and Venezuelan observers, the insurgency and unrest in Venezuela are likely to drag on, especially after Juan Manuel Santos' victory in the recent Colombian elections. The Cubans are showing increasing concern over the performance of the Venezuelan communist leadership and its apparent inability to restabilize control over what appears to be an increasingly discontented and dissident population. The Cuban recipe for Venezuela seems to be to stiffen and reaffirm the march toward left-socialism and exclusive communist party control. Meanwhile and consequently, Venezuela's economy continues to worsen, while an increasing number of Venezuelans are deciding to flee. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro.
Source: <http://www.presstv.com>

Source: EFE/ÚN, “Para Vargas Llosa Venezuela no será una ‘segunda Cuba’” (For Vargas Llosa Venezuela will not become a ‘second Cuba’) [tuseguro.com](http://www.tuseguro.com), July 8, 2014, <http://www.ultimasnoticias.com.ve/noticias/actualidad/mundo/para-vargas-llosa-venezuela-no-sera-una-segunda-cu.aspx>

“The show room is desolate. There are no vehicles, much less customers. On the main glass door there is a poster that fulfils the formality of announcing the going prices for vehicles as of March, 2014. It's only that, a formality.”

Source: María Ramírez Cabello, “Tenemos meses sin facturar carros porque no hay,” (We have not sold cars for months because there aren't any) *Correo del Coróni*, July 7, 2014, <http://www.correodelcaroni.com/index.php/economia/item/16241-tenemos-meses-sin-facturar-carros-porque-no-hay>

“Writer Mario Vargas Llosa believes that the struggle of the opposition in Venezuela is the principal reason why that country will not become a second Cuba, according to what he said today at the Atlantic Forum by his International Foundation for Liberty.”

Source: Hernán Lugo-Galicia, “Venezuela: Cubano castrista ayudará en la reestructuración del gobierno,” (Venezuela: A Castoite Cuban will assist in the restructuring of the government) *El Nacional.com*, July 3, 2014, http://www.el-nacional.com/politica/Cubano-ayudara-reestructuracion-gobierno_0_438556345.html

“The president (Nicolás Maduro) confirmed that Orlando Borrego (78-year-old Cuban)... is preparing a set of plans to make ‘a total revolution.’ A ‘senior lieutenant’ in the Cuban armed conflict in the sixties, he will help the government in the restructuring of the ministries: Orlando Borrego will be in the comisión designated by president Nicolás Maduro to make a diagnostic of the ministries’ work...”

Source: “The president (Nicolás Maduro) confirmed that Orlando Borrego (78-year-old Cuban)... is preparing a set of plans to make ‘a total revolution.’ A ‘senior lieutenant’ in the Cuban armed conflict in the sixties, he will help the government in the restructuring of the ministries: Orlando Borrego will be in the comisión designated by president Nicolás Maduro to make a diagnostic of the ministries’ work...”

“Recently a photo circulated on the Internet of a duty-free store ‘for Cubans only’ at a DHL agency, something that undoubtedly annoyed everyone except Fidelista Cubans. But that unacceptable privilege given to the invaders I had to suffer personally when I went to take care of some business at the Industrial Bank in Mérida, to find that I had to wait in a kilometers-long line, in spite of being a retired person, while in another much shorter line were only Cubans, wearing extravagant shirts, fancy bracelets, and a detestable arrogance.”

Communism is Still a Threat; Anti-Communism is Not

6 July 2014

“(The FARC) has been a terror apparatus gestated, nourished, and developed in the innards of the Colombian Communist Party...”

“Anticommunism must be recognized as a cause of violence against the people”

OE Watch Commentary: Now that the Colombian presidential elections are over, many Colombian political observers, especially those who opposed the reelection of President Santos, are turning their commentaries to the on-going peace negotiations that leaders of the FARC have been conducting in Havana, Cuba with representatives from the Colombian government. These opinions appear to represent a significant portion of the Colombian political perspective. They evince fear that the so-called peace process is giving unnecessary and dangerous credibility, access, opportunity and ultimately power to an illegal armed group, the FARC. In their view, the FARC is not only illegitimate, but its leaders (most of whom are under multiple criminal indictments in Colombia and abroad) are heinously criminal. The comments underscore the FARC's communist roots and nature, as well as its leaders' stated intentions to not only participate in Colombian politics, but also to dominate it, including by demands upon “politically correct” language and thought. One of these demands is that the idea of ‘anti-communism be itself extirpated from the language, that is, those who associate with the term be officially discredited and shunned. Commentators point out that the FARC is attacking free speech in order to hobble its enemies -- an inauspicious start to peaceful political participation. Although some see the reelection of President Santos as a public ratification of the peace process, the Santos policy toward the FARC continues to be met with visceral criticism from within Colombia. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

Source: Ariel Peña, “El anticomunismo” (Anti-communism), Minuto30.com, July 2, 2014, <http://www.minuto30.com/opinion/ariel-pena/el-anticomunismo-por-ariel-pena/>

“...the secretary general of that organization (Communist Party of Colombia) dropped the following pearl in an interview – “Anticommunism must be eradicated from Colombia in peace.”

Source: Carlos Romero Sánchez, “Las Farc son Partido Comunista Colombiano: ‘Jacobo Arenas’” (The FARC are the Colombian Communist Party: ‘Jacobo Arenas’), Debate Periódico, June 29, 2014, <http://periodicodebate.com/index.php/nacion/politica/item/5105-las-farc-son-partido-comunista-colombiano-jacobo-arenas>

“(The FARC) has been a terror apparatus gestated, nourished, and developed in the innards of the Colombian Communist Party, PCC, a subversive party voluntarily vassaled to the dictates of its maximum Muscovite leaders during the existence of the USSR, with an intrinsically criminal ideology, marxism-leninism, and which, in its inseparably double condition of legal party and armed band, has aspired to impose itself by force of arms or by political means.”

Source: Nelson Matta Colorado, “Con \$3,6 billones las Farc sostienen sus estructuras” (The FARC maintains its organizational structures with 3.6 billion dollars) El Colombiano, July 6, 2014, [http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/C/con_\\$36_billones_las_farc_sostienen_sus_estructuras/con_\\$36_billones_las_farc_sostienen_sus_estructuras.asp](http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/C/con_$36_billones_las_farc_sostienen_sus_estructuras/con_$36_billones_las_farc_sostienen_sus_estructuras.asp)

“Looking at the present situation, one must say that the FARC is a “business” with excellent returns on investment. The reason: the number of personnel was reduced due to demobilizations, deaths and captures; participation in narco trafficking increased to the point of controlling about 60% of the world cocaine traffic according to the DEA; kidnapping ceased to be an important income category, but was replaced by an increase in extortions; illegal mining of gold and tantalite appeared as a new source of income; and many of terrorist activities began to be outsourced, reducing costs.”

Source: Eduardo Mackenzie, “El Partido Comunista Colombiano Exige Extirpar a los Anticomunistas,” (The Colombian Communist Party Demands that the Anticommunists be Eradicated), July 3, 2014, <http://www.periodismosinfronteras.org/el-partido-comunista-colombiano-exige-extirpar-a-los-anticomunistas.html>

Jaime Caicedo (Secretary General of the Colombian Communist Party): “Anticommunism must be recognized as a cause of violence against the people and of exterminations and genocides, that must be extirpated from a peaceful Colombia. We want the government to soften its posture regarding these themes, not just demand that the insurgents do so. We cannot continue to assign the blame for the war in Colombia to the communists...”

Narco Babies: The New Generation of Drug Traffickers in Colombia

Source: Surgen los “narco babys” colombianos; trafican drogas a Europa. Proceso. Accessed on May 15, 2014 from: http://www.proceso.com.mx/?p=372023&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+revista_proceso+%28Revista+Proceso%29

OE Watch Commentary: Pablo Escobar Gaviria is a legend in Colombia, but his way of running a large-scale cocaine enterprise no longer represents the way drug traffickers in the country operate. Instead, today's traffickers, who are being classified by authorities as “narco babies,” are opting for discretion, a business-like operating model, and low levels of violence. In contrast to Gaviria, they do not want public recognition and prefer anonymity as they run their trafficking operations behind the façade of legal business entities. To date in 2014, Colombian authorities have identified at least 15 narco babies. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel and Gonzalez)**

Narco Babies, the New Generation of Drug Traffickers in Colombia

Darío is a 27-year-old drug trafficker who runs his business out of a small apartment in Bogotá. In direct contrast to the ostentatious Colombian traffickers who dominated the cocaine business in the 80s and 90s, Darío does not even tell his close friends about his role in the drug trafficking business. He even maintains a day job to keep neighborhood gossipers at bay.

Darío also dresses much differently than the attention seeking traffickers of the past who drove flashy cars, dated high-profile women, and wore exaggerated jewelry to show off their status. Instead, he is more likely to be seen walking around in athletic clothing and sporting a modern haircut. As for his personal life, he does not even have a girlfriend. Because of the low profile that Darío keeps, he has been in the business for 10 years.

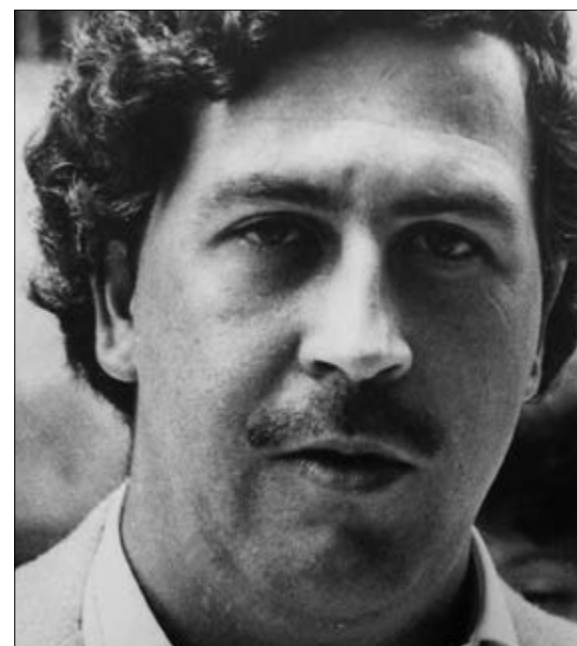
Darío's Introduction into the World of Drug Trafficking:

Darío studied psychology at the Javeriana University, one of Bogotá's most prestigious schools, but still decided to earn a living as a drug trafficker. This is not surprising given that he has been surrounded by this world his entire life. Darío grew up in the Sierra Nevada region of northern Colombia where his parents dedicated themselves to producing high-quality cocaine. After his stepfather was killed by a paramilitary group (date/group not specified), he and his mother left the Sierra Nevada region of Colombia and moved to Bogotá where they

reinitiated their cocaine business. In the last year, Darío has successfully expanded his cocaine business into South Korea where he has made new contacts to facilitate the arrival of his shipments via airports. To avoid suspicion, his cocaine shipments are concealed in paintings. Once at their final destination, they are removed from the paintings via a chemical process.

Although Darío represents a change from the traffickers that Colombia is famous for, he certainly fits the profile of what Colombian authorities are classifying as “narco babies.” These narco babies are different from traditional Colombian traffickers in the following ways:

- The majority of narco babies are from Colombian cities including Cali, Medellín, and Bogotá.
- In some cases, the narco babies are said to be the sons/daughters of historically prominent traffickers.
- They have no criminal record.
- They do not use weapons.
- They do not work for any specific drug cartel.
- Many have graduated from college.
- Many are the owners of legitimate businesses. These businesses are then utilized to export small drug shipments from Colombian seaports to Europe. Popular destinations of the shipments include Spain, Belgium, and Greece.
- Cocaine shipments are primarily sent to Europe because according to this source, narco babies allegedly feel that extradition attempts initiated by European countries are often unsuccessful.
- Narco babies are known to launder money in Shanghai, China, or Dubai by purchasing shoes and clothing for importation into Colombia.



Pablo Escobar
Source: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>

Colombian authorities currently have information regarding at least 15 narco babies; one of which was identified as Brayan Alejandro Dueñas, 25. This individual is originally from Bogotá and was arrested after he was caught attempting to export 35 kg of cocaine via an international cargo flight. Colombian authorities also reported that narco babies may have been responsible for a 110 kg shipment of cocaine that was seized on 30 April 2014 at the port of Antwerp. The shipment originated at the Port of Santa Marta in Colombia.

Fuel Theft Generates Massive Profits for Mexican Drug Cartels

24 June 2014

Source: “Narco” vende a \$5 el litro de gasolina en Tamaulipas.” El Milenio. Accessed on June 24, 2014 from http://www.milenio.com/policia/gasolina_Tamaulipas-robo_combustibles-ordena_ductos-Zetas-cartel_del_Golfo-Pemex_0_318568192.html

Fuel Theft Generates Massive Profits for Mexican Drug Cartels

OE Watch Commentary: Around 2008 Los Zetas and the Gulf Cartel began diversifying their drug-trafficking activities and expanded into other criminal enterprises, including fuel theft. Year by year they have expanded this operation, and today represent real competition for Pemex, a Mexican state-owned petroleum company.

In Tamaulipas illegally siphoned gasoline sold to the public is known as “Popular Gasoline.” This illegal gas is three times less expensive than a gallon of milk and is even cheaper than a can of Coca Cola. Drop by drop, the gas is almost given away at \$(MXN) 5 pesos/per liter, which is equivalent to \$.38 US. In comparison, legal gas sells for between \$(MXN) 12.77-13.45 pesos/liter, a cost that many are not willing to pay, given significantly cheaper alternatives. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel and Gonzalez)**

An investigation conducted by El Milenio, a Mexican news media source, indicated that Los Zetas and the Gulf Cartel are so efficient at stealing and re-selling gasoline that they now represent real competition for Pemex (the Mexican state-owned petroleum company). According to information gathered from Pemex, federal investigations, social media, and interviews with experts, gasoline theft now represents a significant revenue generator for cartels. In fact, illegal gas siphoning and its subsequent sale is said to cost Pemex an estimated \$(MXN) 350,000,000 a year; all of which directly benefits Los Zetas and the Gulf Cartel. The largest black market for gasoline is located along the Frontera Chica of Tamaulipas where at least 15% of total fuel earnings are retained by the two aforementioned groups. This is especially true in Tamaulipas where criminal organizations are selling gasoline \$(MXN) 5 pesos per liter; 50% less than the average cost of gasoline which ranges between \$(MXN) 12.77 and \$(MXN) 13.45 pesos per liter. The 5 peso gasoline is known locally as ‘gasolina popular’ (popular gasoline).

Who is the Rightful Owner of Illegally Siphoned Gasoline?

Although popular gasoline is indeed popular in Tamaulipas, it is a stolen commodity which belongs to Pemex. Many illegal fuel consumers are not swayed by this as they are able to save up to \$(MXN) 9 pesos/liter. This idea is evidenced by the fact that on a daily basis, hundreds of buyers flock to vehicles transporting illegally siphoned gasoline in areas throughout Tamaulipas. In some instances, the gasoline is directly pumped into a vehicle, but in other cases, gas jugs, water bottles, and anything else that can hold a drop of gas is brought to the clandestine sites by citizens so they can be filled.

Pemex Financial Losses

Cartel efficiency in robbing Pemex of its fuel has actually turned them into competition for the state owned monopoly. In fact, Pemex has lost 1/6 of its market share in Tamaulipas to drug cartels over the last 10 years. The company also reported selling less gasoline in Tamaulipas than any other Mexican state despite strong economic growth of 3-5% per year, double the vehicles on the road (from 2006-2012), and rapid population growth. Decreased Pemex sales were consistent from 2008 to 2012 as in each year following 2008, national sales dropped in the following manner:

- 2008: 153,000 barrels of gasoline sold per day
- 2009: 151,000; this is the first time in Pemex history that barrels of gasoline consumed on a daily basis actually decreased from previous years.
- 2010: 148,000
- 2011: 142,000
- 2012: 141,000. When compared to 2008 levels, this represents a loss of 4.3 million barrels annually.

On average, a barrel of gasoline holds 159 liters. Using this number and taking into account Pemex 2014 prices for a liter of gasoline, this represents a loss of 8,893,000,000 pesos per year. Contrastingly, it represents earnings of 3,500,000,000 for Mexican drug cartels which is equivalent to 268,543,000 US dollars.

(continued)

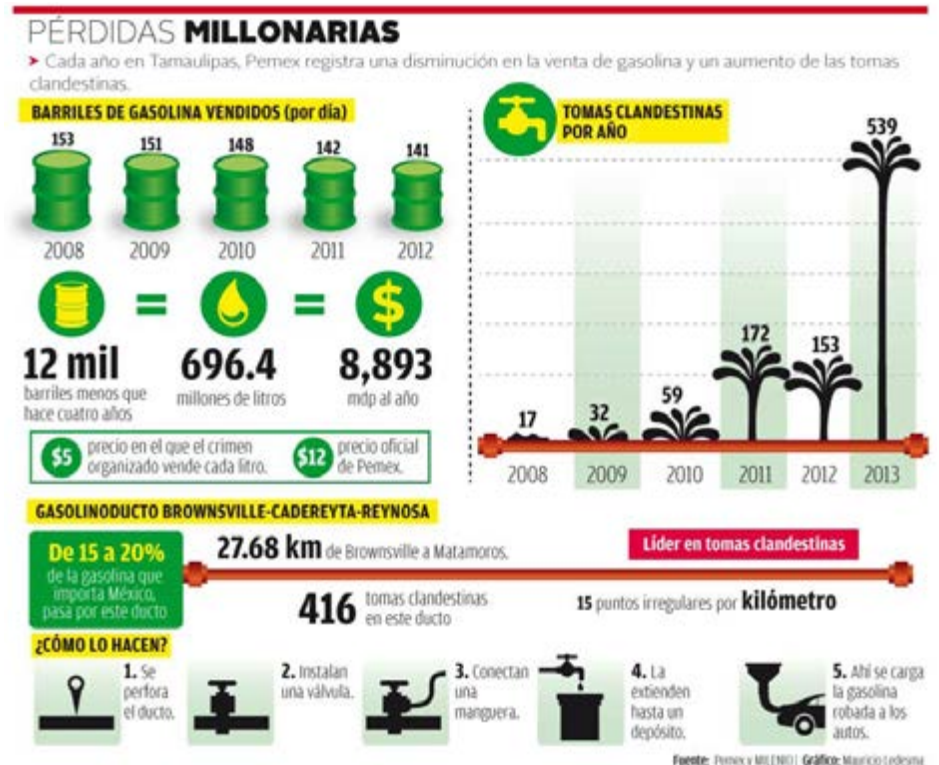
Continued: Fuel Theft Generates Massive Profits for Mexican Drug Cartels

Daily sale decreases in Tamaulipas coincide directly with increasing numbers of clandestine siphoning points. Since 2008, the following numbers of illegal siphoning points have been detected in the state:

- 2008: 17
- 2009: 32
- 2010: 59
- 2011: 172
- 2012: 153
- 2013: 539

One of the most targeted pipelines in Tamaulipas is the Brownsville-Cadereya-Reynosa duct. This pipeline originates in Brownsville, TX and is responsible for importing an estimated 20-30% of all gasoline from the US into Mexico. From Brownsville, the pipeline extends to Matamoros where it connects with a Pemex line that carries gasoline to Reynosa and Cadereyta. From 1993-2012, \$(USD) 12,290,000,000 worth of gas were imported through this duct.

Despite added military surveillance along this pipeline, 416 siphons have been detected since 2008 which averages out to 15 every kilometer as the total length of the pipeline is just a little over 28 kilometers. Along this particular pipeline, the majority of the siphons are located in and around Reynosa in areas including San José, La Comezón, La Polvadera and Las Minitas. Daily, the siphons located along this line rob Pemex of an 3,500 barrels of gas; an amount that seems to continue increasing as cartels become more and more proficient at stealing gas from Pemex.



Brazilian Foreign Ministry Leaks Reveal Complicity in Bolivia in 2007-08

6 July 2014

OE Watch Commentary: E-mails and other official documents recently revealed through the Brazilian Foreign Ministry's own hacking scandal have disclosed that not only did Venezuela and Cuba send both military personnel and equipment to Bolivia to help put down a budding insurgency in the Bolivian frontier state of Pango in 2007-2008, but the Venezuelan Air Force also intentionally overflew Brazilian territory in order to do so. As the excerpts below describe, once Brazilian Defense and Foreign Ministry officials became aware of the events, they then chose to bury the budding scandal and quickly came to an understanding with Venezuelan officials that would allow the Venezuelan Air Force to continue overflight operations due to the ideological affinity between the Chavez and Morales regimes in Venezuela and Bolivia and the Lula administration in Brazil. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grilo)**

Source: <http://www.defesanet.com.br/al/noticia/15889/ItamaratyLeaks---Brasil-Abdicado-Controle-do-Espaco-Aereo-aos-Bolivarianos/>

... Part of the story appears in a confidential Brazilian Defense Ministry Dispatch. The text of the dispatch narrates the visit by Brazilian Defense Ministry personnel to Venezuela from 13-14 April in 2008. The document is one of 397 separate documents and emails hacked from Itamaraty and posted to the Internet last May (2013).... According to the document, after disembarking in Caracas, the Brazilian officials gathered on the 14th at the residence of Brazilian Ambassador Antônio José Ferreira Simões in order to receive talking points prior to meeting with then Chancellor Nicolas Maduro. Each of those present were listed on the report. At one moment during the meeting, the Brazilian Army General Augusto Heleno, Commander of Brazilian Military Forces – Amazon Region, asked if anyone else knew about Venezuelans C-130s overflying the Amazon while transporting Venezuelan Soldiers to Bolivia. Ambassador Simões cut him off simply saying that: “a public Brazilian denunciation of Venezuelan Troops in Bolivia could worsen the situation”.

Source: <http://www.defesanet.com.br/al/noticia/15889/ItamaratyLeaks---Brasil-Abdicado-Controle-do-Espaco-Aereo-aos-Bolivarianos/>

... According to the Brazilian Air Force's Lieutenant Brigadier General Gilberto Burnier, during the crisis, Venezuela conducted 114 overflights. Described in one of the revealed documents was that: “They told us they were ferrying commercial vehicles, but eventually we found that they were transporting armored personnel carriers and other commercial vehicles”. In a later meeting with the Venezuelans, then Brazilian defense minister Nelson Jobim suggested creating an air corridor in order to “take this problem off the agenda”. Brazilian law prohibits the overflight of foreign military material over its territory without prior government approval.



Documents pointing to Brazilian complicity.
Source: <http://www.defesanet.com.br>

Russia Looks to Brazil, BRICS in Order to Break its International Isolation

13 July 2014

“We have instructed our negotiators to continue the accord for the acquisition by Brazil of Russian Anti-Aircraft units. We have done it because we want a long term relationship with Russia” -- Dilma Rousseff

OE Watch Commentary: Russian President Vladimir Putin found his way to Brazil from 13-15 July as part of his larger Latin American tour, but it was not just tickets to the Argentina–Germany World Cup Final he was after (although he managed to secure prime seats to the match anyway). Instead it was international legitimacy. Scorned for their suspected role in the Ukrainian separatist fight, the Russian contingent took advantage of the opportunity presented by the 15 July BRICS (Brazil, Russia, China, India and South Africa) meeting in Fortaleza to secure eight minor cooperation agreements in the fields of defense, science and technology, and energy development.

Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, for her part, is desperately trying to recapture the momentum in economic growth and trade lost over the last several years. Although total trade between Brazil and Russia had reached an all-time high in 2013, with a total value of US \$5.6 billion dollars, Brazil saw its trade surplus with Russia dwindle to just US \$300 million last year, \$50 million less than in 2012 and a fraction of the \$2.5 billion dollar surplus of 2005. This, of course, is set against the backdrop of slowing economic growth, the largest Brazilian budget deficit in years, and a presidential re-election bid.

The most significant of the accords signed referenced the PANTSIR-S1 antiaircraft systems that Brazil originally agreed to purchase last October. The accord, signed on 14 July, was just a recommitment on the part of the Brazilian government to the ongoing purchase negotiations. The total value of system is relatively small, as far as defense expenditures/purchases go; of significantly more value to the Russian contingent, however, are the maintenance and missile supply contracts which most industry experts suggest will extend to upwards of a decade. The same experts suggest that those long-term institutional linkages and dependencies are exactly what the Russian contingent is after. Russian defense contractors are also reportedly eyeing supplanting Ukrainian contractors on the lucrative Brazil defense joint venture at the Alcântara base in Brazil; however, Ukraine has not yet defaulted on its portion of the contract. Completely absent from the one-on-one talks on 14 July: any mention of the ongoing crisis in the Ukraine. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grilo)**

Source: http://www.defesanet.com.br/br_ru/noticia/16007/Isolada--Russia-tenta-se-aproximar-do-Brasil/

The two presidents signed eight accords in order to boost cooperation between the two countries in the noble fields of defense, science and technology, and energy production. They first met on Sunday (13 JULY) at the World Cup final, and they will sit down at the table today, in Fortaleza, during the 6th Round BRICS Consultations, which will also bring together the representatives from China, India, and South Africa... The meeting yesterday (13 July) was originally scheduled for 40 minutes but ran to an hour and twenty minutes and delayed the luncheon planned at the Itamaraty Palace (home of the Brazilian Foreign Ministry) for 1300 hours. In that hour, Dilma and Putin appeared for a joint press conference and an announcement of the accords, some of which were completed in a hurry. Such was the hurry to conclude the accords, that some of the signatories were not even certain of the exact content of the accords with less than a half hour left before the end of the meeting.



Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff welcoming Vladimir Putin.
Source: www.defesanet.com.br

Regional Reaction to Missing Malaysian Airliner

15 July 2014

OE Watch Commentary: The unexplained disappearance of Malaysia Airlines MH370 in March 2014, created an exceptional international reaction within the region. This multinational cooperative effort can be seen as unprecedented in Indo-Pacific Asia. Military assets from Malaysia, China, Vietnam, United States, Indonesia, Singapore, India, Cambodia, Philippines, Bangladesh, Taiwan, Australia, Thailand, Japan, and New Zealand combined forces in an extraordinary manner during the two month search.

The Boeing 777-22ER was in route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing when it left radar coverage over the Gulf of Thailand. Almost immediately search and rescue efforts were mounted by the Malaysian government along the projected flight path toward the South China Sea. The Malaysia navy requested that Indonesia and Vietnam allow their navies to join in the search. Of the 227 passengers on the flight 153 were Chinese. China dispatched naval assets to join the search. Some 13 other nationalities were represented in the missing passengers and crew. Several aspects of the flight disappearance were mysterious which gave impetus for several nations to weigh in to assist the search and possible criminal investigations. Ultimately some 26 countries joined in the search effort.

China launched its largest ever, search and rescue task force which operated deep into the southern Indian Ocean and was forward based in Australia. An article from India.com catalogs the assets involved by April 1, 2014. The immediate and open cooperation of Vietnam with the Chinese navy in searching within Vietnam territorial waters is noteworthy in light of their ongoing competing claims in the South China Sea.

Each regional nation proudly touted their participation and recognized the unusual level of cooperation that took place. An article found in The Diplomat reveals India's view of the effort while detailing the disappearance and the early days of the search. This article is a good source for the names and nomenclature of ships participating in the search.

The angst over this unsolved mystery provided impetus for an uncharacteristic hiatus in the current tension over territorial disputes. This is detailed in a piece from The Hindu. This new found spirit of regional cooperation is not expected to last. However, some see the incident as a possible harbinger of future alliances created during unexpected tragedy or tensions. **End OE Watch Commentary (Welch)**

“A total of 10 planes and nine ships will assist in Tuesday's search for missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370.”



Source: <http://kimedia.blogspot.com/2014/03/missing-malaysia-airlines-flight-370.html>

Source: India.com, “Missing Malaysian Airliner MH370: Tuesday's Search Resumes,” April 1, 2014 <http://www.india.com/loudspeaker/missing-malaysian-airline-mh370-tuesdays-search-resumes-31429/>

....The Joint Agency Coordination Center was established Monday and is being led by retired Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston in Perth to effectively coordinate Australian government's search and recovery operation, Xinhua reported....

Ten military planes – two Royal Australian Air Force P3 Orions, two Malaysian C-130s, a Chinese Ilyushin IL-76, a US Navy P8 Poseidon, a Japanese Gulfstream jet, a South Korean P3 Orion, a Royal New Zealand Air Force P3, a Japanese P3 Orion will assist in the search, with a civil jet providing communications relay.

Nine ships have been tasked to search in four separate areas...

“...the international rescue effort over the South China Sea demonstrated a rare show of goodwill and cooperation between Southeast Asian nations who generally are mired in territorial disputes.”

(continued)

Continued: Regional Reaction to Missing Malaysian Airliner

Source: The Diplomat, “Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 Search and Rescue: Cooperation in the South China Sea,” March 11, 2014 <http://thediplomat.com/2014/03/malaysia-airlines-flight-370-search-and-rescue-cooperation-in-the-south-china-sea/>

Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 (MH370) ...mysteriously went missing over the Gulf of Thailand in the South China Sea...

While the tragic fate of MH370 is as yet unknown, the international rescue effort over the South China Sea demonstrated a rare show of goodwill and cooperation between Southeast Asian nations who generally are mired in territorial disputes....

Malaysia has borne most of the responsibility for the search and rescue operation so far,...

China dispatched the *Jinggangshan* and *Mianyang*, two warships, almost immediately. The *Jinggangshan* is a particularly well-equipped ship with two helicopters, 30 medical personnel, ten divers and 52 marines on board. On Sunday, China additionally dispatched the *Kunlinshan* and *Haikou* to assist in the search and rescue operation. It also adjusted its satellites to help in the operation.

The Philippine Navy dispatched BRP *Gregorio del Pilar*, BRP *Emilio Jacinto*, BRP *Apolinario Mabini* and search and rescue aircraft. Indonesia announced that it would send five ships. It additionally launched the KRI *Matocra* and KRI *Krait*, two PC-40 fast patrol vessels, and one corvette. Singapore’s Air Force responded immediately by deploying a Lockheed C-130 Hercules. It deployed an additional two C-130s on Sunday. The Singapore Navy sent the RSS *Steadfast* and MV *Swift Rescue* (a submarine rescuer ship) with divers on board. It also deployed the Victory-class RSS *Vigour*. Vietnam contributed three Antonov An-26s in addition to surveillance aircraft and ships....

The Royal Australian Air Force sent two AP-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft...

...The last major regional crisis to result in an international naval effort was Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in late 2013. Back then, China was criticized for appearing disengaged given its proximity to the Philippines. .. In the MH370 case, however, China has been cooperating with regional navies in the search effort...

It remains to be seen if this cooperation is a temporary show of humanitarian goodwill given the trying circumstances...the MH370 disaster and the ensuing search and rescue effort are a reminder of what military cooperation can look like in the South China Sea.



MALAYSIA



VIETNAM



“...There are no problems or difficulties working together so far between the countries involved. Vietnam has allowed all ships and planes to take part in the searching in Vietnamese territory...”

(continued)

Continued: Regional Reaction to Missing Malaysian Airliner



CHINA



"Chinese state media report China has deployed the largest naval SAR flotilla it has ever put together and the Xi'an Satellite Control Center in Shaanxi Province has dedicated operations of eight orbiting satellites for the search and rescue effort."

Source: <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2014/04/06/A-very-long-long-search/>

Source: The Hindu, "Countries Shelve Maritime Disputes to Seek Missing Jet," March 9, 2014, <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/international/countries-shelve-maritime-disputes-to-seek-missing-jet/article5766932.ece>

... Chinese ships entered Vietnamese territory as part of an international search for a Malaysia Airlines jet missing a day earlier over waters between Vietnam and Malaysia.

"Vietnam allowed two Chinese navy ships to enter Vietnamese waters at noon" (0400 GMT), the deputy chief of the General Staff of the Vietnam People's Army, Lieutenant General Vo Van Tuan, told DPA.

The two countries have put aside diplomatic tensions over competing territorial claims in the South China Sea to search for the Boeing 777—200 jet carrying 239 people of 14 different nationalities, 153 of them from China.

Currently, 17 planes and 35 ships from six different countries are searching the area, the National Search and Rescue Committee said. Of those, five planes, and six ships belong to Vietnam. An unknown number of civilian vessels are also helping....

China dispatched two maritime rescue ships and the Philippines — which often spars with China over its maritime territorial claims — deployed three air force planes and three navy patrol ships, news reports said.

The United States also sent the USS Pinckney, an Arleigh Burke—class guided—missile destroyer, to the area.

"Vietnam is co-ordinating the search with other countries well," Deputy Chairman of the National Search and Rescue Committee, Pham Quy Tieu, told dpa.

"There are no problems or difficulties working together so far between the countries involved. Vietnam has allowed all ships and planes to take part in the searching in Vietnamese territory," he added.

Yang Chuantang, China's transport minister, on Saturday said his government was actively coordinating with "maritime rescue authorities and civil aviation administrations in Malaysia and Vietnam," the official Xinhua news agency said.

Chinese state media have made no mention of the maritime disputes in their reports on the missing plane, despite the high recent profile of the overlapping territorial claims with several countries, including Malaysia and Vietnam.

Xinhua also reported that the "China Coast Guard 3411" vessel reached the main search area on Sunday afternoon, and "contacted two Malaysian ships among the eight" boats it found there, it quoted Chinese maritime officials as saying.

Despite their competing claims to parts of the South China Sea, cooperation on disaster relief and search and rescue is "win—win for everybody", says defence analyst Professor Carl Thayer from the University of New South Wales in Australia.

"The areas you're talking about are so vast no country has the resources to do it themselves and in the case of the Malaysia Airlines plane, even though the majority of people are from China all you have to do is see all the other nationalities involved to see other countries have an interest," he said...

... The multinational search—and—rescue operation is an example of how the region could cooperate, said Dr Tang Siew Mun, director of Foreign Policy and Security Studies at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies in Kuala Lumpur.

"It shows what the region could achieve if everyone has the same objectives," he said....

Brutality Prevails in Burma
with an Unrelenting Federal Government

OE Watch Commentary: The Burmese government has signed initial ceasefire agreements with at least 11 major rebel groups in various states. Despite these agreements, there continue to be clashes between the federal government and the different states. One of those is the Shan State, located in the northeastern part of the country.

In early 2012 Naypyitaw, the capital of Burma, had signed a ceasefire with the Shan State Army/Shan State Progress Party. However, media reports, such as the one highlighted, indicate that the government has been conducting military operations within Shan. According to the article, the Burmese Army has deployed nearly 2,000 troops from over 10 battalions since June. Media reports seem to paint an image of bullying and brutality on the part of the Burmese Army. According to the article, “Local villagers have also been ordered to provide 10,000 pieces of bamboo for the construction of barracks for a new artillery training centre... A local Burmese military officer said this was specifically to prepare to attack the SSA-North [Shan State Army-North].” Other reports have emerged as well, such as the

“Local villagers have also been ordered to provide 10,000 pieces of bamboo for the construction of barracks for a new artillery training centre... A local Burmese military officer said this was specifically to prepare to attack the SSA-North.”

Source: Chiang Mai, “Burmese Government Must Stop New Military Operation Against Ceasefire Army in Northern Shan State,” Shan Herald, July 14, 2014, <http://www.english.panglong.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5872:burmese-government-must-stop-new-military-operation-against-ceasefire-army-in-northern-shan-state&catid=102:mailbox&Itemid=279

Article #1: Burmese government must stop new military operation against ceasefire army in northern Shan State

...Since July 2, a further 18 trucks of Burma Army troop reinforcements have been sent into the conflict area from nearby command centres. Local villagers have also been ordered to provide 10,000 pieces of bamboo for the construction of barracks for a new artillery training centre at Man Kart, near Tangyan. A local Burmese military officer said this was specifically to prepare to attack the SSA-North.

(The Shan Human Rights Foundation) is gravely concerned at this troop build-up and expansion of military infrastructure, which completely contradict the claims by the Burmese government that it is seeking a peaceful settlement to the conflict.

One aim of the offensive appears to be to clear out resistance forces so the government can proceed with control and exploitation of local natural resources, including hydropower...



(Top) “SSA-South soldiers go through their paces during training.”(Photo: Steve Tickner / The Irrawaddy)
Source: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/breaking-news/more-deadly-violence-in-burmas-shan-state-sends-1000-fleeing-toward-china.html>
(Left) Map of Shan State, Myanmar. Source: <http://myanmartravel.org/shan-state/>

(continued)

Continued: Brutality Prevails in Burma with an Unrelenting Federal Government

second article, which describes the federal army as using villagers as human shields at the frontline.

*These actions seem to go completely counter to the “Panglong Agreement,” drafted in the late 1940s, which forbade the Burmese federal government from sending troops into the states without reason. However, there is plenty of discontent between the federal government, which wants more control, and each state, which hopes for autonomy. According to an article from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Myanmar watchers agree that a lasting resolution of ethnic conflicts requires more than forging ceasefires. Disputes are rooted in disagreements over autonomy, economic development, fair access to natural resources, and rights and protections for indigenous languages, cultures, and religions. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)***

Source: “Myanmar Army Use Civilians as Human Shields in Shan State,” Myanmar Today News, April 24, 2013, <<http://www.myanmarodaynews.com/2013/04/24/myanmar-army-use-civilians-as-human-shields-in-shan-state-shrf/>>

Article #2: Myanmar Army Use Civilians as Human Shields in Shan State

According to Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF), the military forces of Myanmar had stopped about 50 young people, both men and women, on a road in Tangyan Township in northern Shan State during the celebration of the New Year last week and were forced to serve as human shields for the military, Mizzima news reported.

Strategic Implications of the Afghan Mother Lode and China's Emerging Role

By Cindy A. Hurst and Robert Mathers

http://www.ndu.edu/press/lib/pdf/jfq/jfq-72/jfq-72_75-81_Hurst-Mathers.pdf

JFQ | Joint Force Quarterly
Issue 72, 1st Quarter 2014

As the 2014 withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops draws closer, the question on many minds is what will become of Afghanistan. Will the country slip back into its usual pattern of power struggles, be taken over by the Taliban, or continue to develop into a global economic player? This report talks about many of the hurdles Afghanistan must overcome before being able to achieve success. It also discusses one possible outcome – a growing alliance with neighbor China, in which both countries stand to benefit. Although this prospect may initially be distasteful to those who have shed blood and treasure over the past decade to create a viable state within Afghanistan, it may be the best way to achieve the end state those nations strived to establish.

Lieutenant Commander Cindy A. Hurst, USNR, is a Research Analyst for the Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Colonel Robert Mathers, USA, is the former Chief of the International Engagement Cell, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Training Mission–Afghanistan, and is now the Director of the Eurasian Security Studies Program at the George C. Marshall Center in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.



China Publishes a Sailing Guide for the Northeast Passage

20 June 2014

“The Northern Sea Route can save Chinese cargo ships nearly 5200 kilometers and nine days from the traditional voyage to Europe through the Strait of Malacca and the Suez Canal.”

OE Watch Commentary: China continues to push into prominence in the Arctic region despite a recent setback, when the Government of Norway stopped Chinese billionaire Huang Nubo's bid to purchase Austre Adventfjord on Svalbard. The 217-square-kilometer plot is one of two privately owned properties on the Arctic archipelago. It has its own mountain and over 20 million tons of coal. Huang Nubo is not out of Arctic Norway, however, since he recently bought a 100-hectare property in the picturesque area of Lyngen in Troms, where he plans to spend 110.3 million dollars over the next 10 years to build a luxury resort for Chinese tourists.

China's interest in the area is more than coal and tourism. China's new sailing guide for the Northeast Passage could prove a major boon to Chinese maritime commerce. Russia will also gain from railroad and port fees. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gruu)**

Source: Trude Pettersen, Barents Observer, 20 June 2014. <http://barentsobserver.com>

China is accelerating its pace in Arctic exploration by publishing its first guide to sailing through the Northern Sea Route.

The guide will offer “comprehensive, practical and authoritative” information for Chinese cargo ships for sailing through the Northern Sea Route to Europe, Zhai Jiugang, deputy head of the Ministry of Transport's Maritime Safety Administration, said at a news conference in Beijing on Thursday, according to China Daily. He said the guide will be released in July.

The guide will include the route's nautical chart, sailing methods, ice-breaking providers and Arctic geography and climate, as well as laws and regulations of countries along the route.

In May this year, President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping signed a joint statement on a new stage of comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation between the two countries. According to the joint statement, Russia will facilitate China's goods shipment using its railway networks, ports and the Northern Sea Route.

China made its first commercial voyage through the Northern Sea Route in 2013, when the cargo ship “Yong Sheng” sailed from Dalian in China to Rotterdam. In 2012 the icebreaker “Xue Long” (Snow Dragon) became the first Chinese vessel to sail all along the Northern Sea Route into the Barents Sea and upon return sailing a straight line from Iceland to the Bering Strait via the North Pole.

The Northern Sea Route Administration has so far received 205 applications to sail the whole or parts of the Northern Sea Route in 2014. Only one of these – the heavy lift vessel “Xiang Yun Kou” sails under Chinese flag.



The PLA Establishes a Cyberspace Strategic Intelligence Research Center

26 June 2014

OE Watch Commentary: China continues to expand its cyber warfare awareness and capabilities. On 30 June Jiefangjun Bao online noted that a Cyberspace Strategic Intelligence Research Center had been officially founded. The center is designed to provide support in high-quality intelligence research and to help China gain an advantage in its quest for attaining national information security.

The creation of the Center follows the development of several other significant cyber organizations in China. For example, on 27 February General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Xi Jinping oversaw the first meeting of the Central Leading Group for Cyber Security and Informatization. China appears to be embarking on a plan to turn the nation into a “cyber-powerhouse,” that is, a country that maintains firm control over Internet issues and public opinion, while focusing on developing and advancing information technology and ensuring information security. **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

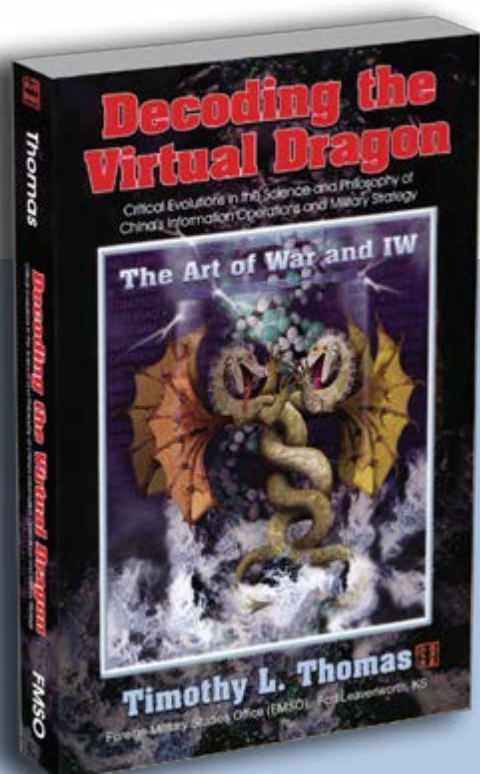
“The Cyberspace Strategic Intelligence Research Center was officially founded at an information center of the General Armaments Department (GAD) of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) on June 26, 2014.”

Source: Unattributed report, “PLA Cyberspace Strategic Intelligence Research Center Founded,” Jiefangjun Bao Online (in English), 30 June 2014.

The Cyberspace Strategic Intelligence Research Center is a high-level intelligence platform built on research efforts of an information center of the GAD and the wisdom of the experts in various fields. The center is designed to become an authoritative research resource for Internet intelligence, build a highly-efficient cyberspace dynamically-tracking research system, provide high-end services for hot and major issues, and explore approaches of intelligence analysis as well as identification and appraisal with cyberspace characteristics.

The center will be completed with high-level academic exchange platform for cyberspace in the form of high-level forums, academic conferences, published monographs and translated works, etc, so as to keep expanding its influence in the cyberspace research field. The center will adopt the expert engagement system as the basic organization form, engaging experts from such key equipment and technology development fields as cyberspace situation awareness and fundamental research while giving attention to such key development directions as strategic policies.

The experts come from such fields as strategic theory research, intelligence study, technology, argumentation and management, and front-line research. The representatives of relevant departments, famous academicians in the cyberspace field and specially-invited experts attended the inauguration ceremony. The experts present also aired their views on the topic of “cyberspace strategic situation evaluation and countermeasures”.



Tim Thomas’s *Decoding the Virtual Dragon* explains how Chinese information warfare (IW) concepts since 2003 fit into the strategic outlook, practices, and activities of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). The book offers IW explanations directly from the pens of Chinese experts. The Chinese authors discuss the application or relation of IW to strategic thought, the transformation plans of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), the revolution in military affairs (RMA), and the revolution in knowledge warfare and cognition.

Tim Thomas provides an indispensable source for understanding the fundamentals of Chinese military thought and demonstrating how IW/IO has been integrated into the art of war and strategy.

South China Sea Opponents Building New Ground in Their Conflict

13 July 2014

“China’s provocative and unilateral actions have lent credence to the view that it is pursuing an aggressive expansion agenda to advance its nine-dash-line position in the South China Sea”

OE Watch Commentary: On 2 May 2014 CNOOC, the Chinese state-owned oil and natural gas exploration and production company, moved its only deep-sea exploration rig, HS981, into a portion of the South China Sea also claimed by Vietnam. Within days Vietnam dispatched dozens of civil maritime and coast guard vessels to interdict the rig’s operations and hopefully force its withdrawal. Vietnam claims the waters as within its Exclusive Economic Zone per its interpretation of the UN Convention on the Law of Sea. In turn, China claims the sea by historical right and dispatched over 80 civil maritime and coast guard vessels as a cordon to forestall Vietnamese action. China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated the rig is “completely within the waters of China’s Paracel Islands.” Other states’ interference with the rig’s operations is therefore illegitimate.

For almost three months, the two sides have been jousting on the waters around the rig. While the Vietnamese have made a valiant attempt, they have been outclassed by the larger and more numerous Chinese vessels. As well, just over the horizon hovers the superior naval force of China’s Southern Seas Fleet. The Chinese oil rig has been able to continue normal operations and is scheduled to move back to undisputed waters by late August 2014.

With the HS-981 deep-sea exploration rig 120 nautical miles east of Vietnam’s Ly Son Island and 180 nautical miles south of China’s Hainan Island, the two countries have moved from being competing South China Sea claimants to being adversaries on the sea. There is little doubt that if China continues to prioritize exerting its ability – if not its right – to deploy the HS-981 wherever it wants, it will succeed in these tactical deployments and there is nothing Vietnam or any other South China Sea littoral country can do to stop it.

The medium-term danger for China lies in its being perceived as a regional bully that has forsaken its rhetoric of “peaceful rise” and “harmonious foreign relations” in the pursuit of immediate gain. The longer-term and larger battle though is already unfolding in the form of maritime construction crews and equipment that are literally creating new, above-water ground. Each party hopes to use these land



“Vietnam views the South China Sea (which many Vietnamese call the East Sea).”
Source: <https://johnib.wordpress.com/tag/oil-rig-hs-981/>

Source: “Navy Quick to Deny China Link in Choice of Anniversary Venue,” Malaya Business Insight, 26 May 2014. <http://www.malaya.com.ph/business-news/news/navy-quick-deny-china-link-choice-anniversary-venue>

Philippine Navy chief Vice Adm. Jesus Millan yesterday said the command’s 116th foundation anniversary will be held tomorrow at the headquarters of the Naval Forces West in Ulugan Bay, Puerto Princesa City, but he was quick to deny any link to China or the territorial dispute in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

(continued)

Continued: South China Sea Opponents Building New Ground in Their Conflict

features to as naval bases and possibly airbases from which area control of the sea may be exerted. The first article cited below highlights the concern with which the Philippines views China's increasing construction activity at several locations. China hopes to build military garrisons, naval facilities, and airstrips far out in the sea from its home shores.

The second article describes some of the Philippine response to China's moves through significant investment from its limited capital budget to expand and improve its naval facilities that front the confrontation zone of the Spratly Island chain. Given their small size relative to China, no South China Sea littoral country can hope to outbuild China, let alone directly confront its naval forces. They must rely on methods similar to China by using civilian instruments well within the bounds of international law in an attempt to counter China's more confident moves.

Yet, China is not alone in its island-building gambit. In the early 1980s Vietnam artificially augmented Southwest Cay in the Spratlys with an enclosed harbor and military barracks. In the third article Taiwan is shown near completion of a significant expansion of the artificial harbor and airstrip on Taiping Island, Spratly. Thus, it is possible to see China's build-out on five South China Sea features as an attempt to balance the land-grab in the sea already commenced by others. Building permanent, above-water ground features in the sea has become the most salient way in which the adversaries are fighting their "cold war" for control of the South China Sea, its natural resources, and the political legitimacy that tough action earns these governments in the eyes of their respective nationalist audiences at home. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zandoli)**

Source: "Taiping Island Pier Project Is Expected to Be Completed in Advance," Nansha.org, 13 July 2014. <http://www.nansha.org/index.php/forum?view=topic&catid=1&id=7418#15495>.

Nansha Taiping Island Ferry construction is expected to be completed in advance. Ministry of Transportation National Expressway Engineering Bureau said new construction in addition to 320-meter quay length of the main pier, and 210 meters long access road, towpath facilities, navigation aids and other ancillary facilities, port dredging depth of 14 meters. When complete it will be a future stop for Navy and Coast Guard 3000-ton large frigates that will expand the scope of enforcement and fishing protection functions.

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CNOOC HS-981 (Haiyang Shiyou) deep-sea exploration rig. Xinhua Photo.
Source: <http://news.usni.org>

China's Counter-terrorism Strategy Focuses on the Internet

2 July 2014

“In one room there were also documents relating to jihad, receipts of money from Nigeria and Qatar transfers.”

OE Watch Commentary: According to a recent video about terrorism and the Internet released by the Chinese government (available at <http://video.sina.com.cn/p/news/c/v/2014-06-24/143664050509.html>), China says that Uighur militant groups have increased their attacks in the country from 8 in 2010, to 13 in 2011, to 32 in 2012, to 109 in 2013 and to 73 in the first six months of 2014. The video showed previously unreleased footage of terrorist attacks, such as a suicide vehicle bombing in Tiananmen Square in October 2013. Though the factors behind Uighur militancy are varied, China has closely documented the online propaganda efforts of Uighur militant groups and called for broad restrictions on the Internet to combat them.

Consistent with China's concern about the Internet, a Chinese article on sina.com describes how Russian, Arabic and Uyghur foreign websites are recruiting Chinese citizens—likely Uighurs—to receive terrorist training overseas, after which they are sent back to China to carry out attacks. There have been videos of Chinese fighters in Syria, and China has claimed that participants in terrorist attacks in Xinjiang have traveled to South Asia and Syria and returned home to launch the attacks. Since many of these terrorists were recruited via the Internet, according to the article, China has sought to eliminate all terrorist groups' propaganda videos and audio available on the Internet, 70% of which come from outside of China.

China's increasing focus on the Internet's role in terrorist propaganda and recruitment will likely lead to further restrictions on the Internet, including popular search engines like Google. The Chinese government is also eager to cite as justification for this Internet policy politicians and analysts in the West, who discuss the dangers of online radicalization. Given China's concern about online radicalization, the country may also seek to leverage its power to urge other governments to close down websites that are hosting anti-Chinese content. At the same time, China's restrictions may give legitimacy to other countries that, like China, seek to curb extremist content, as well as some nonviolent anti-government sentiment. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



A screenshot from a scene of a video China released showing the Uighur family of three that carried out a suicide bombing in Tiananmen Square in October 2013. In the video, China blamed the Internet for radicalizing Uighurs in the country. Source: <http://video.sina.com.cn/p/news/c/v/2014-06-24/143664050509.html>

Source: Sami Kohen, “Türkiye neden hedef oluyor? (Why is Turkey a target?)” Milliyet.com.tr, 13 June 2014, <http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/turkiye-neden-hedef-oluyor-/dunya/ydetay/1896502/default.htm>

Hundreds of overseas terror websites seeking Chinese recruits

Internet regulators have received more than 1,500 reports a week about terrorism sites, which further provide strong support for the Communist Party to combat terrorist organizations. China's Illegal Internet Information Reporting Center found that some Russian, Arabic and Uyghur foreign websites are recruiting Chinese citizens overseas to receive terrorist training, and then send them back to China to carry out attacks.

The center began offering up to 10 million yuan in prize money to encourage people to report terrorism websites. Reports received include 165 that are foreign and 65 within China. The National Internet Information Office said the mainland should start the “eradication of online audio and video for fear of violence,” since the Center received 230 valid reports that more than 70% of violent terrorist information from outside websites.

Kazakhstan's Space Agency Launches another Satellite

29 June 2014

“...A second unit, but with medium spatial resolution, went into space on the heavy Russian ballistic rocket, the RS-20 ‘Dnepr.’”

OE Watch Commentary: Kazakhstan's involvement in space exploration is most often associated with the Baikonur Cosmodrome (in western Kazakhstan), the main launch site of the Soviet, and now Russian space program. As the accompanying article shows, Kazakhstan Gharysh Sapary (Kazakhstan Space Agency or KGS) recently launched the second satellite this year to be used for remote sensing. It is mentioned that the stated use of the satellite is resource and environmental monitoring and management, and outside of this the government has said that the satellite's mission fits into a strategic goal (through the year 2020) of defense and security of the country;

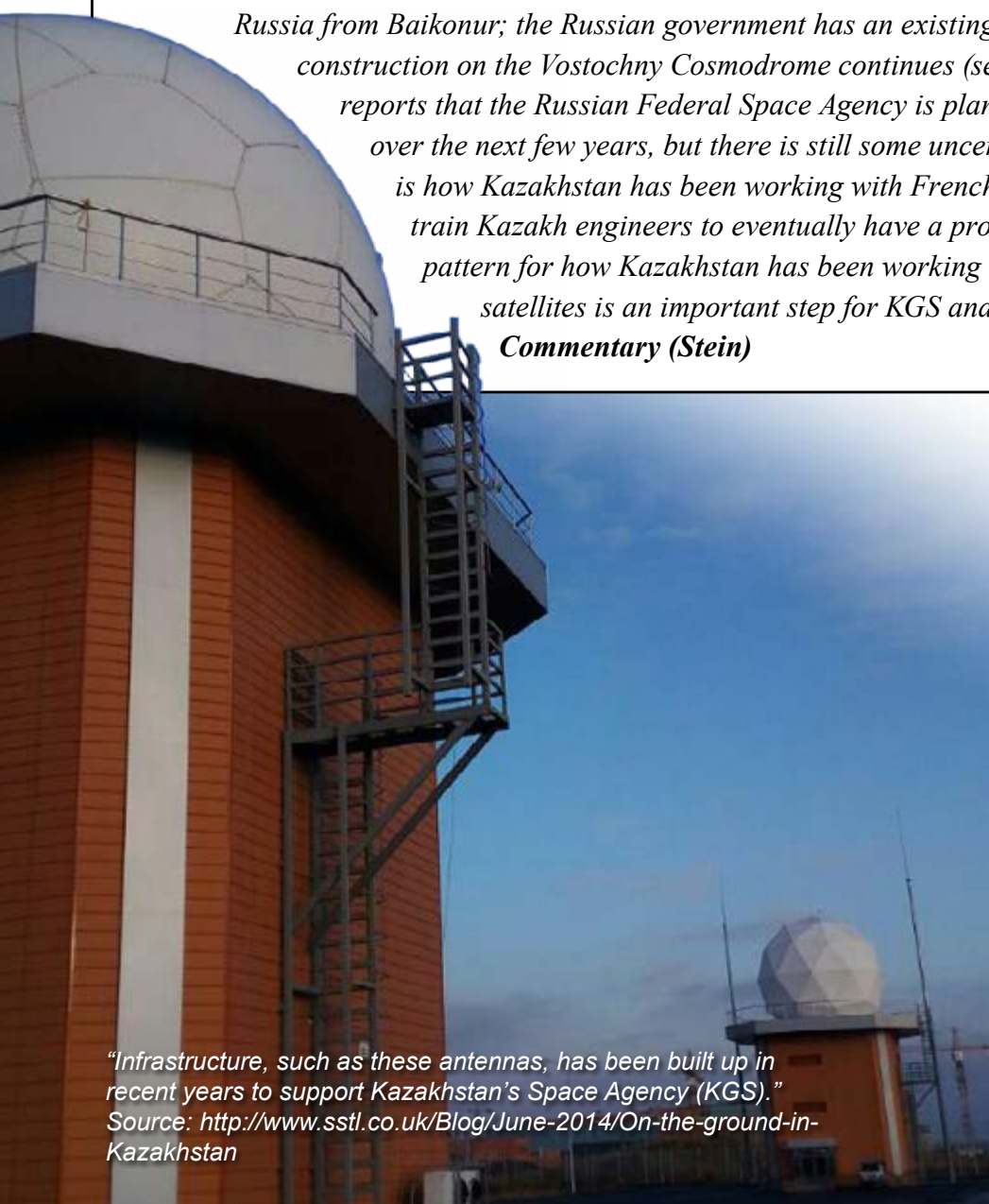
however, there is no specific information on what other ministry, if any, might work with KGS on this project. The satellite is capable of producing images with a ground sample distance of 6.5m (KazEOSat-1, launched in May of this year, has a one-meter capability) and will be in service for an estimated three years. The satellite has a seven-year operational lifetime and could be utilized beyond its original mission.

Another aspect of the satellite launch not mentioned (or shown in the photographs) is how it fits into a stated goal of the country's space agency to develop capabilities to eventually take over Baikonur. This is not necessarily an indication of Kazakhstan planning to remove Russia from Baikonur; the Russian government has an existing agreement to use Baikonur for a few dozen more years, though construction on the Vostochny Cosmodrome continues (see: <http://drugoi.livejournal.com/4008917.html>). There have been reports that the Russian Federal Space Agency is planning to shift a percentage of launches from Baikonur to Vostochny over the next few years, but there is still some uncertainty surrounding this. One other thing to note about this launch is how Kazakhstan has been working with French and British companies not just to produce satellites, but also to train Kazakh engineers to eventually have a production capability at a facility in Astana. This follows a similar pattern for how Kazakhstan has been working to develop its defense industry. Ultimately, the recent launch of two satellites is an important step for KGS and could complement Kazakhstan's national security. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

Source: Bedenko, Grigory, “Как запускали KazEOSat-2 (How they launched the KazEOSat-2),” Vox Populi, 29 June 2014.
<http://www.voxpopuli.kz/post/2097-kak-zapuskali-kazeosat-2>

How they launched the KazEOSat-2

Not long ago we talked in detail about the launch of the first Kazakh remote sensing satellite. A second unit, but with medium spatial resolution, went into space on the heavy Russian ballistic rocket, the RS-20 “Dnepr.” The rocket launched (on the night of June 20) from a facility in the Orenburg region (Russia) near the Russia-Kazakh border...the orbit of the machine is designed in such a way that it is able to shoot not only the territory of Kazakhstan...it is possible to sell images to other countries...



“Infrastructure, such as these antennas, has been built up in recent years to support Kazakhstan's Space Agency (KGS).”
Source: <http://www.sstl.co.uk/Blog/June-2014/On-the-ground-in-Kazakhstan>



The KazEOSat-2 being worked on prior to its launch.
Source: <http://www.voxpopuli.kz/post/2097-kak-zapuskali-kazeosat-2>

The Kyrgyz-Tajik Border Dispute Continues

8 July 2014

“Both sides are willing to provide security in areas where construction will take place”

OE Watch Commentary: The governments of Central Asia have always made border security a priority, and their participation in several international and regional border security organizations (that allow for coordination of border security among members or the development of border guard forces' capabilities) demonstrates that. The accompanying articles provide an example of how these governments often work bilaterally on border issues, though with mixed results. The articles discuss a recent meeting held between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on resolving border disputes, most notably near Tajikistan's Vorukh enclave in Kyrgyzstan's Batken Province, and eventually demarcating the shared border (presumably the entire Kyrgyz-Tajik border, though neither article mentions this). The articles were published only a day apart, but reflect how quickly negotiations went from somewhat optimistic to a rejection of the proposal for how roads near the border would be used.

It is interesting to note that Tajikistan has planned to pay damages to Kyrgyz citizens for the clash that took place between civilians on both sides of the border near Vorukh in May of this year. This was the third incident on the Kyrgyz-Tajik near or on the road to Vorukh: a clash between civilians took place in April 2013 and border guards from both countries exchanged fire in January 2014. Despite any efforts by either side to negotiate an agreement, another clash took place on 10 July between Kyrgyz and Tajik Border Guards. Details on the incident are still coming out, and there was one reported casualty. It had been reported that 10 July was the planned date that construction was to resume on Kyrgyzstan's road to bypass Tajik territory in the Batken Province, though it is unclear if this is what caused the clash. Representatives from the Sughd and Batken Provinces met informally on 11 July, but this has received little attention and might be an initiative of local authorities. Negotiations at the national level are likely to resume eventually, as they have following incidents in the past, though it is difficult to tell how much of a setback the most recent clash will cause. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**



“Representatives from the Kyrgyz and Tajik Border Guards Services meet on July 11 in the Batken Province, Kyrgyzstan.” Source: <http://batken.turmush.kg/ru/news:66217>

Source: Malikova, Bernmet, “После инцидентов (After the incidents),” Vecherniy Bishkek, 8 July 2014. <http://members.vb.kg/2014/07/08/panorama/5.html>

After the incidents

...On Thursday a joint meeting of delegations from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan was held on the delimitation and demarcation of the border... The stretch of road (from) Kok-Tash – Ak-Sai will only be used by our (Kyrgyz) citizens, while the road Isfara – Vorukh will be shared. Both sides are willing to provide security in areas where construction will take place... In the near future they will meet to discuss an agreement on a draft treaty on the border between the two countries... It was stated that the Tajiks are ready to compensate for material damage of seven millions Soms (\$135,000) to Kyrgyz citizens caused during the May 7 incident...

Source: Rafiyeva, Mavlyuda, “Джумабой Сангинов: Встреча в Кайраккуме не дала никаких результатов (Jumaboi Sanginov: the Meeting in Kayrakkum has not resulted in anything),” Asia-Plus, 9 July 2014. <http://news.tj/ru/news/dzhumaboi-sanginov-vstrecha-v-kairakkume-ne-dala-nikakikh-rezultatov>

Jumaboi Sanginov: the Meeting in Kayrakkum has not resulted in anything

...The government working groups of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, which started discussion of road projects on Isfara – Vorukh and Kok-Tash – Ak-Sai – Tamdyk, do not have a unified position... The Tajik side is proposing to build a new road between Isfara – Vorukh, of which only Tajiks would use. The Kyrgyz believe this road should be used by both sides... Tajikistan has rejected this offer... according to Sanginov, disputes and conflicts between residents of border villages will not end because the main goal of the Tajiks is to provide direct access to the Vorukh enclave...

The Market for Private Security in Kazakhstan

7 July 2014

“Priority is given to former athletes and members of the security services”

OE Watch Commentary: Private security in Kazakhstan (or even Central Asia) is a topic that is not often discussed, but as the accompanying article highlights, it is an industry that has been experiencing some growth. The article is an interesting look at the market for private security in the country, but there are other pieces of information that are worth focusing on. First, one of the women interviewed for the article mentions having a permit to carry a shotgun (smoothbore weapon), which she occasionally does on duty, but not a pistol or revolver (weapons with rifling). It is somewhat surprising that bodyguards are carrying firearms, especially in Kazakhstan, where they are tightly regulated. Civilian ownership of rifles and shotguns is allowed for hunting, but only the latter is legal for self-defense, and registration is required with the Interior Ministry. Earlier this year the government passed a law making traumatic weapons (typically a gas-powered pistol that fires small spherical rubber or tear gas rounds) illegal, but it was not mentioned if this included those working in private security. If the article is any indication, bodyguards might continue to have fewer restrictions on firearm possession than civilians.

There are a couple of other things in the article that provide insight into how the private security industry has been operating in Kazakhstan. First, there are a number of companies in cities across the country (most are in Almaty) that provide a variety of security-related services (see: <http://www.1stroitelny.kz/catalog/list/id/511b2632ac79593e4d00a356.html>). Second, the article mentions that one of the directors of a security company had served in the Interior Ministry and that these companies usually recruit former members of the security services or athletes. This has a few similarities with what happened following the collapse of the Soviet Union, when former athletes and service members provided protection (or in some cases served as enforcers) when racketeering activity increased in the early and mid-1990s. The government of Kazakhstan has been working on improving salary and benefits for service members, but it could be difficult to compete with the salary offered to those working in private security. If Kazakhstan's economy continues to grow, this will be a development worth watching.

End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)



“There are a number of security companies in Kazakhstan which employ personnel with military experience and perform a variety of functions. Above, security guards respond to an alarm at bank in Almaty in December 2012.” Source: <http://www.voxpopuli.kz/post/view/id/919>

Source: Gubaydulin, Oleg. “Охрана тела – женское дело, или Легко ли быть “тёлкой”? (Bodyguards – a woman's business, or is it easy to be a “chick”?),” Karavan, 7 July 2014. <http://www.caravan.kz/article/87788>

Bodyguards – a woman's business, or is it easy to be a “girl”?

The subject of female bodyguards have caught the attention of Karavan... We met and spoke with two such individuals, Alfiya and Aygerim...

(Karavan) – Do you have a license?

(Alfiya) – Yes, of course, I went and took a special course

(Karavan) – And a permit for possessing and carrying firearms?

(Alfiya) – Only smoothbore. I have a shortened MP-133 shotgun with a pistol grip...

(Karavan) – You don't use pistols or revolvers?

(Alfiya) – No. Even if I had permission, I risk going to jail by using a weapon...

(Karavan) – How much do you earn?

(Alfiya) – Sometimes up to three thousand dollars a month, sometimes around two thousand... three to four months a year, usually in winter, I don't have work...

...“Those that are selected as bodyguards have demands imposed upon them that “sharpen” (them), says Kayrat Kalzhan, director of a security agency and former Interior Ministry agent... “Priority is given to former athletes and members of the security services. Ideally, they need to be able to shoot a Makarov pistol at 25 meters and score no less than 26 points... New hires go through a three week training course... Kazakhstan now has several dozen large, private security firms...”

Iran and Kyrgyz Relations Aim at Theoretical Security and Practical Infrastructure

8 July 2014

“Iran is a country with global importance now and due to the country’s very high potentials in different areas, Bishkek supports broadening of cooperation with Tehran.”

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying article is from Iran’s farsnews.com and illuminates a discussion between Kyrgyz Defense Minister Abibilla Kudaiberdiyev and the Iranian Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan Ali Najafi, in which they pledged to further bilateral cooperation to face emerging threats from the region and develop infrastructure, particularly rail.

According to the article, Najafi outlined a foreign policy for Iran to expand friendly relations with all of its neighbors, including consolidating the bilateral relationship with Bishkek. This type of policy is possible for Iran because the Shi’a population of southern Iraq is drawing on Iranian support for its war against jihadists, and the weak internal politics of Afghanistan allow for Iran to expand its influence in western Afghanistan and among the Afghan Shi’as. Moreover, Central Asian countries like Kyrgyzstan would welcome Iran’s influence in Central Asia to balance against the overbearing powers of Russia and China.

Yet, the key entry point for Iran into Kyrgyzstan may be through helping to build up Kyrgyzstan’s infrastructure. Iran and Kyrgyzstan have recently begun negotiating the building of a railroad between their countries. This would allow goods from China to exit Iranian ports after transiting through Kyrgyzstan and would also open up more avenues for diplomatic and security cooperation between Iran and Kyrgyzstan, as well as between these two countries and China.

End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)



Iran’s size, population, and proximity to Kyrgyzstan makes it a likely security partner of Kyrgyzstan to help Kyrgyzstan balance against other regional powers, such as China and Russia. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran-Kyrgyzstan_relations#mediaviewer/File:Kyrgyzstan_Iran_locator_map.svg

Source: “Kyrgyz DM Urges Regional Cooperation to Fight Terrorists,” farsnews.com, 8 July 2014.

Kyrgyz DM Urges Regional Cooperation to Fight Terrorists

“Further cooperation among countries in the campaign against terrorism and for existing threats in the region is needed,” Kudaiberdiyev said during the meeting on Tuesday. He also referred to the good relations between Iran and Kyrgyzstan, and underlined the necessity for using the existing capacities to further develop the two countries’ bilateral ties and cooperation.

Najafi, for his part, stressed the importance given to the expansion of relations with neighbors in Iran’s foreign policy, and asked for the consolidation of all-out bilateral ties between Tehran and Bishkek.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in a meeting with new Kyrgyz Ambassador to Tehran Asanbeyk Osman Aliyev in June underlined the need for the further expansion of bilateral relations. The Iranian president pointed to his recent negotiations with his Kyrgyz counterpart Almazbek Atambaev over the construction of a joint railway network among the regional countries, and said, “Construction of railroads, roads and aerial routes will bring the countries closer to each other.”

The Kyrgyz ambassador, for his part, pointed to the status quo of Iran-Kyrgyzstan relations, and said, “Iran is a country with global importance now and due to the country’s very high potentials in different areas, Bishkek supports broadening of cooperation with Tehran.”

Ethnic Protest Turns Violent in Macedonia over Terror Trial Verdict

4 July 2014

“Several thousand young ethnic Albanians angered by the terrorism convictions fought running battles with riot police...”

OE Watch Commentary: Ethnic tensions in Macedonia are a continual, lingering issue between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, the latter making up about a quarter of the population. In 2001 ethnic Albanian insurgents fought Macedonian security forces until Albanians received increased rights. Violence and protests continue, however, and the recently concluded “Monster Case” renews and augments tension.

This case began in 2012 when five Macedonians were shot and killed, allegedly by Albanians. Soon after the police arrested dozens of Albanians, saying they apprehended the terrorists and claiming that they were driven by Islamic fundamentalism. The case has since incited ethnic tensions, as prosecutors sought to paint the murderers as terrorists, an allegation Albanians deny.

The verdict of the case gave six Albanians life sentences as terrorists, provoking ethnic Albanian protests throughout the Balkans. In Skopje, Macedonia’s capital, protests turned violent, with promises for further protests and even an attack by an Albanian guerrilla force if the convicted Albanians are not freed. Given the history of this region and the strained relations between Macedonians and Albanians, this violence could easily escalate. **End OE Watch Commentary (Jackson)**



“Several thousand protesters clashed with police in Skopje at a rally against the jailing of alleged extremist ethnic Albanian Muslims for the ‘terrorist’ murders of ethnic Macedonians.”

Source: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/high-risk-ethnic-protest-announced-in-macedonian-capital>

Source: Marusic, Sinisa J. “Unrest Erupts at Macedonia Albanians’ Terror Trial Protest.” Balkan Transitional Justice. Balkan Insight, 4 July 2014. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/high-risk-ethnic-protest-announced-in-macedonian-capital>

Unrest Erupts at Macedonia Albanians’ Terror Trial Protest

Several thousand young ethnic Albanians angered by the terrorism convictions fought running battles with riot police who used tear gas, water cannon, stun grenades and pepper spray in an attempt to quell the unrest in the capital on Friday. ...

...In a case that raised ethnic tensions in the country, the Skopje Criminal Court on Monday jailed six alleged Albanian radicals for life for the killing of five ethnic Macedonians at Orthodox Easter in 2012. ...

...News of the murder raised ethnic tensions, after groups of ethnic Macedonians staged protests, some of which turned violent, blaming the killings on members of the country’s large Albanian minority community....

Bulgaria Backs Controversial Russian Pipeline

8 July 2014

“The [European] union appears deeply divided, with several member states that depend on Russian gas supporting [the pipeline]”

OE Watch Commentary: The South Stream Pipeline is controversial for a few reasons, one of which being its tenuous legality. Work on the pipeline was suspended in June over allegations that Gazprom, Russia's state-run energy company, held a monopoly over the project.

However, these allegations curbing construction of the pipeline have a political tone as Russia's use of energy in its diplomacy with the EU and Ukraine heightens. The pipeline is an attempt to reduce Russia's dependence on Ukraine to pump natural gas to Europe. The new route would traverse under the Black Sea to Bulgaria before continuing to Serbia, Hungary, and Slovenia.

Bulgaria, along with several other EU member states, would benefit from the pipeline, leading to political pressure to allow the project to continue. However, the EU and US wish to minimize Russia's ability to manipulate gas prices and availability as a form of diplomacy. Bulgaria previously aligned with the EU and US, but has now decided to back the pipeline. **End OE Watch Commentary (Jackson)**

Source: AFP. “Sofia Backs Moscow in U-Turn on Gas Pipeline,” Bangkok Post. 8 July 2014. <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/world/419438/sofia-backs-moscow-in-u-turn-on-gas-pipeline>

Sofia Backs Moscow in U-Turn on Gas Pipeline

“Russia and Bulgaria pressed the EU on Monday to approve the controversial South Stream gas pipeline, a project that would bypass Ukraine and which Brussels views critically.

Russian Foreign minister Sergei Lavrov listens to questions during his joint news conference with his Bulgarian counterpart Kristian Vigenin in Sofia on July 7, 2014

Having suspended preparations for the project last month at the height of the crisis between Moscow and Kiev, EU member Bulgaria changed tack to row back in behind the Russians. ...

...The EU has called on all 28 member states to resist pressure from the Kremlin over the project. But the union appears deeply divided, with several member states that depend on Russian gas supporting it.”



Sending a Message: Russia Airlifts VDV Division and Brigade 22 June 2014

“Our country will continue to vigorously defend the rights of Russians, our compatriots abroad, and will do so by using the entire arsenal of available means -- from political and economic ones to humanitarian operations and the right to self-defense, which are provided for by international law.”

--Russian President Vladimir Putin

OE Watch Commentary: Russia's recent “snap drill” in the Central Military District (OSK) deployed two army groups and an airborne (VDV) division and brigade, involving a total of approximately 65,000 personnel. The most impressive aspect of the drill involved the deployment of the 98th Guards Airborne Division and the 31st Separate Guards Air Assault Brigade by way of military-transport aviation (VTA) to the training areas. Russian media reports that the 98th Division required 96 sorties of the Il-76 heavy lift transport to redeploy the division to its base in Ivanov suggest that some of the division's equipment was staged beforehand at the training area, or the entire division did not participate in the event. Most likely the 96 sorties were used to deploy the division's main force projection assets, the 217th and 331st Guards Parachute Infantry Regiments, leaving supporting units at their barracks. Although the entire division likely did not deploy, this still represents a significant accomplishment for the coordinated air transport of over 12 battalions of mechanized VDV (including units of the 31st Brigade), covering a distance of approximately 3500 miles to the battlefield, a feat that has not been accomplished in recent memory.

Source: “Large-scale Airlifts Are Part of Snap Drills in Russia's Central Military District,” Interfax Online, 22 June 2014, < <http://www.interfax.com/>>, accessed 8 July 2014.

Large-scale Airlifts Are Part of Snap Drills in Russia's Central Military District

The Military-Transport Aviation (VTA) of the Russian Air Force has begun to implement tasks as part of a large-scale operation to airlift the personnel and equipment of the formations involved in an inspection of combat readiness in the troops and forces of the Central Military District, the Press Service and Information Directorate of the Russian Ministry of Defense has announced.

“More than 40 Military-Transport Aviation An-124 Ruslan, Il-76, An-22 and An-26 aircraft from the Tver, Pskov, Taganrog and Orenburg VTA airbases are involved in the airlift. Today alone, they will fly more than 50 sorties to bring personnel and military equipment promptly to their destination,” it said in the military's statement...

At the airfields, the embarkation of personnel and equipment from the subunits of the 98th Airborne Division and 31st Separate Airborne-Assault Brigade of the Airborne Troops is under way, to be subsequently airlifted to Chelyabinsk Region, where Airborne Troops units will take part in an exercise jointly with combined-arms formations from the Central Military District, the press office said.

“VTA aircraft will airlift a command task force, as well as the personnel and special equipment of an auxiliary Airborne Troops command and control post, from Moscow Region's Chkalovskiy to Chelyabinsk Region,” the Defense Ministry also noted.

(continued)



Source: http://ruskline.ru/opp/2014/7/01/zavershena_vnezapnaya_proverka_vojsk_cvo/

Continued: Sending a Message: Russia Airlifts VDV Division and Brigade

The last time the Central Military District conducted a “snap drill” was 26 February 2014, when a large force mustered on the Ukrainian border, a precursor to the Crimea invasion and current trouble in Eastern Ukraine. Although the current exercise was conducted far from Ukraine, the significance of such an operation could not be missed in Kiev. Flexing its power-projection muscles, the Kremlin leadership is likely reminding the new Ukrainian president of its ability to deploy Russian peacekeepers to Eastern Ukraine. Russian peacekeepers have been used in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria, and their rather one-sided deployment has made the idea of Russian peacekeeping in Eastern Ukraine unpalatable to Kiev. On 1 July 2014 President Vladimir Putin claimed that “Our country will continue to vigorously defend the rights of Russians, our compatriots abroad, and will do so by using the entire arsenal of available means -- from political and economic ones to humanitarian operations and the right to self-defense, which are provided for by international law.” This statement, combined with the fact that the 98th Division and 31st Brigades are both part of the Collective Security Treaty Organization Rapid Reaction Forces and the 31st Brigade is a dedicated peacekeeping brigade, constitutes a not-too-subtle message that Russian peacekeepers could quickly be inserted into Eastern Ukraine if required.

End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)

The integrated snap inspection of combat readiness in the troops and forces of the Central Military District began on 21 June 2014 by order of the supreme commander-in-chief of the Russian Federation Armed Forces.

As part of the inspection activities, the 2nd and 41st Combined-Arms Armies of the Central Military District and Airborne Troops formations will be on exercise at training ranges in Samara, Kemerovo and Chelyabinsk Regions.

A total of some 65,000 troops from all armed services and service arms of the Armed Forces and command-and-control agencies will be involved in the inspection activities, as will more than 180 fixed-wing and 60 rotary-wing aircraft and more than 5,500 pieces of armament and military equipment.



98th Guards Airborne Division patch.
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/98th_Guards_Airborne_Division

Source: http://ruskline.ru/opp/2014/7/01/zavershena_vnezapnaya_proverka_vojsk_cvo/

Russia Expands Electronic Warfare Capabilities

20 June 2014

“...In the final analysis, the fact that al-Qaeda has become the sovereign power in Sunni Iraq, is a bigger disaster for Turkey than anybody else.”

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying article discusses a Russian Air Force program to retrofit the Il-22 aircraft with an upgraded electronic warfare (EW) and avionics package. The resulting Il-22PP Porubshchik will have improved reconnaissance and jamming capabilities.

This program follows the current trend in Russian military efforts to counter (superior) Western traditional aviation, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and GPS-dependent technologies. The Russian military is experimenting with several airframe and terrestrial platforms for such EW systems. The Russian Air Force has been taking deliveries of the Mi-8MTPR-1 jamming helicopters since 2011, and used them in the joint Russian-Belarusian “Union Shield 2011” exercise to disrupt anti-aircraft radar. The Russian Ground Forces have EW companies in maneuver brigades, which run the gamut of EW activities from disrupting enemy communications and GPS technologies to disrupting enemy radio-controlled fuses in artillery shells. As the Russian military believes the West (especially the US) is overly dependent on certain technologies, such as GPS and UAVs, for effective combat operations, the Russian Federation will likely continue to invest heavily in EW technologies as effective countermeasures. Russia may not have the technical acumen or economic ability to match Western technological capabilities, but it perceives cheaper countermeasures such as EW as an effective way to level the battlefield. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

(Left) SPR-2 Artillery Fuse Ammunition Jamming System
Source: Air Defence Weapons and Electronic Systems of Russia



Il-22PP “Porubshchik”.
Source: <http://vpk.name/file/img/il-22pp.jpg>

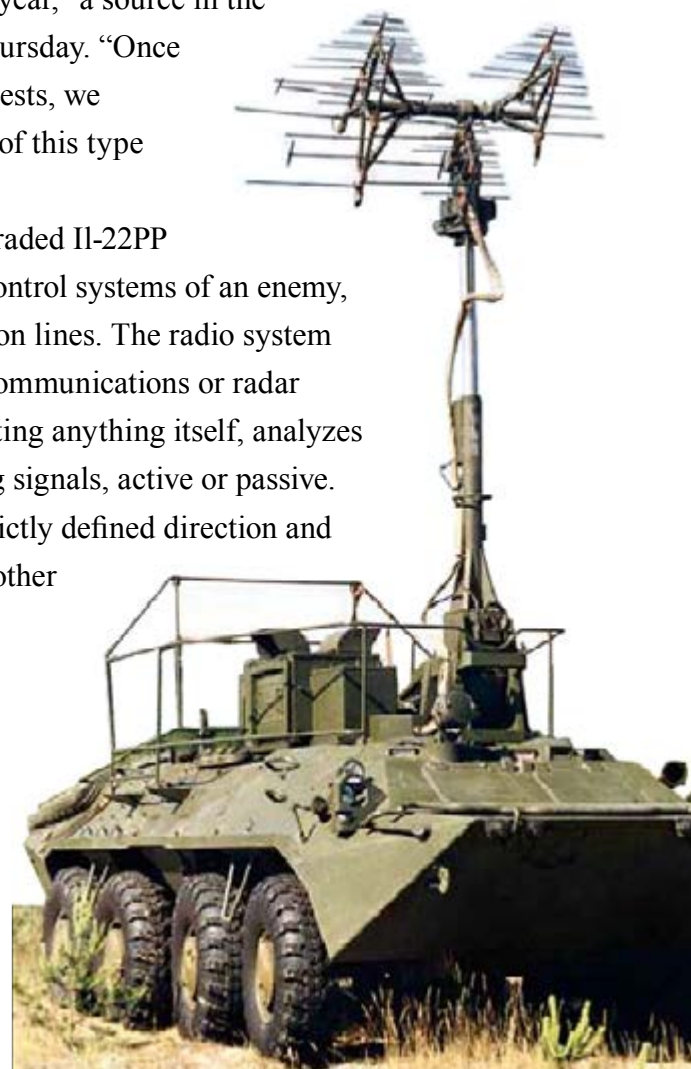
Source: “Il-22PP Aircraft to Complete Final Tests in Fourth Quarter of 2014,” Interfax Online, 20 June 2014, < <http://www.interfax.com/>>, accessed 8 July 2014.

Il-22PP Aircraft to Complete Final Tests in Fourth Quarter of 2014

The Russian aircraft design bureau, Myasishchev Experimental Machine-Building Plant, has submitted for state tests its upgraded electronic countermeasures (ECM) and aerial reconnaissance aircraft, Ilyushin Il-22P. “The state tests of the Il-22PP are due to be completed in the fourth quarter of this year,” a source in the defense industry told Interfax-AVN on Thursday. “Once the upgraded Il-22PP completes the state tests, we are planning to upgrade the other aircraft of this type currently in use,” the source said.

According to unofficial reports, the upgraded Il-22PP is capable of disabling radars and drone control systems of an enemy, without suppressing its own communication lines. The radio system installed on the aircraft detects wireless communications or radar emissions in a passive mode without emitting anything itself, analyzes channel frequency and radiates interfering signals, active or passive. The signal can only be suppressed in a strictly defined direction and on a certain frequency, without affecting other sources.

“It is expected that the new electronic warfare system will efficiently counter American AWACS aircraft and Patriot-class missile defense systems and will also block control of unmanned aircraft that are being actively used by NATO countries,” the source said.



A Growing Rift over Special Operations Aviation?

9 July 2014

“If a full-scale conflict were to begin, as experience demonstrates, the spetsnaz will again be left without helicopters, since the main portion of the craft will be engaged in the support of the combined arms troops...when large-scale operations were conducted, they simply forgot about the ‘wings’ of the spetsnaz,” --Russian Ministry of Defense Officer



MI-28H Night Hunter
Source: http://cache.photosight.ru/img/a/949/4136973_large.jpeg

OE Watch Commentary: The Russian Federation has recently established a Special Operations Command within the Russian General Staff. The development a Special Operations Command was started in 2009, one of many reforms of Anatoliy Serdyukov, the Russian Federation's previous Defense Minister. These reforms are often termed “New Look” reforms, as pundits have argued the intent of Serdyukov's reforms were to make the Russian military more closely resemble (look like) Western militaries. Serdyukov's reforms have met with considerable institutional resistance, since Western concepts such as a professional enlisted cadre and independent special operations forces are not easily grafted onto Russia's post-Soviet military.

The creation of a Special Operations Command within the General Staff is a significant doctrinal change for Russian special operations forces (Spetsnaz). In the Soviet/Russian system the majority of Ministry of Defense Spetsnaz have belonged to the Intelligence Directorate (GRU) of the General Staff and have performed mainly reconnaissance and direct

Source: Aleksey Ramm “The Winged Spetsnaz: Should Yet Another ‘Legacy’ of Anatoliy Serdyukov be Abandoned?,” Voenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer Online, 9 July 2014 <<http://vpk-news.ru/articles/20965>> , accessed 14 July 2014

The Winged Spetsnaz: Should Yet Another ‘Legacy’ of Anatoliy Serdyukov be Abandoned?

The idea of organizing helicopter squadrons as part of the newly created Special Operations Command of the Armed Forces of Russia has been circulating within the leadership of the Ministry of Defense since 2009. It is believed that one of the instigators supporting this was the head of the military establishment at that time, Anatoliy Serdyukov.

The new squadrons must not only provide covert deployments of special forces reconnaissance groups into the rear of the enemy and when necessary provide fire support for them, but they must also independently inflict strikes on the enemy during poor weather conditions of day and night...

(continued)

Continued: A Growing Rift over Special Operations Aviation?

action activities in the enemy rear in support of combined arms commanders, which are usually in operational control of them. The Spetsnaz have never been an “independent” force, have never been equipped with organic aviation or logistic assets to support sustained activities, and have had to rely on the supported commander to provide these resources. The creation of a Special Operations Command with organic aviation and logistic support outside of GRU control could suggest the command will be less focused on reconnaissance in support of a combined arms commander and more of a rapid reaction force capable of sustained, and possibly covert, direct action in support of national objectives.

*As with many of the former defense minister’s reforms, the creation of the Special Operations Command has also ruffled some feathers. In the Russian system, army aviation (run by the Air Force) controls all helicopters and ground attack aircraft for the Russian Ground Forces, airborne (VDV), naval infantry, and Spetsnaz. As the accompanying article explains, tactics used by the Air Force to conduct air assault operations for the VDV and naval infantry may not be meeting the needs of Russia’s special operators, as these forces have desired to adopt tactics more in line with Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB). The competition for limited aviation resources and differing tactics, techniques and procedures could be another reason for the creation of a Russian Special Operations Command. The Russian Air Force is likely worried that the loss of these assets to the Special Operations Command may be setting a precedent, as the Ground Forces and VDV have expressed similar interests in obtaining direct control of their supporting aviation assets. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Is it a Question of Equipment or Organization?

“The deployment of reconnaissance and sabotage groups by helicopters was first used in Korea” It should be noted that “helicopter special forces” have already long existed in the armed forces of the USA, Great Britain, Italy, France, etc.

“Currently an Mi-24 and Mi-8 pair is used for such tasks. The Mi-28N “Night Hunter” and the Mi-35M are beginning to be involved. In the near future we will be testing the Ka-52 “Alligator” as well. An attack helicopter provides cover and the Mi-8 conducts the assault. Exercises with special operations units are being constantly conducted. We have experience in interaction. It is sufficient to say that the helicopter pilots can recognize the voices on the radio stations of the spetsnaz officers with whom they are working,” related an Air Force officer of the Southern Military District to a commentator of the newspaper Voenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer...

At the same time an officer of one of the directorates of the Ministry of Defense who is familiar with the situation does not agree with how the issue was posed. “We have already said for some time that two combat transport helicopters based on the Mi-8 will cope much better than a combination of Mi-24s and Mi-8s. The experience of the FSB proves this. While one craft lands the group, the second one covers it from the air. Then they change places. After all, you have to consider that during assault operations 20-30 men are landed at the same time. In this case two Mi-24s and two Mi-8s are needed, and during contact conditions in battle these are excess targets that create unnecessary congestion in the air.”

The Ministry of Defense representative also noted... “If a full-scale conflict were to begin, as experience demonstrates, the spetsnaz will again be left without helicopters, since the main portion of the craft will be engaged in the support of the combined arms troops. The experience of the interaction of Army Aviation in Chechnya and Afghanistan is frequently cited, but there when large-scale operations were conducted, they simply forgot about the ‘wings’ of the spetsnaz,” mused the Ministry of Defense officer. “And it must be acknowledged that this was not just our problem. The Americans, the French and the English are all confronting similar problems. That is why they also created the separate helicopter squadrons for the support of spetsnaz.”

There will be no Extras

“It would not have been bad for the high command to have deployed one helicopter squadron in each military district to work with the spetsnaz brigades. It is possible that there is a need to include them in the composition of the Army Aviation brigades presently being formed. In any event there will be no extra ones, and they will bring many benefits,” answered one of the helicopter pilot officers surveyed by Voenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer, expressing his opinion. It was remarkable that the majority of the co-respondents shared this opinion...

What are China's Real Intentions in Russia's Far East?

9 July 2014

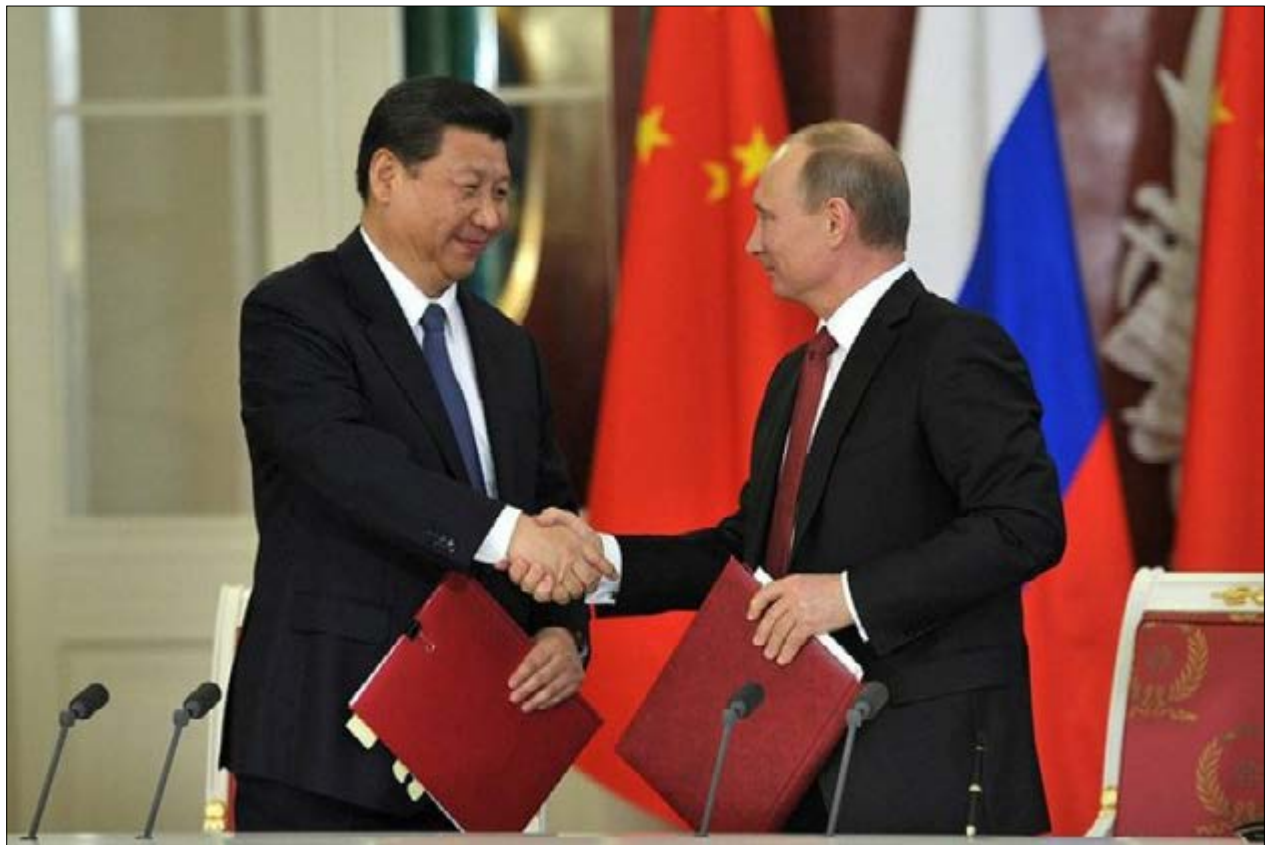
OE Watch Commentary: On 21 May 2014 Moscow and Beijing signed a 30-year gas agreement, which stipulates that Russia will supply hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of gas to China. The deal also requires construction of a new pipeline. Dubbed the "Power of Siberia," it would run through Yakutia, Khabarovsk, and Vladivostok in Eastern Siberia to transport Yakutia's gas to Primorsky Krai and China.

This agreement made Russia China's second largest gas market after Germany. More generally, it signaled growing ties between the two countries, as both countries seek ways to counterbalance the West and Russia's relations with the West continue to deteriorate. As the first excerpt reports, however, building the "Power of Siberia" pipeline will cost Russia more than previously estimated. Other analysts had observed before that the Russia-China gas deal provides more advantages to China than to Russia. This excerpt lends additional support for this conclusion.

The agreement also renewed an existing discussion in Russia about China's real intentions in Russia's Far East. Indeed, for several years now analysts in Russia have been divided on whether China is simply interested in business ties or is encroaching on Russia's Far East in attempts to gradually overtake these territories. The accompanying excerpts present two different viewpoints on this topic and give an update about the "Power of Siberia" pipeline construction.

The second excerpt is an interview with Dmitriy Tayevskiy, chief editor of Siberian internet news source Babr.ru, who asserts that the Chinese would never want Russia's Far East. Its cold climate is alien to them, and incorporating yet another territory would only create administrative headaches for Beijing, which already has its hands full with Tibet and Xingjiang. Indeed, he says, very few Chinese actually settle permanently in Irkutsk (one of Siberia's largest cities), even though they have every opportunity to do so. Ultimately, while Moscow fears that Russia will become China's raw material appendage, it is Moscow that uses the Far East in the same way. Therefore, the locals are mistrustful primarily of Moscow.

The third article, written without a byline in Kkm.kiev.ua, asserts that China has gradually but steadily increased its presence in the Far East through economic and cultural ties: intermarriages between Russians and Chinese are increasing, and China's investments in the Far East keep growing. It is easy for Russians from the Far East to travel to China and study there, which they do on a regular basis. Siberia has already become a source of raw materials for China, and the local elites are already "beginning to orient their relations towards their southern neighbor."



Chinese President Xi Jinping shakes hands with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin after approving a joint declaration.

Source: <http://gbtimes.com/business/xi-jinpings-russia-visit-yields-concrete-results>

Source: "Газопровод «Сила Сибири» обойдется России в 60 - 70 млрд. \$. Китай будет покупать российский газ по 350\$ за тысячу кубометров" (Pipeline "Power of Siberia" cost Russia 60 - \$70 billion. China will buy Russian gas at \$350 per thousand cubic meters), 9 July 2014 Russkiye.org <http://www.russkie.org/index.php?module=fullitem&id=32957>

Head of Russia's Presidential Administration Sergei Ivanov announced at a meeting with students in Beijing the increase of the projected cost for constructing the Russian-Chinese gas pipeline "Power of Siberia." Experts estimate the cost of building the gas pipeline will be \$60-70 billion. According to Sergei Ivanov, pipeline construction will begin in the near future....

(continued)

Continued: What are China's Real Intentions in Russia's Far East?

Both authors raise valid points. Furthermore, they do not necessarily contradict each other. Indeed, the second excerpt suggests China has been encroaching on the Far East without Chinese citizens settling there permanently and without formally annexing the territory to avoid the possible administrative problems Tayevskiy describes.

*The Far East is poor and life there is difficult. It makes sense that Russians would prefer to go to neighboring China than the other way around, and it provides another way for China to, in fact, encroach on the Far East. Indeed, it is possible for Chinese to become Russian citizens without permanently settling in Russia. Moreover, given Moscow's historic poor treatment of the Far East, it is not surprising that the Far East elites would look elsewhere for support. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***

Source: Tatiana Chesnokova, “Зачем китайцам Сибирь? (Why Do the Chinese Need Siberia?), 26 June 2014, Rosbalt.ru, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/federal/2014/06/26/1284335.html>

[Tatiana Chesnokova]--Another popular scary story—is about China Capturing Siberia.

[Dmitriy Tayevskiy] --In China there really is quite a rigid political system. Perhaps this is what causes the concerns. But from Moscow and Europe you cannot see what we see: the entire Chinese civilization had developed and is developing in the warm southern zone. Siberia for the Chinese – these are cold lands, and they don't want to live here. And those who do live in Irkutsk do not seek to assimilate, although they have all available resources to accomplish this. There are only very few of those who are really settled here less than ten in the entire city. They come to trade, build, and earn money, and, after earning money, they go back. So all this talk about the Chinese capturing Siberia – this is a perfect myth based on ignorance. The Chinese want to work based on partner relations.

Let's say they have seized Siberia. And what would happen? China would have another very problematic region, and they already have many troubles from them and from Tibet and Xinjiang. There would be problems with everything - language, administration, climate...

..... In fact, Siberia to Moscow - is that very same raw material appendage, which, we are scared into believing, Russia could become for China

Source: “Почему Сибирь станет китайской?” (Why Siberia Will Become Chinese), 9 July 2014, Rkm.Kiev.ua, <http://rkm.kiev.ua/v-mire/159270/>

Part of China, which borders the Russian Far East is growing rapidly and gradually merging economically, culturally, and simply based on human ties, with the Russian territory. In the Russian Far East and Siberia, the number of Chinese migrants and Chinese investments grows every year. A large number of immigrants from China obtain Russian citizenship, the number of mixed marriages between Russian and Chinese is increasing. One gets the impression that China is gradually assimilating into the Far East. Already, the economy of these Russian regions is more connected with Beijing than to Moscow. Residents go to China on vacation, for shopping, and the youth can receive education in Chinese universities. In addition, the local Russian elites are also beginning to orient their relationship towards their southern neighbor. Siberia already provides raw materials to the Chinese industries.

Ukraine Crisis Continues to Echo in the North Caucasus

10 July 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *The ongoing Ukraine crisis continues to reverberate in the North Caucasus, as the accompanying excerpts illustrate. The first excerpt, from Russian Interfax, focuses on population decline among Russian speakers in the North Caucasus. According to the article, Stavropol Senator Mikhail Afanasov proposes to resettle immigrants from Ukraine in the region to overcome this problem. The second excerpt, from Kavazskiy Uzel (Caucasian Knot), focuses on the North Caucasus' role in import substitution (replacing foreign imports with domestically produced goods) in the context of Russia's increasing economic isolation in response to its invasion of Ukraine.*

Russian President Vladimir Putin, indeed, began urging import substitution as early as April 2014, particularly for Russia's defense complex. Moscow had historically used the Caucasus region (both north and south) for building its military-industrial complex. Yet, even if Moscow now wants to develop more projects in the North Caucasus—whether to attract more Russian speakers, develop industry, or others—it is unclear how it plans to do so successfully, given the current economic and political situation of the region.

Since the late 1990s the Kremlin had propped up regimes in the Caucasus in an effort to control it, following two wars with Chechnya over its declared independence. In 2004 the Kremlin abolished regional elections altogether and instead transferred the power to appoint regional leaders to the Russian president. In practice, however, Moscow's heavy-handed approach has proven ineffective. The leaders which the Kremlin supported had managed to maintain the most basic order—in exchange for large cash flows from Moscow—but the regional economy stagnated while the political system grew corrupt and resistant to reform. No industry, basic infrastructure, or legitimate tax system is set in place, so the North Caucasus does not generate tax revenue for the central government. Meanwhile, the Kremlin spends per capita almost twice as much on the North Caucasus as it does nationally. In fact, the more nationalistic segments of the Russian society often demand to “stop feeding the Caucasus!” citing precisely this reason.

Meanwhile, the population in the North Caucasus is increasingly young, but dissatisfied and cynical due to poor job prospects in the context of a declining economy. When they go to Moscow and other large cities in Russia in search of employment, they are routinely treated as second-class citizens. In response, fewer and fewer are interested in Russian language or culture; more and more turn towards radical forms of Islam. It is unclear, therefore, how receptive this region would be to Ukrainian immigrants or development projects from Moscow.

*While the Ukraine crisis, it appears, has made the Kremlin take a look at the North Caucasus through a different lens than in the past, and the crisis is clearly reverberating in the region itself, it is doubtful at best that the Kremlin will muster a serious strategy to successfully implement its ideas. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***

Source: “Восточные районы Ставрополя нуждаются в притоке населения, в том числе за счет украинских беженцев – сенатор” (Stavropol's Eastern Regions Need Population Influx Including from Ukrainian Refugees - Senator), 10 July 2014, Russian Interfax, <http://www.interfaxrussia.ru/South/news.asp?id=518519&sec=1671>

The Russian-speaking population decline in Stavropol Territory's East can be overcome through a combination of measures taken by the Ministry of Regional Development and the Ministry of the North Caucasus, believes Stavropol senator Mikhail Afanasov ...

It is possible to resolve the existing problems, according to the senator, among other ways, by attracting to Stavropol Russian-speaking population residing in the former Soviet republics.

“This proposal is of particular importance due to the recent events in Ukraine, from where the inflow of migrants is increasing,” said M. Afanasov.

“...Today 500 thousand Ukrainians have arrived to Russia, and what will happen to them tomorrow, maybe these people can be settled in the east of the territories...” he said.

Source: Oleg Ponomarev, “Кавказ поможет в борьбе с импортом” (Caucasus Will Help in Fight with Imports), 7 July 2014, Vestnik Kavkaza (Caucasus Herald) <http://www.vestikavkaza.ru/articles/Kavkaz-pomozhet-v-borbe-s-importom.html>

At a meeting of the Government Commission on socio-economic development of the North Caucasus Federal District, held on July 1 in Vladikavkaz, Premier Dmitry Medvedev, in effect, clarified definitively an issue that is currently being discussed quite heatedly. This [issue] is a hypothetical shift in priorities towards folding various programs in North Caucasus Federal District.

One reason for such speculation was, for example, the recent adjustment of the North Caucasus tourism cluster development, and possible reasons for this that were cited were the significant reallocations of funds for the resettlement of the new territory, which became part of Russia recently – the Republic of Crimea...

As the Prime Minister said, due to some problems, including the cut of external economic relations, a serious question arose of import substitution now arose for the country. In this regard, the North Caucasus, according to Medvedev, could be one platform for implementing new [projects] and strengthening ongoing projects. The potential is there...

Voices of Disapproval of the Kremlin's Actions in Ukraine

10 July 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *As the Ukraine crisis enters another month, voices disapproving of the Kremlin's policy towards this country, though few, continue to appear in the Russian-language press, despite Moscow's best efforts to suppress dissent. The two excerpts below are examples of this.*

The first is from a Veter s Apsheron (Wind from the Apsheron) blog entry, published by the Russian-language Kavkazskiy Uzel (Caucasian Knot). Apsheron is a peninsula in Azerbaijan, and the author identifies himself as Turkic. His blog is emotional and impassioned, titled tellingly, "I Defend Ukraine. Why do you Want its Collapse?" He wrote the blog in response to readers who, as he described, attacked him for being "anti-Russian." He explains that he's not anti-Russian but anti-Russian government, and anti-Russian citizens who blindly defend the current Russian regime. "Is this your Slavic brotherly love?" he asks regarding the Kremlin's seizure of Crimea.

The second excerpt is from an interview with Alexei Makarevich—a Russian musician, songwriter, and leader of the music band "Time Machine." The interview is by Tatiana Raida, an editor at Gordonua.com. Makarevich had been publically critical of the Kremlin's policy towards Ukraine since March. In early June, he and his group refused to perform in Crimea during a major Russian concert. He explained that he could not look Crimea's residents in the eyes after the Kremlin had seized this peninsula. "I feel sorry for everyone...", he said in response to a question about with whom he sympathizes more—Russia's or Ukraine's citizens. "Unfortunately, everyone is losing. Some—on account of being fooled, and others—on the account of having a war." According to Makarevich, he is not alone in his disapproval of the Kremlin—his circle of friends, by and large, agrees with him.

A common theme runs through these articles, aside from obvious disapproval of the Kremlin—one of Russian citizens being fooled, or put another way, allowing themselves to be fooled, by their government. Still, as these articles show, the Kremlin has been unable, despite its best efforts, to fool everyone. End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)

Source: "Я защищаю Украину. А почему вы хотите ее развала?" (I Defend Ukraine. Why Do You Want Its Collapse?), 10 July 2014, Veter s Apsheron, blog (Wind from the Apsheron) in Kavkazskiy Uzel (Caucasian Knot), <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/blogs/83772/posts/18578>

... Why does Russia care about Ukraine's internal developments? Which way it goes, with whom it wants to be friends, what development model it chooses - that's its business, it is a separate from the Russia country. Crimea, according to the United Nations map, is the territory of Ukraine upon the division of the USSR, Russia and the whole world recognized these borders. And now, the Kremlin rudely grabbed Crimea. The ideology of Russian native land has been utilized. Why has this peninsula suddenly become known as the native Russian land, if until the Russians arrived it was Turkish, and until the Turks' arrival, it was Greek?

Khrushchev gave away Crime while drunk? Writes one forum participant. Then let's repeal all of Khurshchev's decisions.... Your logic is amazing: the [U.S.] State Department bad, so let's give Donetsk tanks to break Ukraine apart... Is this your Slavic brotherly love?... Why are you so quick to forget the blood of our fathers - Ukrainians, Russian, Azeris, Georgians, Armenians, Belarusians, all the inhabitants of Central Asia, who died in war [WWII] for Russia?

Source: Tatiana Raida, "Макаревич: Россия получила кусок земли с населением, которое придется кормить, презрение всего мира и санкции, которые нам аукнутся" (Makarevich: Russia Received Piece of Land with a Population it will Need to Feed, World's Contempt, and Sanctions that will Haunt us) 28 June 2014, Gordonua.com, <http://gordonua.com/publications/Andrey-Makarevich-Rossiya-poluchila-prezrenie-vsego-civilizovannogo-mira-i-nelyubov-ukraincev-Boyus-nadolgo-29294.html>

.....

- With whom do you sympathize with more? Ukraine's or Russia's residents?

- I feel sorry for everyone, to be honest. Unfortunately, everyone is losing. Some—on account of being fooled, and others—on the account of having a war.

- Due to recent political and emotional trials, for some, their social circle narrow, while for others, the contrary – it dramatically expands. What about you?

- For me, nothing changed, because my circle of friends shares my views, perhaps with very few exceptions

- Is there a logical explanation for such a rapid deterioration in relations between the two countries and peoples? What are the internal reasons for all this information and a real war?

- A small victorious war always contributes to the growth of a ruler's authority....

Military Mobilization Muddle

16 June 2014

OE Watch Commentary: Ever since Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014, the country's major television media have been on a war footing. To justify this seizure, the Kremlin has used its extensive media assets to hammer home the narrative that the current political instability in Ukraine is all part of an elaborate Western/US plot to gain influence and ultimately weaken Russia. According to their logic, had not the "polite" Russian forces moved to secure Crimea, extremist forces in the new Kiev government would have attacked this region and forced the ethnic Russians out. These claims of Ukrainian neofascist extremism and Western encroachment are also being used to justify continued Kremlin support for pro-Russian separatist forces in SE Ukraine. To respond and defend against this insidious Western threat, all sectors of Russian society must be mobilized, to include the country's political leadership.

To demonstrate the gravity of the situation, the Russian Ministry of Defense recently conducted near Moscow a series of military assemblies for some 400 high-level political-military officials. These assemblies are designed to allow reservists to become acquainted with the latest military equipment, tactics, and training. As the brief excerpt points out, almost all of the officials who participated in this recent assembly work within the Russian political system, either in the Duma or the Federation Council. A couple of the more notable attendees included Colonel G. Zyganov, the leader of the Communist Party, and Colonel V. Zhirinovsky, the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party. While few if any of the attendees would actually be deployed in a major conflict, by attending this assembly and donning a military uniform these officials demonstrated their readiness to defend the motherland, expressed solidarity with the country's commander-in-chief, and improved their political standing.



LDPR leader V. Zhirinovsky. Source: <http://u-f.ru/News/u309/2014/04/15/674611>

Source: Aleksandr Stepanov, "Избранные солдаты" [Elected Soldiers], Nasha Versiya, 16 June 2014. http://versia.ru/articles/2014/jun/16/izbrannye_soldaty

Elected Soldiers

At the beginning of June military assemblies were held in which 400 highly-placed military officials from various echelons of the Russian political elite participated. The representation at this travelling session was substantial: 286 deputies and employees of the State Duma central organization, 72 senators and employees of the Federation Council, 23 employees of the Accounting Chamber, and nine representatives of the Central Election Commission. Nasha Versiya has analyzed why the highly-placed officials left their comfortable offices and made the forced march to the training ranges.

The events were held in Moscow and in the Moscow suburbs at the base of the Military Academy of the General Staff, at the Central Sports Club of the Army, and at the Alabino training range. It was reported that during the assemblies the officials were given subject lectures, and their level of physical fitness was checked and they were offered an opportunity to participate in tactical exercises, where they were able to shoot firearms and even tank weapons. Commanding their colleagues were the Chairman of the TsK KPRF [Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation] Colonel Gennadiy Zyuganov and the leader of the LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia] Colonel Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. RF [Russian Federation] Minister of Defense Sergey Shoygu was personally called upon to evaluate the combat readiness of the reserve officers. One may assume that the reserve officers who successfully participated in the assemblies and passed the standard tests will now apply for the awarding of their next military ranks.

Experts noted the somewhat artificial nature of this event.... The fact was also noted that practically all categories participating in the assemblies have wartime exemptions, and will therefore join a fighting army only in accordance with their own desires or they will not go at

(continued)

Continued: Military Mobilization Muddle

While the article characterizes this recent assembly in a satiric vein, the author goes on to point out that the country's current military mobilization plans remain in a muddle. The military infrastructure to account for, train, and maintain a mobilized force was disassembled with the collapse of the USSR and never fully reconstituted. Recent plans to create an active reserve force comprised of ex-officers and soldiers who had completed conscript duty fell apart over funding problems. There were also unresolved questions regarding the rights of mobilized soldiers to return to their place of employment once they returned. As the excerpt points out, there are now renewed calls to grant university students a deferment from conscript duty in exchange for a brief (three month) period of training whereby students, upon graduation, could gain basic military skills. These graduates would then serve as the mobilization reserve for the military.

*The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has been heavily exploited by the Kremlin-controlled national media to impress upon the populace that the Western menace is growing ever closer. Fortunately, much of this heated rhetoric has been confined to the Russian information space, designed largely to strengthen the ruling elite's hold on power. Judging from Russia's actual military mobilization plans, major conflict which might require full-scale deployment of reserve forces remains a distant possibility. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)***

all, which clearly lowers the motivation to “study military affairs in the real manner.” However, the Ministry of Defense did arrange to dress the highly-placed officials in military uniforms, at least for a few days. It was thus demonstrated that even high officials, like true patriots, are prepared to take up arms and defend the Homeland.

Several experts believe that by this example the authorities are sending a clear signal during the current international situation, that in the event of a military threat every man must act in the same manner. Thus, as the consciousness of population is inculcated with the hostility of the world surrounding it on all sides, this will undoubtedly foster militaristic sentiment in society. Against the background of the mass mobilization of State Duma deputies, the overall situation of the country's mobilization reserves, which gets worse every year, appears in sharp contrast. Fundamental changes are needed, since today the country's mobilization system has been practically destroyed. We recall that as early as 2009, when the Serdyukov reforms began, all of the reduced staff units were eliminated. These units were to have been developed to full-staff levels in the event of a large-scale war. The training of personnel for these units was likewise terminated. The number of military commissariats, whose work was linked to the old system of mobilization, was cut by more than 20 times in Russia....

...A crisis in the mobilization area was long overdue. In the opinion of specialists, the Soviet system of training reserves of military personnel had long outlived its usefulness, and serious reforms have been required for more than 20 years....

...We recall that at the end of last year the Ministry of Defense proposed a new method for the development of a mobilization system. It was now proposed to make training centers for the mobilized reserves based on the already existing military faculties of the institutions of higher learning, which would allow every student without exception to have deferred service in the Army for one or two years. Upon graduation from the educational institution the students would go through a three-month assembly at the Ministry of Defense training centers, where they would reinforce in practice the theoretical knowledge that they acquired during vuz studies. The agency plans to allocate its training ranges and firing ranges for solution of this task, and more than 100,000 students will pass through them every year. This would allow an additional expansion of the mobilization reserves by almost half a million people. For the sake of comparison: today only 60,000 graduates of the institutions of higher learning complete military service. The effect of a mass flow of degreed specialists into the mobilization reserves would be obvious. Obviously, students who are able to learn will master the military specialties, learn to handle complex military equipment, and to manage high-technology Army weaponry quicker and better than yesterday's secondary school graduates and aging reservists. But will the graduates of the institutions of higher learning need this? This is another issue, and no one is asking them about this.

Dangerous Corruption Fight

10 July 2014

OE Watch Commentary: Up until a few months ago the criminal cases surrounding former Russian Minister of Defense Anatoliy Serdyukov captured a large portion of the Russian media's attention. However, the Sochi Olympics, followed by the conflict with Ukraine and annexation of Crimea, pushed the case against Serdyukov and his associates from the front pages. Indeed, except among military analysts, Serdyukov's February 2014 amnesty from criminal prosecution passed largely unnoticed within the Russian information space (see the May 2014 issue of the OEW for more details). Yet the long, slow reach of Russian justice marches on. As the brief excerpt points out, a major criminal case against Yevgeniya Vasilyeva, one of Serdyukov's former chief assistants (and alleged paramour), is scheduled to begin in mid-July. Although she denies any wrong-doing, this trial could have a significant impact upon the Kremlin leadership, particularly if Serdyukov is called to testify.

The thrust of the charges against Vasilyeva revolve around allegations that as chief property manager under Serdyukov, she willingly sold excess military property to third parties at reduced prices, and in the process gleaned off a portion of proceeds for personal use. As the heir to the Soviet military, the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) inherited extensive property holdings. As part of the reform process, and in an effort to reduce and streamline property controlled by the MoD, many facilities and pieces of military property were auctioned off, supposedly to the highest bidder. However, according to Russian prosecutors, Vasilyeva and other associates within the military property relations department allegedly embezzled some of profits through fraudulent schemes.

When Serdyukov was removed as Minister of Defense in November 2012, the Russian media suggested that his dismissal heralded a renewed effort by the Kremlin leadership to root out high-level corruption. For months after his removal the media were filled with reports of new charges brought against the former defense minister and his close associates. As the process dragged on, however, and only a few minor officials were actually punished, the case against Serdyukov and his associates began to appear less as an example in the fight against corruption and more about the selective nature of Russian justice. His amnesty in February 2014 further weakened the Kremlin's argument that it was serious about fighting corruption.

While seemingly insignificant, the conduct and outcome of this trial could have significant consequences. High-level corruption within the Ukrainian government was one of the major reasons which prompted public protests in Kiev in November 2013. Many Ukrainians, regardless of ethnic orientation, were aggrieved at the unfair distribution of wealth and the arbitrary nature of the law enforcement and judicial systems within their country. Despite all the patriotic rhetoric over the past few months, this same sense of economic injustice and anger at the arbitrary nature of the legal system is widespread in Russia. The Kremlin leadership has shown remarkable skill in walking the fine line between maintaining an inherently corrupt economic system and demonstrating that it is serious about fighting corruption. The upcoming trial against Vasilyeva will likely further test the Kremlin's balance. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**



Yevgeniya Vasilyeva. Source: Kommersant.ru

Source: Russia's Oboronservice case: Vasilyeva Denies Charges, Interfax, 10 July 2014. <http://www.interfax.com/>

Vasilyeva Denies Charges

Yevgeniya Vasilyeva, a former head of the Russian Defense Ministry's property department, on Thursday denied her charges of heading a group accused of large-scale embezzlement in the Oboronservice company, an Interfax correspondent reported from a court.

"There was only one purpose for this criminal case: to defame the Ministry of Defense and create an image of corruption and theft. The investigators have failed to achieve it, which will become obvious in the course of this trial," Vasilyeva told Moscow's Presnensky Court after the prosecutor stated the indictment.

"I never set up any organized group, I never drew any of the persons who are accused in this case [into the alleged scam]," she said. She claimed that the case was a frame-up and that the alleged crime ring was part of it.

Besides Vasilyeva, who is the chief figure in the case and charged on 12 counts with infliction of damages of more than 3 billion rubles on the state, there are four defendants in the trial...

...Investigators say Vasilyeva, "taking advantage of her office, chose the most liquid real estate items, shares and other property belonging to ... Oboronservice, after which she organized their sale at a price that was deliberately too low."

The Oboronservice proceedings, launched in October 2012, led to the dismissal of then defense minister Anatoly Serdyukov and other senior Defense Ministry officials.

Russian Military Chaplains

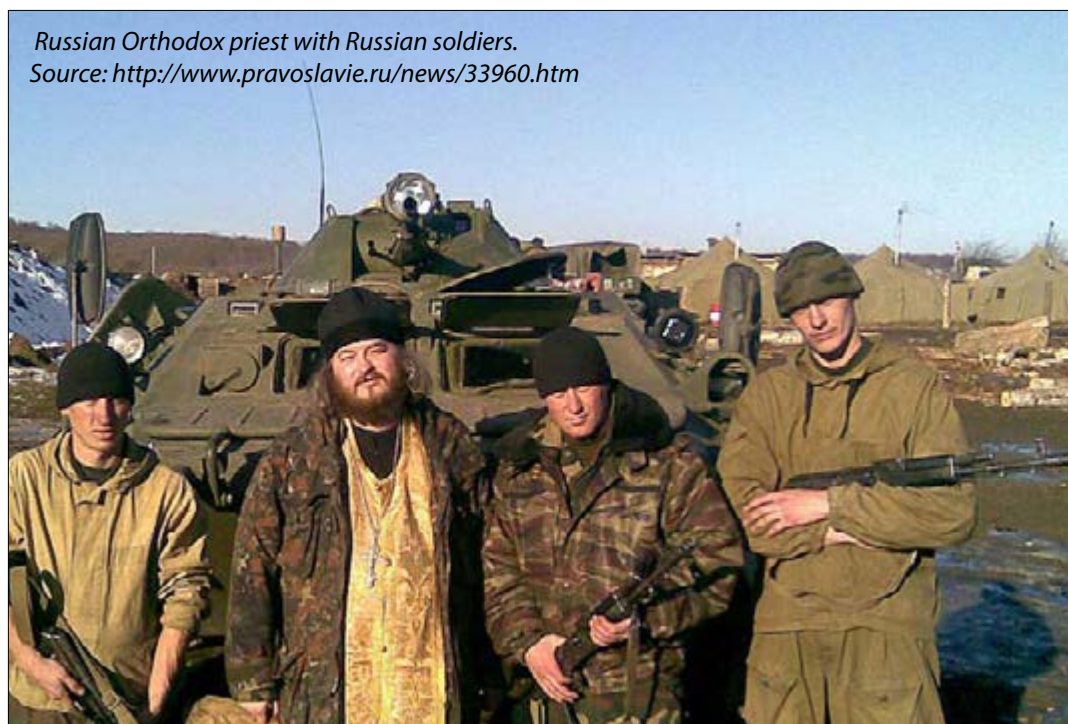
7 June 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *Alongside the Russian Armed Force's planned material rearmament, there has been a corresponding strengthening of factors related to military morale. Better pay, improved living facilities, and increased educational and employment opportunities have certainly helped to nurture morale. Even before the successful seizure of Crimea the Kremlin had conducted a prolonged and directed information campaign to raise the status and prestige of military service. Everything from TV programming to new historical textbooks has been used to impress upon young Russians the value to defending the motherland.*

Throughout history, some Russian military leaders (like A. Suvorov) have suggested that a robust and responsive system of military chaplains is a key component in the maintenance of high military morale. The brief excerpt describes a recent conference dedicated to the subject of chaplains within the Russian military. According to the report, the Russian military has made considerable advances in providing for the spiritual needs of its soldiers. While nowhere near the size of the tsarist military in WW I, more than 250 chaplain positions have been authorized, about half of which have been filled.

Besides the relative novelty of the military chaplain specialty within the Russian Armed Forces, there are a number of other reasons why 50% of the positions remain unfilled. This report points out that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) has yet to create a dedicated school where future chaplains could be trained. Moreover, clerics who want to serve in the military must first gain the approval of the local commander and also receive permission from their superior. There are also unresolved questions related to logistics, administration and career growth of Russian military chaplains.

*Russia is a multi-denominational country, and while the majority of chaplain positions are filled with those who practice the Orthodox faith, there are also chaplains who minister to those who adhere to Islamic and Buddhist teachings. According to a survey quoted in the article, up to 90 percent of Russian servicemen regard themselves as believers. While there is still much work to be done, it appears that the Russian MoD is serious about meeting the military's spiritual needs. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)***



Russian Orthodox priest with Russian soldiers.
Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/news/33960.htm>

Source: Olga Kalshtyk, “Батюшки Особого Значения” [Special-Purpose Chaplains], Suvorovskiy Natisk, 7 June 2014.

Armed Forces Hold Fourth Conference on Military Chaplains

The Fourth Methods Training Assembly, which was held at the end of May, involving Russian Federation [RF] Armed Forces officials for work with servicemen of faith, was the most well attended in the past several years. More than 130 regular assistant commanders for work with servicemen of faith participated in it. Over the course of one week, Orthodox priests, Muslim and Buddhist clerics, and officers and relevant specialists of federal security departments from all regions of Russia exchanged experience at the base of a Ground Forces Military Science Training Center branch in Blagoveshchensk city....

...”Teaching a non-believing army is like sharpening rusty iron.” This was said by Aleksandr Suvorov [Field Marshal Prince Alexander Vasilyevich Suvorov, 1729-1800]. The great military leader understood that an army's strength is not only its weapons, but also its ideology, on the basis of which people do heroic deeds, risking their lives and health.”

For the majority of the world's armies, the presence of chaplains in the troops is a routine matter. It was also thus in pre-revolutionary Russia. Just before the October 1917 revolution, according to various sources, the czar's army had around 5,000 regimental chaplains and 800 garrison churches....

...The ice began to crack five years ago. On 21 July 2009, the day of glorifying and venerating the “Kazan” Icon of the Mother of God, Russian President Vladimir Putin met with representatives of the religious confessions that are traditional in our country. It was that meeting that resulted in the decision to re-create the military clerical institution.

Today, the establishment structure of agencies for work with servicemen of faith comprises 254 chaplains' posts and 10 civilian personnel posts. There are currently 132

(continued)

Continued: Russian Military Chaplains

chaplains in post, and a further 15 have been nominated for appointment.

The existing vacancies are easily explained. Col Aleksandr Surovtsev is convinced that the military chaplain's profession is an exclusive one. As yet, no educational establishments exist for training such specialists for the Army and Navy. What is more, Col Surovtsev expresses serious doubt that such training is even possible at all in any single educational institution, since an army chaplain must possess knowledge in both the spiritual and military spheres....

..."Today's assembly of military clerics is yet another step in the noble cause of consolidating the Army and the church on the path toward a common objective -- reviving the moral foundations of service to the Fatherland," Major General Vladimir Gryzlov, the school principal, stated in his welcoming address....

...Becoming a military chaplain is no simple matter. This requires more than just the desire and the necessary minimum level of education. In addition to a unit commander's endorsement, a candidate for the post of assistant commander for work with servicemen of faith must also obtain a blessing from a bishop. And this is not given to just anyone. So, rigorous vetting is one more explanation for the existing regimental chaplaincy vacancies....

...The paramount functions of military chaplains are conducting services, spiritual enlightenment, and help in maintaining military discipline. Military clerics have to discharge them simultaneously. Col Aleksandr Surovtsev says that, according to sociological surveys conducted in the Army, up to 90 percent of servicemen regard themselves as believers. Therefore, the present assembly was also aimed at giving the bearers of God's word as much knowledge as possible specifically about practical work.

According to the clerics, there is neither hostility nor competition between different confessions in military collectives. It is successfully avoided by building constructive dialog.

...A church cleric in today's Army is a spiritual comforter, a psychologist, an educator, and even an ideological commissar. Although, of course, war is per se abhorrent to the clergy. However, pastors are in attendance at the hottest "hot spots," alongside their spiritual children in shoulder boards....

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://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Finch-Shoygu.pdf>



More Military Police Power to Reduce Abuse in Russian Military

OE Watch Commentary: *The Russian leadership first began seriously discussing the creation of a military police (MP) force in 2006, after revelations that a Russian conscript had been abused so horrifically that surgeons had to remove his legs and genitalia. Prior to this, there had been a number of other brutal (and well publicized) incidents of hazing that reflected serious discipline problems within the military. Debate and discussion dragged on, and it was not until 2012 that the MP leadership was appointed and tentative manning levels for this force were established (initial manning levels were set at 6,500 personnel, but could grow larger). The actual legislation spelling out the mission and authority of this new body was only signed into law by President Putin in February 2014. (For a relatively recent interview with the chief of the Military Police (Igor Sidorkevich) see link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzTrxXs59Bk>)*



Leader of the Russian Military Police, Igor Sidorkevich. Source: Vesti.ru

As initially reported in the March 2014 issue of the OEW, to improve overall discipline, Russian military officials are continuing to develop and strengthen the role of the MPs within the Armed Forces. Where in the past, discipline in the barracks was maintained by a combination of threats and intimidation (from either the commander or senior soldiers), today the MPs (officers and contract personnel only) will help to develop and uphold good order. As the excerpt points out, Russian MPs “are to defend the lives, health, rights and freedoms of servicemen, civilian personnel, citizens, and those attending military assemblies in the Armed Forces of Russia, to counter crime, and to maintain the rule of law, law and order, military discipline, and vehicular traffic safety in the Army.” They will be represented in all four military districts and presumably be based at every military installation. The Ministry of Defense is still in the process of developing the final training program for the MPs.

The brief excerpt describes how the MPs have now been authorized to conduct limited, independent investigations when a crime or serious incident occurs. This expanded power could have a profound influence on the maintenance of discipline within the military. In the past, when a crime or serious incident occurred within the ranks, the unit commander was responsible for appointing the investigating officer. Not surprisingly, as the incident could likely reflect poorly on the

Source: Roman Kretsul, “Они дознаются: Полномочия военной полиции расширены” [They are Inquiring: Authority of the Military Police have been Expanded], Vzglyad Online, 25 June 2014. <http://vzglyad.ru/>

Minister of Defense Shoygu Expands Powers of new Military Police

For the first time in Russian history the Military Police have acquired inquest functions. Urgent investigative actions of incidents in the Armed Forces will be performed by Military Police officials who have legal degrees. Under the former system, when the commanders appointed line officers as inquest officials, one could not count on objectivity.

The head of the Ministry of Defense Sergey Shoygu reported on Wednesday that the Military Police, which were recently created in the structure of Russia’s Armed Forces, have been given inquest functions.

“The execution of authorities as an inquest organization is a new initiative of Military Police activities. This will facilitate an increase in the quality of the solution of crimes by having Military Police officers having higher education in the law conduct urgent investigative activities,” the Minister is quoted in ITAR-TASS.

He noted that in the history of the modern Russian Army this is the first time that a Military Police structure has been formed. “The creation of the Military Police will allow tasks aimed at lowering the level of crimes in the Army to be more successfully resolved, and it will aid improvements to the quality of combat training of servicemen by freeing personnel from the execution of extraneous tasks,” the Minister said.

In an AiF [Argumenty i Fakti] interview released on Wednesday, the Chief of the Main Administration of Military Police of the Ministry of Defense, Igor Sidorkevich, discussed the inquest functions of his subordinates in the following manner: “[Until] rather recently the following practice evolved. The unit commander appointed one of the line officers

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Continued: More Military Police Power to Reduce Abuse in Russian Military

commander, these investigating officers were often inclined to water down or distort their findings. As the excerpt indicates, now these investigations will be conducted (or at least monitored) by the MPs in coordination with other law enforcement agencies. This added layer of independent supervision could help to improve overall accountability and discipline within the Armed Forces. End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

(without, naturally, a legal education) as the inquest officer. So the poor devil tries to play the role of Gleb Zheglov [tr. note: legendary Moscow detective portrayed in movies and novels of the 1970's] as best as he can."

"For the time being the Military Police are monitoring such inquest officers and are giving them some hints on refinements, and in the future all of the investigations in the Armed Forces will transfer to the Military Police. In this manner the officers will be freed from functions that are extraneous for them. From this perspective, the creation of the Military Police is fully consistent with the thrust of the military reforms, the essence of which is that everyone in the Armed Forces must be engaged in his own job," he said....

... "Frequently, when the commander tasks one of his officers to conduct an inquest, it is done subjectively, in the interest of the command staff," commented Chairman of the All-Russian Trade Union of Servicemen Oleg Shvedkov to the newspaper Vzglyad. "The Military Police are able to conduct an independent inquest and to determine whether or not a crime has been committed, and to transfer the case to the military investigators and then to the Military Prosecutor."

"Say, for example, some kind of crime has occurred. An inquest officer has been appointed. So now the commander sits down and thinks: 'I will hold them accountable, and later they will punish me.' But now the Military Police will conduct the inquest independently of the wishes of the commander," he added.

We recall that the formation of the Military Police in the Ministry of Defense began in November 2012, and by the end of this year it should be fully completed. All of the management organizations of the Military Police have already been created, including the Main Administration, the territorial organizations, and about 140 command centers.

The Law on the Military Police was adopted by the State Duma on 24 January and signed by the President on 4 February. The document introduced amendments in the legislation concerning the activities of the Military Police of the VS RF [Armed Forces of the Russian Federation] and established the basis of the organizational structure of the Military Police and its activities.

In the Law on Defense it is stipulated that the purposes of the Military Police are to defend the lives, health, rights and freedoms of servicemen, civilian personnel, citizens, and those attending military assemblies in the Armed Forces of Russia, to counter crime, and to maintain the rule of law, law and order, military discipline, and vehicular traffic safety in the Army. Its portfolio also includes defending other legal relationships in the defense establishment that are protected by law. It is stipulated that the leadership of the Military Police is performed by the Minister of Defense of Russia....

Russia tests Canadian Arctic Air Defense

20 June 2014

“Canadian fighter jets were scrambled twice in the past two weeks to track Russian bombers over the Arctic, patrols near North American airspace that government sources say have increased in 2014 compared with the previous two years.”

OE Watch Commentary: Russia continues its test of North American air defenses. Early in June two Russian long-range bombers flew 80 kilometers off the Alaskan and California coast, causing American interceptors to scramble.

Now it is Canada's turn. Twice, in the first two weeks of June, Russian bomber aircraft approached Canadian airspace. As before, the bombers used were not state of the art, but rather long-range TU-95 Bear four-engine turboprops that entered the Soviet inventory in 1956. Still, they are capable aircraft and, like the American B-52, still provide a heavy bomber and cruise missile launch capability. Such flights are ideal for signaling displeasure without invoking the hysteria of a major attack. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

Source: Steven Chase, Toronto Globe and Mail, 20 June 2014. <http://www.theglobeandmail.ca/>

Russia's Arctic flybys a 'strategic' message

The Canadian government believes at least some of these patrols, in particular similar Russian flights off the U.S. West Coast, are “strategic messaging from Moscow” in response to tensions between the West and Vladimir Putin over Ukraine, sources say.

Defence Minister Rob Nicholson offered few details about the new. However, he said the flights demonstrate “the need for ongoing vigilance” in Canada's north. “We continue to see Russian military activity in the Arctic. The Canadian Armed Forces remain ready and able to respond.”

Government sources said that, in both recent cases, the bombers entered Canada's Air Defence Identification Zone in the Arctic, a band of airspace north of the country's main land mass.

In one instance, the Russians turned back when Canadian fighters reached them, the sources said, and in the other, Moscow's aircraft veered away before the CF-18s arrived.

The Putin government has previously accused Ottawa of overreacting to Moscow's training flights and making hay out of the “Russian bear in the air” for political reasons.

A spokesman at the Russian embassy in Ottawa said Canada and Moscow usually have a working military relationship to address any “misunderstandings in this regard” – open lines between the two countries' “chiefs of staff of the armed forces.”



Canadian F-18 Super Hornet.
Source: <http://foxtrotalpha.jalopnik.com/>

Continued: Russia tests Canadian Arctic Air Defense

Unfortunately, said Andrey Grebenshchikov, second secretary at the embassy's political section, this communication channel is no longer open as a result of strained relations over Crimea.

"Regretfully, due to the crisis in Ukraine, the Canadian government has recently frozen all contacts at this level," Mr. Grebenshchikov said. He also repeated Moscow's standing comment that it has no interest in militarizing the Arctic.

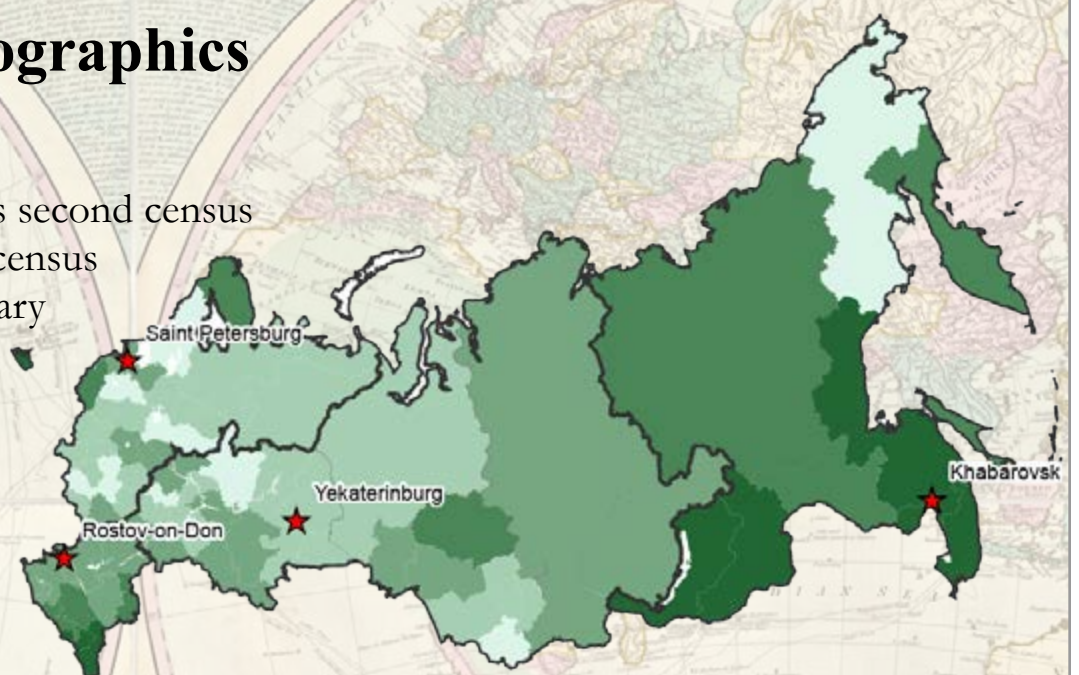
The concern Ottawa voiced about the flights on Thursday is a shift of tone. As recently as March, Prime Minister Stephen Harper publicly played down any risk that conflict between the West and Russia over Ukraine could spill over into the Arctic.

Moscow's departing ambassador told The Canadian Press that Russia would consider it provocative if Ottawa joined the U.S. ballistic missile defence shield as a Senate report urged this week.

Russian Conscription Demographics

By Charles K. Bartles, FMSSO

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>

Busy Naval Destroyer

11 July 2014

OE Watch Commentary: On 11 July 2014 the “Admiral Levchenko,” a Russian destroyer, returned to the city Severomorsk to end its long naval campaign, one of the longest in Russia’s recent naval history. As the ship docked in Severomorsk, Commander of the Northern Fleet Admiral Vladimir Korolev congratulated the crew on its success in completing its mission objectives and also, according to a fleet representative, praised the Northern Fleet’s work in strategically important areas. After the long voyage many of the Russian soldiers will be presented with state and departmental awards.

According to the accompanying article, the ship, commanded by First Captain Igor Krochmal, sailed the Atlantic Ocean, the Barents, Norwegian, North, Mediterranean and Black Seas. It also marked the first time in modern Russian naval history that a Russian ship passed through the Strait of Messina, which separates Sicily from the Italian peninsula. In the Mediterranean the ship acted as part of a task force of Russian naval warships conducting joint training sessions with Russia’s Pacific, Baltic and Black Sea Fleets. According to the article, the crew of the “Admiral Levchenko”, as part of the mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, also helped to transport Syrian chemical weapons out of the country.

Displaying versatility and range, the completion of this destroyer’s journey illustrates the growing reach of the Russian Navy and may help to further Kremlin goals for the Northern Fleet, the main objective being to create a greater presence in the resource-rich Arctic region.

End OE Watch Commentary (Kangas)

Source: “Корабль ВМФ России ‘Адмирал Левченко’ вернулся из дальнего похода,” [Russian Navy ship ‘Admiral Levchenko’ returns from long trip], RIA Novosti, 11 July 2014. http://ria.ru/defense_safety/20140711/1015572354.html

On Friday, the “Admiral Levchenko,” the large destroyer ship of the Northern Fleet, completed one of the longest voyages in the recent history of the Russian navy and returned to the main base of the Northern Fleet in the city Severomorsk, reported a representative of the fleet, Yevgeniy Kirilov.

The crew of the ship also worked to ensure safe transportation of Syrian chemical weapons. According to Kirilov, the naval mission to safely transport the Syrian chemical weapons was completed with close cooperation with the international community, international naval forces, the UN missions in Syria and Cyprus, and the mission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.



RFS Admiral Levchenko.
Source: <http://www.worldwarships.com>

Science and Future War Technologies in Russia

25 June 2014

“It was pointed out in the reports that the main threat to Russia’s security in the region emanates not from traditional armed forces but from the destabilization of very important defense capability subsystems.”

OE Watch Commentary: Nearly 200 scientists took part in the recent 17th All-Russia Scientific and Practical Conference on Defense and Security, held in St. Petersburg. The discussion began with a presentation by the President of the Russian Academy of Missile and Artillery Sciences Vasily Burenok, who listed six 21st century military-technical threats to Russia: the US and Chinese missile defense systems; the US adoption of hypersonic cruise missile; NATO’s development of high-speed kinetic weapons, laser systems, and weapon control systems; space technology developments, such as the use of mini- and nano-satellites; the improvement of information warfare forces and resources; and the introduction of sixth-generation technological advances in equipment, which will signal the move to fully intellectual models that implement the concept of “cognicentric” warfare.

Konstantin Sivkov, the journalist who wrote the article, noted that this will require Russia to equip its forces with the next generation of high-tech weapons operating on new physical principles and supporting the pursuit of contactless and information wars. The proportion

Source: Konstantin Sivkov, “Information is the Best Defense. Scientists Call for Sixth Technological Generation to be Adopted into the Armory,” *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* Online, 25 June 2014.

Russia already has a number of breakthrough technologies that have been brought to the point of practical application and which make it possible to create models of armaments taking our country into leading positions in certain areas. These include, in particular, direct-flow hypersonic jet engines and flight management systems; super-high-yield warheads; laser weapons; small, medium, and large-class robot base platforms; electrothermal chemical and electrodynamic guns with high-speed projectiles; super-high-yield electromagnetic pulse generators; multispectral optical target detection devices; ultra-broadband radars with phased-array antennas based on radio photon elements; zonal rapid-deployed active and passive hydroacoustic systems for interpreting the underwater situation; and means of conducting information wars (particularly in cyberspace) and cognitive control.

Mikhail Silnikov, general director of Special Materials NPO and corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in his report “Development of Material and Technical Support for OVD [Internal Affairs Organs] Subunits in Emergency Situations,” proposed a whole range of highly effective systems and means of protecting staffers of the internal affairs organs in emergency situations. New models of nonlethal devices were presented that possess greater stopping power than those in use today. They have been developed rapidly taking into account the events in Kyiv. Aggression by destructive elements can be quickly and effectively stopped.

It was pointed out in the reports that the main threat to Russia’s security in the region emanates not from traditional armed forces but from the destabilization of very important defense capability subsystems. The range of hostile measures include the advance of pro-Western figures into positions of power, “indirect force operations” ranging from sorties by environmentalists to the staging of political crises and acts of terrorism, and the use of

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Collage-Andrey Sedykh. Source: <http://vpk-news.ru/articles/20786>

Continued: Science and Future War Technologies in Russia

of equipment and models of arms must increase by 20-30 percent as well.

*Sivkov also underscored significant emerging geopolitical issues for the coming years, especially the importance of protecting Russia's interests in the Arctic Basin. The main factors that must be developed and concluded in the Arctic include the designation of ownership over the Lomonosov and Mendeleyev underwater ridges, preferential rights for the exploitation of mineral deposits, designation of who can claim ownership and thus use of the Northern Sea Route and polar air routes, and the division of the sea area for offshore operations. **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)***

nontraditional military systems based on new physical principles, in particular the deployment along our borders of 10 plasma systems (in the United States, Canada, Iceland, Norway, and Japan) which provoke earthquakes and other natural disasters.

In order to prevent a negative turn of events the speakers propose by way of priority steps the formation of a coalition for the protection and exploitation of Arctic resources and the Northern Sea Route (with the participation of China, India, and possibly Germany and Japan), the formation of a single command uniting all the Arctic zone security structures and being entirely responsible for the region's security, the concentration of military subunits and special resources within a multiservice grouping, and the development of arms and military and specialized equipment capable of operating effectively at high latitudes and successfully confronting the equipment and weaponry of the probable enemies.

Here two groups of threats can be identified. The first includes the development and dissemination of malware, the hacking of data processing and transmission systems, and the intrusion of false information. But reliable protection against fools is equally important. A system can be made to fail by the use of "crooked" technology in one's work, an uncertified device, or, for instance, the introduction into hardware and software products of components that perform functions not stipulated in the documentation.

Russia, in the speaker's opinion, should adopt urgent measures to protect its information space, in particular that of the Armed Forces. To this end it is proposed that special subunits be incorporated in their structure. One priority is scientific support for the protection of the Russian Federation's information space. Methodologies are needed for assessing the survivability of the information and telecommunications system in conditions of net aggression and calculating the time-probability characteristics of typical computer attacks.

The conference showed that there are promising projects in the Russian defense industry complex that meet the highest requirements of the present day. In the opinion of many speakers the level of funding of the defense sphere makes it possible to resolve the problem of reequipping the Russian Federation Armed Forces with modern weapons in the areas that are most critical for security.

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>

Kidnappings of the Chibok Girls and Aboke Girls

Operational Environments with some similarities but at least one critical difference ...an Effective, Immediate Interlocutor

In 2014 a terrorist group waging a religious war against the central government and other entities kidnapped girls from a school in northern Nigeria. In 1996 a terrorist group waging a religious war against the central government and other entities kidnapped girls from a school in northern Uganda. While there are many points of significant differences, there are some instructive congruencies. In both instances, the countries are split by ethnicity roughly along a north-south divide, and the different ethnic groups have been at violent odds with each other. In both incidences, the terrorist groups operate in remote areas and through porous borders, making national response efforts more difficult. In both instances, though receiving prior warning, the armed forces were unable to prevent the kidnappings. In both instances, significant numbers of girls were able to escape their captors. In both instances the kidnapped girls either became or were to become “wives” of men they had not previously known. In both instances, the kidnappings garnered international attention and a tremendous outcry for the girls to be released or rescued. Both sets of girls have come to be known for their place of abduction: in Nigeria, Chibok, and in Uganda, Aboke. As of the time this essay was written, none of the 276 Chibok Girls had been released, though over 60 have escaped.¹ As for the Aboke girls, of the 139 originally abducted, 109 were released, 5 died in captivity, and 25 escaped, so that by 2009 all were accounted for.

There are several differences between the two kidnappings, not least of which are the timeframe of the kidnappings and the nature of the abductors: the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and Boko Haram. However another significant difference that made an immediate impact for the majority of the Aboke girls, was the presence of a non-state individual whose bold--even heroic--early intervention, as well as continued persistence, resulted in the terrorists releasing those 109 girls almost immediately. If the reader suspects that the hero will be some brawny Rambo-type with bandoliers of bullets, expect to be surprised: the individual who bravely confronted the terrorists and won the release of the 109 girls was Sister Rachele Fassera, a Comboni nun originally from Italy.

RED - Nigeria
Green - Uganda



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Continued: Kidnappings of the Chibok Girls and Aboke Girls

Studying the kidnappings can reveal valuable insights in contemplating assistance to Nigeria in these unfortunate incidences. As the Chibok kidnappings happened rather recently, many are fairly familiar with it. However, the Aboke kidnappings occurred over 18 years ago, so a brief review of how that event unfolded is worthwhile. For a more in-depth look at this story, the reader is referred to “Aboke Girls: Children Abducted in Northern Uganda” by Els de Temmerman.²

Sister Rachele was serving as the deputy head mistress of the Saint Mary’s Boarding School in Aboke, Uganda, in October 1996, the month members of the LRA kidnapped the girls. The LRA, a militant movement some would also call a cult, initially arose among the Acholi, an ethnic group in northern Uganda, to provide protection from the National Resistance Army, which was composed of people from southern ethnic groups who had a history of attacking the Acholi. Led by Joseph Kony, the LRA adopted numerous practices, including abducting children and forcing the young boys to serve as soldiers and the girls to be “wives” for the commanders. Such actions eventually resulted in many Acholi not only disavowing the LRA but also fearing them. Sister Rachele certainly feared them that fateful October night.

LRA rebels had been to Saint Mary’s before - in March 1989 - when they took ten girls; nine eventually escaped and one was killed during a battle between the rebels and government soldiers. After that incident a unit of the Uganda People’s Defense Force (UPDF, the Ugandan Army) was assigned to guard the school. However, those government soldiers were eventually replaced by a small number of men from a local defense unit militia who would guard the school at night and return to their homes in the morning. On the night of 9 October Sister Rachele and others at the school, forewarned the LRA might attack, nervously waited for those local defense unit militia members, but they never arrived; however, at 0215 on 10 October the LRA rebels did. Sister Rachele and two other nuns hid, fearing that if they were found by the rebels they would be forced to unlock the iron-reinforced doors protecting the girls’ dormitories. When they no longer heard the rebels they emerged, finding that through means of threats, as well as demolition of a dormitory wall, some of the girls had been abducted. Sister Rachele and a male teacher volunteered to pursue the rebels, though just as the two of them began their journey they encountered a 13 year old student who had been raped, a harbinger of what awaited the other girls if they were not rescued. Leaving her in the care of another nun, they resumed their pursuit. Fortunately, the rebels had also stolen a large amount of candy and drinks from the school, leaving behind a trail of wrappers and bottles which the two were able to follow. They went through difficult terrain, including a swamp, but eventually caught up with the LRA rebels responsible for the raid on Saint Mary’s.

Of the 139 girls the rebels kidnapped, the LRA commander with whom Sister Rachele spoke agreed to release 109 of them. The sister begged him to release the other thirty, offering herself in their place, but it was to no avail. Still, by pursuing the LRA rebels she had quickly won freedom for 109 girls; she would spend the next several years working to have all of them freed.

Make no mistake: Sister Rachele was not the only person working tirelessly to win the Aboke girls’ release. Others, especially the Concerned Parents Association (CPA), a parents’ organization that formed in Uganda, devoted countless



Map of Nigeria showing Borno State and the location of Chibok.
Source: <http://www.authintmail.com>



Map of Uganda showing location of Aboke.
Source: maps.google.com

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Continued: Kidnappings of the Chibok Girls and Aboke Girls

hours to the cause. Its founder, Angelina Acheng Atyam, would go on to win the 1998 United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights.³ Along with Sister Rachele and others, she helped keep international attention on the kidnappings.

The contrast between the way Sister Rachele handled the Aboke situation and the way President Goodluck Jonathan and the Nigerian government handled the Chibok situation potentially illuminates factors that would be useful to consider in the future. First is timing. Sister Rachele, at extreme risk to herself, pursued the rebels who abducted the Aboke girls immediately. By contrast, the Nigerian government took more than two weeks before finally addressing the Chibok kidnappings publicly. Sister Rachele's rapid response to the Aboke kidnappings garnered favorable international attention, while President Jonathan, in part because of confusing and sometimes even contradictory statements released by the Nigerian government, appeared in the press as someone who was struggling to get his arms around the situation. The next point is appearance of determination or confidence. While Sister Rachele appeared incredibly brave, one month after the girls were abducted, the Nigerian president cancelled his trip to Chibok, citing security reasons and causing the internet to light up with comments questioning his courage.⁴ Another key differential is perception of politics and threat to the abductors. Sister Rachele did not appear interested in the politics associated with the kidnappings; she just wanted the girls back, and would work to keep the girls' predicament in the public eye until it was resolved. President Jonathan was accused of playing politics, with one of the most common allegations being that he was trying to hide or downplay the kidnappings as they made him look bad.⁵ The President's wife, Patience Jonathan, added fuel to the fire when at one point she was reported to have accused the demonstrators who were protesting the government's response to the kidnappings of having made up the abductions.⁶ She allegedly even demanded the arrest of the woman leading the protests. Similarly, Sister Rachele's and President Jonathan's relationship with the militaries of their respective countries was different. Sister Rachele was quite proactive, requesting military assistance to guard the school before the rebels struck that fateful night. She continued to work with the Ugandan military after the abductions. In Nigeria the President's interactions with the military were of a different sort, though in fairness to him that relationship was established before he took office. Because of Nigeria's history of coups, its presidents have been wary of a strong military and foreign trainers are often seen an anathema to government and military officials.⁷ Thus, while Sister Rachele was willing and able to work as an unthreatening outsider with the Ugandan military, Goodluck Jonathan and the Nigerian military had to proceed within the internal conditions of their relative relationship.

While unable to rescue all of the Aboke girls, Sister Rachele, with significant personal risk, did manage to bring many of them home. A confident, rapid response by an interlocutor who appears non-threatening to either the government or the abductors may be useful to consider for similar events in the future.



"Screenshot from Boko Haram video allegedly showing the missing girls." (VIA AFP ON YOUTUBE)
Source: <http://www.thewire.com>

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Endnotes

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