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Will the Corruption Scandal Return Military to Politics?

January 2014

OE Watch Commentary: Since 17 December 2013 an anti-corruption investigation has been shaking the Turkish government. The investigation led to the arrests of over 50 people close to Erdoğan's government, including the sons of three government ministers; and has claimed four cabinet ministers. (A Special Essay on this topic is forthcoming in the March 2014 issue of OE Watch.)

Prime Minister Erdoğan quickly moved to control the situation, removing or transferring 3000 police officers and altering rules for judicial investigation. He explained the charges by claiming that certain forces were conspiring to undermine Turkey's rise to becoming a democratic and prosperous country.

As the accompanying passages from the Turkish press demonstrate, the story took an important turn with potentially important consequences for the military on 24 December 2013: in an attempt to explain the events as a plot by secretive forces that had infiltrated the judiciary with goals of overthrowing the government, Yalçın Akdoğan, a leading adviser of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, claimed in an article that those forces had also framed the military, alluding to the controversial coup plot cases (called *Balyoz* and *Ergenekon*) which put hundreds of military officers in jail. Following this, on 27 December 2013 the chief of the general staff asked for legal action against those who have been "targeting the Turkish Armed Forces and its personnel," directly quoting remarks from Akdoğan's 24 December article. The military also issued a series of press declarations.

These developments have prompted a debate in Turkey about whether the corruption scandal will lead to the retrial of military officers imprisoned in previous coup cases -- something that Erdoğan has hinted might be possible -- and whether this might return the military to politics. The accompanying passages warn that the political tension and strife in the country



“The chief of staff, after a long respite, is again making statements. They sound harmless but are nevertheless disturbing. For the military to once again resume the habit of issuing statements will cast the shadow of old Turkey on our new Turkey. As the atmosphere changes, the nature of these statements can also change and we can find ourselves once again debating memorandums. The military's appeal to the public must be categorically rejected.”

Source: Hakan Albayrak, “Askeri darbeye dikkat! (Beware a military coup!),” *Stargazete.com.tr*, 8 January 2014, <http://haber.stargazete.com/yazar/asker-ee-darbeye-dikkat/yazi-826494>

“The chief of staff, after a long respite, is again making statements. They sound harmless but are nevertheless disturbing. For the military to once again resume the habit of issuing statements will cast the shadow of old Turkey on our new Turkey. As the atmosphere changes, the nature of these statements can also change and we can find ourselves once again debating memorandums. The military's appeal to the public must be categorically rejected. If there is going to be a statement about the military, it should be made by the prime minister or minister of defense.”

(continued)

Continued: Will the Corruption Scandal Return Military to Politics?

could trigger another military coup. The second passage draws parallels between the political climate in Turkey today and that of the period immediately preceding the 1960 coup.

While this would have been a far-fetched thought just three months ago, it does not appear to be so anymore. However, as the authors point out, despite the frustration with the government, this is not viewed as a welcome development, as most people want to have civilian control over the military in Turkey. (See Special Essay, “Understanding Turkey’s Historic Coup Trial,” in the October 2012 issue of OE Watch). **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**



Turkish Armed Forces logo.
Source: tsk.tr

Source: “Murat Belge: 27 Mayıs [1960] tipi darbe olabilir, endise verici benzerlikler var! (Murat Belge: A 27 May-type coup might take place, there are alarming similarities!),” t24.com.tr, 6 January 2014, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/murat-belge-27-mayis-tipi-darbe-olabilir-endise-verici-benzerlikler-var/247682>

“I am sure that whether it is a major or a colonel, there are officers who are saying, ‘Something must be done to get rid of this government before they destroy the country.’ Certainly among them there will be those who will say ‘OK, you and I, we must do something.’...After the May 27 [1960] coup [lower echelons within the] military had acted within the military hierarchy, but that coup was against the hierarchy. There can now be a return to May 27. You can’t simply dismiss that possibility. There are perilous similarities. Erdoğan must not make the mistake of thinking that he controls the entire army.”

Source: Hasan Cemal, “Eyy Erdoğan! Hayal kurma, hayatı ve Türkiye’yi avucunun içine alamazsın! (Hey Erdoğan! Don’t dream, you cannot control life and Turkey in the palm of your hand!),” t24.com.tr, 3 January 2014, <http://t24.com.tr/yazi/eyy-erdogan-hayal-kurma-hayati-ve-turkiyeyi-avucunun-icine-alamazsin/8203>

“I feel like screaming: Hey Tayyip Erdoğan! ...You cannot become a single-man [rule] in this country. Press the break pedal as soon as possible. You’ve started playing such a nasty game. If it goes on like this, because of you and your not-so-bright advisers the military will return back to politics. Aren’t you aware of the indicators of this possibility?”



Source: <http://img16.imageshack.us/img16/3237/askerresimleriforumdasi1.jpg>

New Internet Legislation Further Limits Freedoms

January 2014

“...Turkey is moving towards becoming one of the countries with the most restrictive internet censorship laws.”

OE Watch Commentary: Given the limitations on mainstream media in Turkey, the Internet is an important alternative source of information. However, in early January the government introduced legislation that would allow it to arbitrarily and significantly restrict, monitor and control what Turks can view on the Internet. The accompanying passages debate the details of the bill and demonstrate the alarming reactions regarding what this means for the state of freedom of expression and freedom of information in Turkey.

As the passages point out, the legislation will enable the Directorate of Telecommunications (TIB) to close down any site on the Internet without a court order. In addition, a Union of Service Providers will be responsible for recording and maintaining (for up to two years) information on the sites that each person is visiting and the searches he or she is conducting. The passages point out that this will turn Turkey into an “intelligence state,” where the government is aware of every step each citizen takes. The authors claim that this paves the way for the government to censor anything arbitrarily, based on its own political motivations.

As the passages point out, while the law is being created under the veil of protecting children and families, many believe that the ruling Justice and Development Party’s true aims are to protect itself against politically embarrassing revelations and allegations that they fear may come up as part of the anti-corruption and bribery investigation that has been shaking the government since 17 December 2013.



Signs read, “Don’t touch my Internet!”

Source: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/01/turkey-internet-restriction-legislation-website-access.html>

Source: “Internet sansürü özgürlüklerin kısıtlanmasıdır (Internet censorship is a restriction on freedoms),” Haberdar.com, 10 January 2014, <http://www.haberdar.com/internet-sansuru-ozgurluklerin-kisitlanmasidir-3965757-haberi>

“A serious internet censorship law has been introduced [in the Parliament]. This is also a way to monitor people. People will be monitored based on their behavior on the internet. This is an initiative to seriously restrict freedom of communication and information in Turkey. It is being done in the name of protecting children, parents and families. But it really has to do with the political direction of Turkey, and with the government’s desire to monitor society and certain actors in society (civil society organizations and some political actors), to restrict their access to information and to identify the information they are accessing on the internet.

There are two aspects to this:

1. The Telecommunication Communications Directorate will have important powers, and will be able to restrict access to certain sites and close down certain sites without a court order; just with the order of a certain government official. In addition, it will restrict searches on certain ‘names of concern’. So when those names are searched, nothing will be available. Of course, they [the government] will determine these ‘names of concern’ themselves. This draft is one established by the executive branch’s random desires, its daily agendas and its threat perceptions.
2. A union of internet providers will be established and information on each citizen, what they are searching, what sites they are visiting, will be stored for two years, based on their IP address. The government will be watching every step you take.

This censorship reminds me of totalitarian regimes and dictatorships. It is also another example of the alarming direction that Turkey is moving in. With this law, there will be a serious restriction on access to information and it will bring other restrictions on other freedoms, like the freedom of expression. This situation is proof that we are moving rapidly towards becoming an ‘intelligence state’.”

(continued)

Continued: New Internet Legislation Further Limits Freedoms

The alarming state of press freedom in Turkey had been exposed following the Gezi Park protests that erupted in late May 2013, where main news outlets refrained from reporting the unfolding events for several hours or, in some cases, even days. The events led to a significant rise in the use of social media at the time and prompted strong reactions from the prime minister against social media, including comments that it is “the worst menace to society.” (See also “The State of Press Freedom in Turkey” (September 2013 OE Watch) and Special Essay: “Turkey’s Protests: Local Perspectives on their Causes and Implications” (August 2013 OE Watch)).
End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)

Source: Esra Tur, “Türkiye, sansürde en katı ülkeler arasında yer almaya doğru ilerliyor (Turkey is moving towards becoming one of the most strict countries for censorship),” Zaman.com, 17 January 2014, http://www.zaman.com.tr/ekonomi_turkiye-sansurde-en-kati-ulkeler-arasinda-yer-almaya-dogru-ilerliyor_2193905.html

“The ‘draft law’ that brings new regulations to the Internet, has passed the Parliament’s Planning and Budget Commission. With the change, the government is trying to control the internet, according to the President of Reporters without Borders, Johann Bihr, who also says that the law will increase censorship and that this is alarming.

The law foresees ‘dangerous content’ to be removed from the internet immediately. The law basically means that the internet will be limited, censorship will increase. Many believe that the government is trying to control the internet to cover up some of the corruption allegations.

The President of the Europe and Asia Branches of Reporters without Borders Johann Bihr says that Turkey is moving towards becoming one of the countries with the most restrictive internet censorship laws, and says that this is unacceptable and that they are watching the developments with concern. Bihr, who said that the Internet law contains serious violations of basic rights and freedoms and that it is a disappointment, said “With this regulation, Turkey is moving in the wrong direction. This is an alarming development. Turkey, who wants to become a democratic regional power, needs to be very careful when instituting such regulations. Because such regulations are unacceptable in democratic countries.”

Bihr, who also said that, with this law, Turkey is losing its chance to become a regional leader, claimed, “Every country has a certain level of internet censorship. Even though the situation in Turkey is not as concerning as China, Russia or Ukraine, the new law is against the protection of human rights and the rights to privacy. The human rights situation in the country, which is already bad, has gotten worse. Bihr also pointed out that there has been increased attempts to censor the internet following the Gezi Park events, and claimed that the law also aims to prevent the spread of information about the 17 December bribery and corruption operations. Bihr said that “Such initiatives will not help Turkey at all,” and added, “The laws in Turkey have to be compatible with the European Court of Human Rights and the international norms. Otherwise, they are violating these norms.”

Bihr, who said that the laws in Turkey need to be rapidly reformed to conform to international standards, said that many internet sites in Turkey are currently blocked, and that the new law makes a bad situation even worse.”

The President Calls for a Reset to Turkey's Syria Policy

January 2014

“It is an open secret in Ankara that the President Abdullah Gül is not happy with the government's foreign policy, particularly its approach to the Syrian crisis.”

OE Watch Commentary: On 14 January 2014 Turkish President Abdullah Gül convened all of Turkey's ambassadors in Ankara for the 6th annual Ambassador's Conference. In a widely debated move that was interpreted to be directed at the prime minister and foreign minister, Gül called on the government to recalibrate its Syria policies. The accompanying passages from the Turkish press discuss this development, agreeing with him.

The Turkish government's position on Syria differs from that of most of the international community: since the beginning of the crisis it declared that the Syrian civil war would not end unless the Assad regime was gone. After discussions of a possible military attack in fall 2013, the government was not pleased with diplomatic developments and was disappointed in the outcome, which it believed did not punish Assad.

Turkey has hosted the Syrian opposition on its soil, in addition to offering refuge to hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees. Ankara has also been accused of backing some of the more radical rebels in Syria and of shipping weapons to Al-Qaeda-linked groups, allegations it has strongly denied.

The government's position does not reflect the views of the majority of Turks, who oppose a military intervention in Syria. The public is weary of the costs to Turkey of such an intervention, including increased refugees (who already number over 500,000), worsening border security, increased terror attacks, and a worsening



Turkish President Abdullah Gül, speaking at a January 14, 2014 meeting with Ambassadors.
Source: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-president-gul-urges-govt-to-re-calibrate-syria-policy.aspx?pageID=238&nlD=61053&NewsCatID=338>

Source: Sami Kohen, “Dış politikayı yeniden bir “kalibre” etmeli (We must “recalibrate” foreign policy),” Milliyet.com.tr, 18 January 2014, <http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/dis-politikayi-yeniden-bir/dunya/ydetay/1823576/default.htm>

“The President said, “I believe that we need to recalibrate our diplomacy and security policies, in light of the emerging threats.” The President said this in the part of his speech that related to Syria. So he gave the message that the government's Syria policy needs to be recalibrated.

The President openly expressed his personal assessments, which many people share. Even though these assessments are not in line with the policies that the Erdoğan government has been following... Syria is at the top of this list. Gül talked about the most recent developments in the Syrian crisis and of the new groups established in the border regions, saying that “very radical elements” and terror organizations pose a threat to Turkey and that Turkey must reconsider its diplomacy and security policies in light of these threats. Reading between the lines, it could be seen that Gül sees some mistakes and problems with the government's Syria policy.. The following statement is significant: “...An accurate assessment, a realistic diagnosis is needed. The key to the solution is common sense, a conscientious approach, dialogue and empathy which will enable us to understand the interlocutors.”

(continued)

Continued: The President Calls for a Reset to Turkey's Syria Policy

economy and relations with Russia and Iran. Many criticize the government's foreign policy, which, they claim, is sectarian, resulting in Turkey becoming a party to the civil war. Many have also claimed that Turkey's foreign policy choices have left it isolated in the region, including in Syria, Egypt, Iraq and in the Middle East peace process. Thus, Gül's calls for a recalibration of Turkey's Syria policy are in line with public opinion. This is significant because Gül is currently the only rival to Prime Minister Erdoğan for the presidential elections to take place in August 2014. End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)

Source: Semih Idiz, "Gül'den Suriye politikasını yeniden kalibre etme çağrısı (Gül calls for a re-calibration of [Turkey's] Syria policy)," Al-monitor.com.tr, 15 January 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/contents/articles/originals/2014/01/turkey-gul-syria-policy-reset-erdogan-davutoglu.html>

"It is an open secret in Ankara that the President Abdullah Gül is not happy with the government's foreign policy, particularly its approach to the Syrian crisis. Until today, Gül never openly criticized the Syria policy in order to not embarrass the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. Meanwhile, the government was intent on pursuing a single-track policy just focused on the ouster of Syrian President Bashar Assad. But it appears that, like many others, Gül also sees that the Syrian crisis has brought new and unforeseen threats to Turkey, and that Turkey has remained on the sidelines of most initiatives aimed to bring stability to the Middle East.

This situation is in stark contrast to [Foreign Minister] Davutoğlu's claims that Turkey is one of the main game-makers of the region. As the developments in the Middle East unfold in the exact opposite direction that Erdogan and Davutoğlu predicted, Turkey remains face to face with increasingly dangerous realities. It appears that Gül has decided to say something in light of these realities."

Turkey and Africa: A Rising Military Partnership?

By Karen Kaya and Jason Warner

Like many other aspirant emerging countries such as China, Brazil, and India, since 2002, Turkey has unleashed a charm offensive in Africa, deepening bilateral ties with African states in the realms of economics, politics, and more notably, defense and security affairs.

This paper considers the implications from this ever-growing relationship between Turkey and Africa for the U.S.. Where do Turkey's interests in Africa converge with those of the U.S. and where do they diverge?

Given that Turkey's military and security interests and goals in Africa largely parallel those of the United States, the U.S. stands to benefit from the unique chance to partner with a Muslim ally whose presence in parts of Africa appears to be more welcome than those of other Western countries due to its shared religion, cultural ties and lack of imperial history.



<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Turkey-Africa.pdf>

“The culture of society needs guardians.”

OE Watch Commentary: *Iran's Islamic Revolution was a deeply ideological movement. Its leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, sought not only to uproot Iran's two thousand-year-old monarchy, but also change the religious, economic and political culture within Iran. For Iran's leaders the cultural revolution is ongoing. Ali Khamenei, Khomeini's successor as Supreme Leader, addressed the current state of the cultural revolution in a December speech to the Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution. Many of the points he addresses suggest that the Iranian regime remains deeply insecure about the lack of attractiveness that the regime's ideology holds for the majority of the Iranian public.*

Khamenei's speech is an impassioned plea for the regime's politicians—all of whom were vetted on the basis of their fealty to revolutionary values by the unelected Guardian Council—to be more active in guiding the public to embrace revolutionary values. At one point Khamenei likens the role of the Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution to removing weeds from a garden so that flowers can thrive. Such an analogy, of course, should worry Iranian civil society, especially those who have criticized the regime's practice of detention without charge and imprisonment of leaders and intellectuals for political crimes.

Khamenei also addresses the growing tendency of ordinary Iranians, many of whom are religiously conservative, to differentiate between state religion and personal practice. This suggests Khamenei is not simply worried about how young, more secular Iranians view the Islamic Republic, but also the loyalty of religious Iranians who might accept the widespread perception that many senior Iranian clerics are corrupt.

Khamenei also suggests a major initiative is needed to reform education. While he does not condemn foreign language instruction, he suggests that many of the textbooks used to teach English—the most popular foreign language studied in Iran—promote Western culture and so should be rewritten, and continues to suggest a major revision of school texts might be necessary in order to protect revolutionary values against pernicious Western influence.

The entire speech, peppered as well with Khamenei's references to President Hassan Rouhani's agreement on the issue, suggests that hope for substantive reform both inside and outside Iran might be somewhat misplaced.

End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)

Source: “Biyānat dar Didar ‘Aza’ye Shurava-ye ‘Ali Enqalab-e Farangi” (“Remarks in a Meeting with Members of the Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution”) Official Website of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, 10 December 2013. <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=24721>

Supreme Leader Speaks to the Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution

...Culture is the identity of a people. Cultural values are the heart and soul of a people and they are the true definition of a nation. Everything is reliant on culture. Culture is not dependent on and subordinate to economy and politics. On the contrary, economy and politics are dependent on and subordinate to culture. This should receive attention. We cannot separate culture from other areas... Culture requires planning as well. We should not expect the culture of the country - mass culture, intellectual culture, academic culture and other forms of culture - to improve on its own...

We have a moral and legal obligation towards the issue of the culture of the country - particularly, mass culture. Of course, we witness that in their newspapers, writings and speeches, some people want to limit and eliminate the supervision of the government by attaching labels such as “government-based religion” and “government-based culture” to the government. They want to attach these labels to the government. These people say that the government wants to make religion and culture pivot around the government. What does this mean? A religious government is not different from a government-based religion. Officials are part of the people. Government-based religion means popular religion. The government practices the same religion that the people do. The government is responsible for promoting religion in a stronger way. Anyone who has any capability should utilize it. A cleric should utilize his capability, an academic personality should utilize his capability and an individual who has a platform and who can influence the people should utilize his capability as well. And the government of a country is more capable than all of these people. So, it should naturally utilize its capability on the path of promoting virtues and preventing those things which do not let virtues achieve growth. Therefore, like economy, the culture of society needs guardians.



Supreme Leader Khamenei chats with members of the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution, Dec. 10, 2013. Source: <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=24721>



Emblem of Iran's Guardian Council. Source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org>

Bahrain: Iran Sparking Unrest

31 December 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *Sectarian tension re-erupted in Bahrain in February 2011, after a near decade lull. While many journalists depicted the “Pearl Uprising” as yet another chapter in the Arab Spring, the roots of discontent in Bahrain went deeper. The uprising occurred not only against the backdrop of similar protests in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, but also on the tenth anniversary of the National Action Charter, a pact which was put to a popular referendum, led to the restoration of parliament, and ended a spate of sectarian unrest which had begun in 1994.*

The Shi’ites in Bahrain have real grievances. They face discrimination in almost every sector: economic, political, and security. Ninety-five percent of Bahrain’s unemployed are Shi’ite, and the state prevents Shi’ites from purchasing land or living in certain portions of the island.

With the outbreak of violence, the Bahraini government exacerbated the situation. Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad may be inclined toward reform, but his father, King Hamad (who as crown prince had also claimed to be a reformer), has shown himself more interested in leisure than state. Many decisions rest with Khalifa bin Salman al-Khalifa, who has been prime minister for more than 42 years (the longest serving prime minister in the world). A staunch hardliner, Prime Minister Khalifa refuses political reform and has instead been more inclined to recruited to crush local dissent, as well as Saudi security forces. He and, more broadly, the Bahraini government have preferred to leaders have effectively been co-opted by Iran and, more broadly, Bahrain.

While Bahraini Shi’ites currently listen to Iranian media completely than the Bahraini media) and many Bahraini clerics at the accusation that they are acting on Iran’s behest: after all, in Bahrain, whether it should be independent or renew its historical ties voted overwhelmingly to reject Iranian suzerainty and support

Consistently lacking in the Bahraini government’s accusations Republic to the decision making of the Bahraini opposition or the engage (generally manifested with Molotov cocktails against the forces). Privately, Bahraini officials will say that much of the of Iranian accounts sitting in Bahraini banks, but until now direct Iranian complicity in its domestic unrest.

Protesters fests toward Pearl roundabout on 19 February 2011.
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Protesters_fests_toward_Pearl_roundabout.jpg

Source: “Hossein Amir Abdollahian: Ada’ye Moqamat-e Bahrayni dar Mavarad Kosht-e Irani Kamalan Kazeb Ast / Bahrayniha Farafkoni Mikonand ” (“Hossein Amir Abdollahian: Bahraini Authorities’ Claims About Iranian Ship Are Complete Lies; Bahrainis are Blaming Others”) Namehnews.ir, 31 December 2013. <http://namehnews.ir/News/Item/97059/2/97059.html>

Bahraini Claims about Iranian Ship Are Complete Lies

The deputy foreign minister of our country for African and Arab affairs, asked about recent claims by Bahraini authorities that they had seized a shipment of Iranian-made explosives, said: “These claims are complete lies, and Bahrain is blaming others for its own domestic problems.” According to the report of Nameh News, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, deputy foreign minister of our country for African and Arab affairs, speaking on the periphery of the funeral for Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif’s mother and in response to [a question from the Iranian news agency] Tansim about recent allegations by Bahraini authorities that [Bahrain] had seized a ship carrying Iranian-made explosives near the coast of Bahrain, said, “These are complete lies, and Bahrain is actually trying to blame others for the domestic troubles they have encountered.” It was pointed out that on Monday, December 30, some Bahraini security officials claimed that they had seized a shipment of explosives that had Iranian and Syrian markings from a ship off their coast.

(because it covers Bahraini political events and the unrest more studied in the Iranian city of Qom, Bahraini Shi’ites take umbrage 1970 the United Nations sponsored a referendum on the future of to Iran, and both Bahraini Sunnis and their Shi’ite co-nationalists Bahraini independence.

against Iran has been any proof directly linking the Islamic violence in which some segments of the Bahraini opposition water cannons, tear gas, and rubber bullets of the security financing for the Bahraini opposition comes from the interest Bahraini officials have not been able to provide proof of



Continued: Bahrain: Iran Sparking Unrest

If the Bahraini seizure of arms and explosives did originate in Iran, then it portends a new chapter in the Bahraini unrest. The opposition has lost momentum in recent months, as international observers reconsider the legacy of Arab Spring transitions and as Bahraini authorities slowly imprison opposition leaders. While the Iranian Foreign Ministry might deny responsibility for the seizure of weaponry apparently destined for Bahrain, it avoids the question about where such weaponry did originate. Bahrain has better controls than almost any other country in the Middle East simply because, as an island, it is easier to control its borders. Explosives and their precursors are difficult to import into Bahrain under any circumstances as Bahraini patrol boats patrol the coastal area. What smuggling does occur is small scale and comes through normal dhow traffic. Security would easily intercept any dhow landing outside an established port, and it would be difficult to smuggle tons of weaponry through a normal berthing.

*While the Bahraini government lacks credibility in many diplomatic circles simply because it has too often “cried wolf,” the discovery of these weapons apparently destined for the Bahraini opposition should raise real concerns both inside Bahrain and in the international community. Even if the Iranian Foreign Ministry professes innocence, it has no control over the activities of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which has been resurgent throughout the region. If the IRGC is shipping weapons to some elements of the Bahraini opposition, then it suggests that it is willing to take the Bahraini conflict to a new level, even at the risk of a proxy war with Saudi Arabia. At the same time, more direct Iranian involvement can hurt the Bahraini opposition, by tarring it in international eyes in a way that so far it has largely avoided. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***

The Ascent of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Egyptian Revolution: The Interplay of Narrative and Other Factors

By William Tombaugh, Center for Global and International Studies (CGIS)-FMSO Research Fellow during the Spring 2013 semester at the University of Kansas.

In this paper, CGIS-FMSO Research Fellow, William Tombaugh, examines the ascent to power by the Muslim Brotherhood during the Egyptian Revolution. The actors and their role in the Revolution are analyzed, with a focus on identifying and evaluating narratives associated with each of the actors. The role of narrative, as well as other important factors which contributed to the Muslim Brother's victory in presidential and parliamentary elections are discussed, as well as the post-election failure of the Muslim Brotherhood.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/universities/muslim-brotherhood.pdf>[Nato-Missile-Defense.pdf](#)

Behind the Doors of Iranian Prisons

26 December 2013

“When experience in prison is not harsh, the individual stays in prison for a while, is released and returns to prison again.”

OE Watch Commentary: Abbas Salahi, member of the Parliament’s Social Committee, pens a plea in the conservative daily Tehran-e Emrooz (Tehran Today) to reduce Iran’s burgeoning prison population (according to the International Center for Prison Studies [ICPS], Iran imprisons 284 persons per 100,000 population). While ICPS ranks Iran 39th, Salahi’s acknowledgment that Iran now ranks number four probably reflects political prisoners who might not otherwise be reflected in judiciary statistics.

Salahi laments that various initiatives over the years to reduce the prison population have not worked because of a high level of recidivism. While he decries that the Iranian public does

not show more tolerance and often demands prison terms for infractions which Salahi implies merit only lesser penalties, he also opens the window into a society which all too often the Islamic Republic’s leadership pretends does not exist. Iranian television and radio often portray the Islamic Republic as a society of values and ethics, which stands in sharp contrast to the moral laxity and corruption of the West. However, the recidivism rate which Salahi suggests indicates that violent crime is an increasing problem inside Iran. His comment that prisoners learn new behaviors suggests that Iranian society faces not simply drug abuse and simple assaults, but also more violent crime involving firearms, explosives, or larger-scale smuggling, and that organized crime is increasing inside the Islamic Republic. At the same time, the refusal of the Iranian public to accept punishments less than prison sentences suggests that the regime faces frustration not only from those who seek a different political future, but also those who are more apolitical, who simply believe that the regime has failed to deliver the basic security which any public demands of its government. Iran may be boiling in ways that do not often cross diplomats’ radar screens. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

Source: “Abbas Salahi: Habas-Zadaye / Niaz Fowri Dastgah Qaza’ye ” (“Abbas Salahi: ‘Decarceration’: An Immediate Judicial Need”) Tehran-e Emrooz, 26 December 2013. <http://www.tehrooz.com/1392/10/5/TehranEmrooz/1350/Page/1/?NewsID=144757>

‘Decarceration’: An Immediate Judicial Need

Iran’s rise to fourth place in the world in terms of the number of prisoners relative to the population is a new topic that indicates that we must take action in order to reduce the statistics... In order to reduce the number of prisoners, actions must be taken in various social, cultural, and legal fields at the infrastructure level... When experience in prison is not harsh, the individual stays in prison for a while, is released and returns to prison again. In fact prisons have become second homes for some individuals. If we examine prisons, there are people who go back to prison several times and they feel secure. They not only are not punished but, when they leave prison, they also have learned new behaviors and they learn from other inmates where to find whatever they could not access before!

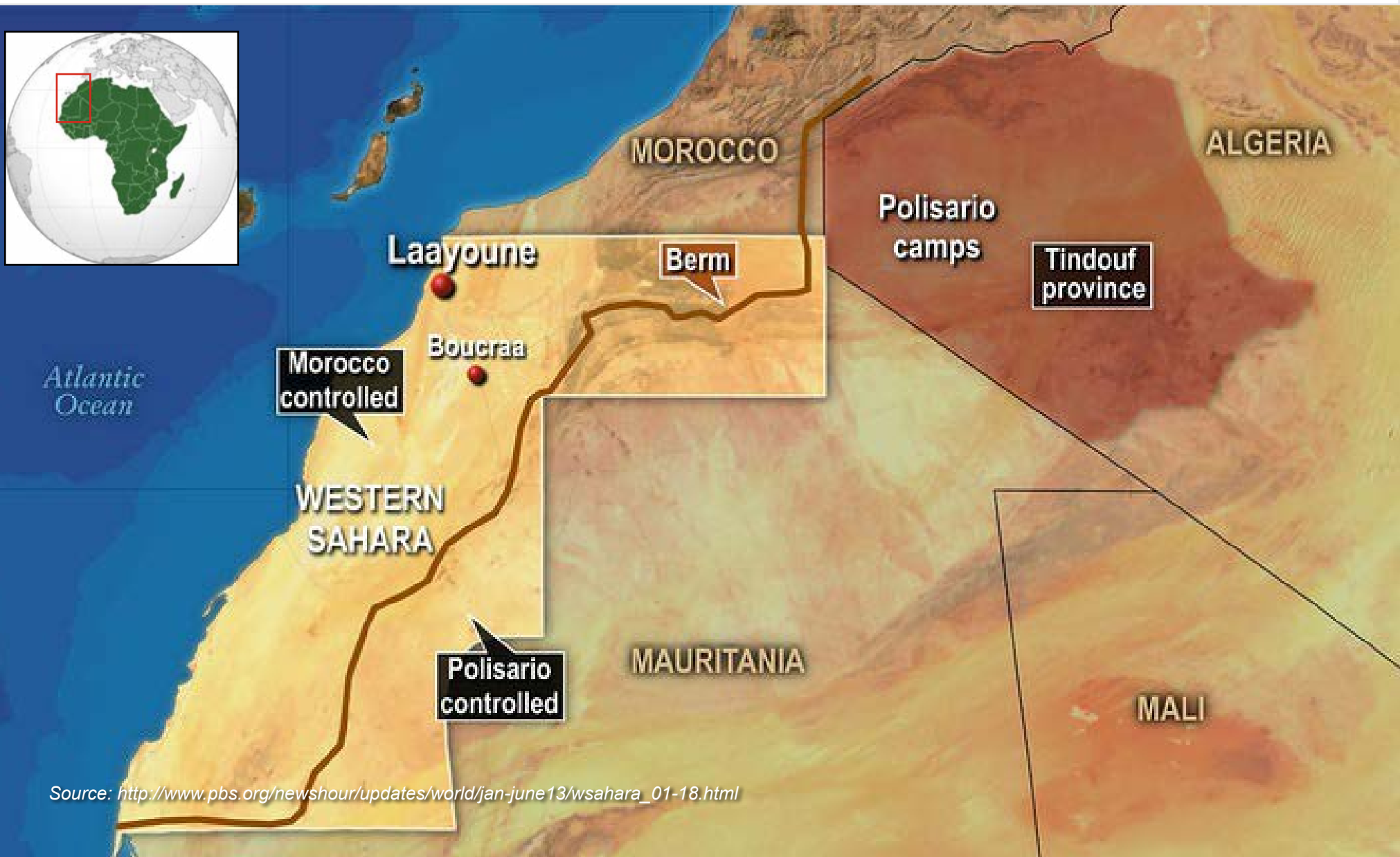


Photo of an outer wall of Evin Prison located in northwestern Tehran, Iran.
Source: picture-alliance/dpa

Polisario Front Smuggling International Aid

28 December 2013

“Children in these camps continue to be used as business opportunities by the chimeric Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and senior Algerian officers to elicit sympathy from the international community.”



Source: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/world/jan-june13/wsahara_01-18.html

OE Watch Commentary: The Polisario Front claims to be the government of the self-declared Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), a state which it hopes to establish in the Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony controlled by Morocco since 1975. Backed by Algeria, the Polisario Front waged war against Morocco until 1991, but now controls little beyond camps in western Algeria for Sahrawi tribesmen it claims are refugees. While the Polisario claims the Tindouf camps hold more than 100,000 refugees, diplomats and former residents place the number considerably lower, perhaps 40,000. Nor are all the camp residents technically refugees from the Western Sahara: as many as half have their origins in Algeria, Mali, or Mauritania. Nevertheless, with the Polisario Front refusing to allow an independent census, the international community bases its humanitarian assistance for the Sahrawi refugees in these camps upon the inflated numbers.

Source: “Le Polisario champion du détournement d’aides humanitaires,” (“Polisario Championing Misuse of Humanitarian Aid”) Aujourd’hui Le Maroc, 28 December 2013. <http://www.aujourd'hui.ma/maroc-actualite/regions/le-polisario-champion-du-detournement-d-aides-humanitaires-107022.html>

Polisario Championing Misuse of Humanitarian Aid

Opponents of the Polisario in the Tindouf camps have recently distributed some documents implementing senior officials of the separatist movement in the smuggling of international aid. According to information coming from the camps of Rabbouni, Tindouf, the leadership of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) is angry these days because of the publication of documents by militants from the Forum for the Support of Autonomy of Tindouf (Forsatin), which exposes the actions of the separatist group which has exploited since 1976 the suffering of the population of the camps...

(continued)

Continued: Polisario Front Smuggling International Aid

All access to the camps comes via Algeria, which also controls the transit of aid over the approximately 1000 miles from Algiers (or other coastal cities) to the camps. It is an open secret throughout the region that much of the aid goes elsewhere: diplomats and other travelers report seeing assistance from the camps in markets in Mauritania, Mali, Algeria, and elsewhere in the Sahel. The smuggled supplies help fund both the

Entire containers were diverted from their destination, and children in these camps continue to be used as business opportunities by the chimeric Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and senior Algerian officers to elicit sympathy from the international community, and do not hesitate to falsify documents regarding the targeted population to increase the amount of food aid received....

Polisario's activities and, apparently, the life style of senior Polisario leaders (beyond smuggling, the group receives income only through the largesse of the Algerian government, which sees the Polisario as a lever to use against its rival, Morocco).

Within the Sahrawi community there is growing frustration with the Polisario leadership. The group's president, Mohamed Abdelaziz, has had a stranglehold on leadership since 1976 and, true to the group's Marxist roots, maintains a Communist bloc-style personality cult. While the international community once favored a referendum to resolve the Western Sahara question, disagreements over eligibility have prevented such a referendum from taking place. The United States and many other countries have therefore accepted Morocco's offer of functional autonomy for the Western Sahara. The Polisario Front, however, has adamantly refused to accept autonomy under Moroccan control, and instead holds onto the fiction of SADR independence, issuing coins and postage stamps, maintaining a declining number diplomatic missions (paid for by Algeria), and refusing in most cases to allow residents of the Tindouf camps to return to Morocco or other countries of origin.

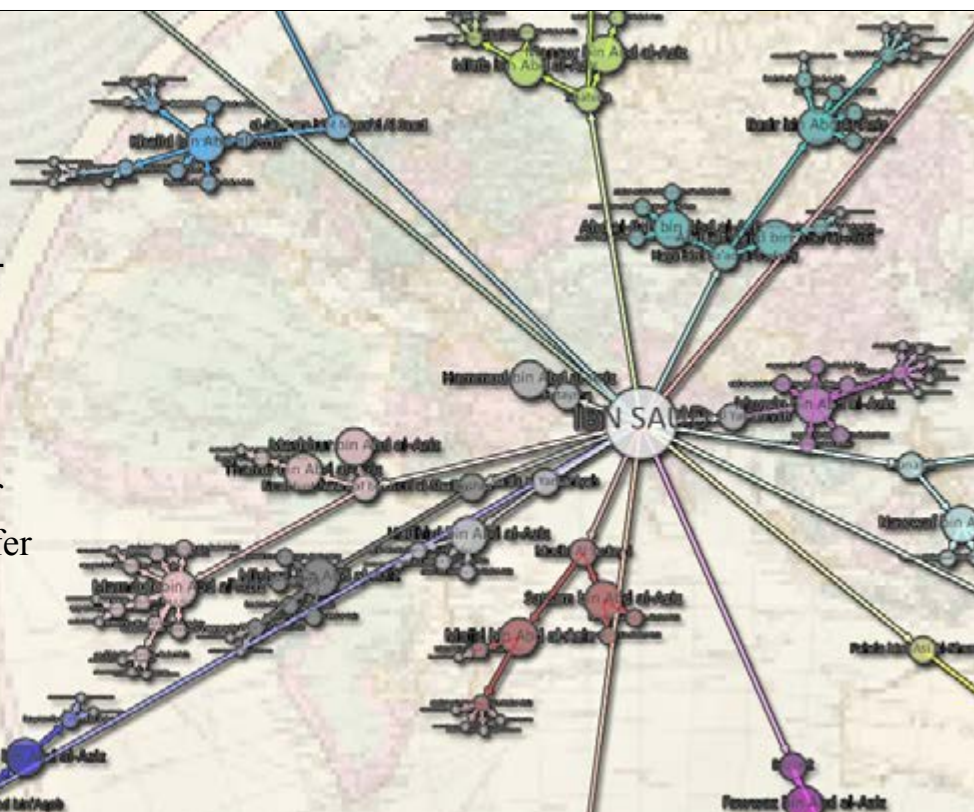
*It is in this context that the report in Morocco's independent, left-of-center Aujourd'hui Le Maroc is interesting, for it suggests, if accurate, that the Polisario is beginning to face internal resistance, both with regard to its misuse of international assistance and from residents frustrated with its refusal to accept Sahrawi autonomy in the Western Sahara. With the end of the Cold War the Polisario has lost much of its power and legitimacy. As Morocco has made good on its pledges of economic development and autonomy in the Western Sahara, reasons for Sahrawi insurgency have declined even further. Should the trends reported in this article continue, it is possible that internal fissures within the Polisario-administered camps might become the death knell for a group which, in effect, is one of the last relics of both the Cold War and African liberation movements. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***

Mapping Saudi Arabia's Succession

By LUCAS WINTER
Foreign Military Studies Office

This paper aims to serve as a guide for keeping track of the key players as the Saudi royal family seeks to transfer power to a new generation of princes.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Saudi-Succession/Saudi-Succession.pdf>



The Curious Case of Majed al-Majed

16 January 2014

“...What was Majed al-Majed doing in Iran?...”

OE Watch Commentary: *Majed al-Majed, the head of a Lebanon-based al-Qaeda affiliate called the Abdullah Azzam Brigades (AAB), died in Lebanese custody on 4 January 2014. While open-source reporting is understandably spotty on the details of his final days, it is illuminating when it comes to the curious geopolitical intrigue sparked by his case.*

The earliest reports of al-Majed's detention surfaced on 31 December 2013, five days after his alleged capture. The news caught fire given that the AAB had claimed the 19 November 2013 bombing of the Iranian embassy in Beirut. Prior to that, the southern-Lebanon-based group had – whether out of patience, ineffectiveness or both – been overshadowed in Syria by Iraqi al-Qaeda groups and indeed done little beyond releasing regular anti-Shi'a screeds and shooting the occasional DIY rocket across the border into northern Israel.

Shortly after the news of al-Majed's arrest, the Saudi ambassador in Lebanon openly stated that, despite the absence of an extradition treaty with Lebanon, his country would seek the repatriation of al-Majed by virtue of his Saudi citizenship and his being on Saudi Arabia's most-wanted list. Iranian officials, meanwhile, expressed their intention of sending an official team to Lebanon in order to interrogate him about the embassy bombing. Then, suddenly, he died.

Somewhat bizarrely, Saudi Arabia and Iran took to accusing one another of being Majed al-Majed's sponsor. New plots suddenly surfaced, such as the one announced in Saudi media in which the AAB plotted to kill the Saudi ambassador in Lebanon, as described in the first accompanying article. Insinuations that 19 November was a false flag attack also began appearing in Saudi media. The second accompanying excerpt, from an article by the former editor-in-chief of the Saudi daily al-Sharq al-Awsat, is illustrative. Key to the Saudi narrative is



Abdullah Azzam Brigades Logo (above)
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Abdullah_Azzam_Brigades_Logo.jpg

Saudi head of the terrorist group of Abdullah Azzam Brigades Majed al-Majed. (pictured left)
Source: <http://en.alalam.ir/news/1552353>

Source:

“قاعدي طهران” خطط لاغتيال السفير عسيري
“Tehran's al-Qaeda' Planned to Assassinate Ambassador Asiri,” al-Watan, 3 January 2014.
http://www.alwatan.com.sa/Politics/News_Detail.aspx?ArticleID=173517

Al-Watan uncovered new information based on several sources ... of a plot by Majed al-Majed to personally target Awad Asiri, the Saudi Ambassador in Beirut.

Source:

ماجد الماجد.. “أبو ادس” جديد؟
Tariq al-Homayed. “Majed al-Majed... another ‘Abu Adas’?” al-Sharq al-Awsat, 16 January 2014. <http://www.aawsat.com/leader.asp?section=3&issueno=12833&article=757774>

What is clear today is that we face a new “Abu Adas” game targeting Saudi Arabia. The al-Asad regime and Hizbullah used “Abu Adas” to try to deceive international investigators following the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri, but the investigators uncovered the fraud. Today we face another “Abu Adas” in a glaring attempt to get something from Saudi Arabia and avoid the most important question, which is: What was Majed al-Majed doing in Iran?

(continued)

Continued: The Curious Case of Majed al-Majed

the AAB leadership's purported Iranian connection, including Majed al-Majed's sojourn there. The third accompanying article, excerpted from the Lebanese daily al-Akhbar, illustrates how the pro-Iranian side views the circumstances surrounding al-Majed's detention and death suspiciously. For them, Saudi Arabia's keen and open interest in the case raises questions on the exact relationships between the Saudi regime and al-Majed.

*Al-Majed seems to have been the consummate al-Qaeda middleman. As to exactly whose payroll he was on, it seems that either no one really knows or everyone pretends they do not know. Indeed a curious case. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)***



Army intelligence took control of the ambulance and drove it in the direction of the Defense Ministry in Yarze. (Photo: Marwan Tahtah) Source: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/majed-al-majed-8-days-lebanese-army> Source: <http://en.alalam.ir/news/1552353>

Source: Radwan Mortada. "Majed al-Majed: 8 Days With the Lebanese Army" al-Akhbar, 6 January 2014. <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/majed-al-majed-8-days-lebanese-army>

What does the Lebanese state have to say in reply to questions from Iranian officials, including Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alawi, who raised doubts about the circumstances of his arrest and called for an autopsy and investigation? What does it have to say about statements from Alaeddin Boroujerdi, head of the Iranian Shura's foreign policy committee, who said, "Saudi, the primary financial backer of Majed, is not interested in uncovering his role in the terrorist attacks that took place in Beirut?" These questions are not meant to accuse the army or its leadership of deliberately killing him. But the man's significance should raise such issues, especially due to allegations that he was an officer in the Saudi army. In addition, there was the Saudi haste to extradite him for trial and Iran's insistence on participating in his interrogation. All this puts the army under a heavy burden.

Latest Moves in the Saudi Succession Endgame

23 December 2013

“...the Saudi king wants to name his children to important state positions ...”

OE Watch Commentary: On 22 December 2013 a royal decree named Mecca province governor Khalid al-Faysal the new minister of education. He was replaced in Mecca by King Abdullah's young son Mishaal, the former governor of Najran province (along the border with Yemen). According to the first accompanying article, from the independent news website Rai al-Youm, the move is meant to grant the king and his sons political control over Saudi Arabia's most important province (and the heartland of Islam), while also paving the way for them to gain control of the Foreign Ministry (led by Khalid al-Faysal's increasingly frail brother Saud al-Faysal).

A few days earlier, a reorganization in the Interior Ministry led to the naming of a deputy minister and several other high-level assistants. Such appointments are normally made by the king; somewhat awkwardly, this one was attributed to Interior Minister Mohammed bin Nayef (although with the king's blessings). Perhaps for this reason, naming Abdul Rahman Al-Rubaian deputy interior minister was greeted



Abdul Rahman Al-Rubaian

Source: <http://en.mall.stc.com.sa/news/local/news/news=deputy-interior-minister-appointed.html>

Source:

تغييرات العاهل السعودي المفاجئة بتعيين نجله اميرا لمنطقة مكة المكرمة ونقل خالد الفيصل للتعليم تعزز دور الاحفاد وحصة الملك

“Surprise Changes by Saudi King Naming his Son Governor of Mecca and Transferring Khaled al-Faysal to Education Strengthens the Role of the Grandchildren and the King's Share,” 21 December 2013, Rai al-Youm. <http://www.raialyouth.com/?p=33983>



Prince Mohammed bin Naif bin Abdulaziz

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Prince_Mohammed_bin_Naif_bin_Abdulaziz_2013-01-16_%282%29.jpg

It is clear that the Saudi king wants to name his children to important state positions ... The naming of Prince Khaled al-Faysal – who in Saudi media was considered a candidate to the foreign ministry – to head the ministry of education may stem from the Saudi king's desire to develop the country's educational sector... It may also be an indication that the foreign ministry has been set aside for Prince Abdulaziz bin Abdullah in the future.

Source:

من هو نائب وزير الداخلية الجديد عبدالرحمن الربيعان؟

“Who is the New Deputy Interior Minister Abdul Rahman al-Rubaian?” 18 December 2013, al-Hayat. <http://alhayat.com/Details/583480>

al-Rubaian was in charge of the office of deceased second deputy prime minister Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz in the year 1432 (h) with ministerial rank following his retirement from military service. Before that he was promoted by a royal decree issued by the Custodian of the Two Holy Sites, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, on 12/16/1427 (h) from the rank of lieutenant general to general.

(continued)

Continued: Latest Moves in the Saudi Succession Endgame

with little fanfare. Al-Rubaian is a retired general who also served as an assistant to former Interior Minister Nayef bin Abdulaziz, Mohammed bin Nayef's father. The second accompanying article, from the Saudi daily al-Hayat, purports to give some background on the new deputy minister. The article's brevity and bureaucratic language are telling. Contrast that with the third accompanying article, an excerpt from a profile of Mishaal bin Abdullah.

Two factions are thought to remain on the chessboard of Saudi succession politics. The reshufflings in the Interior Ministry and Mecca are considered the latest move by each. According to "Mujtahidd," the enfant terrible of Saudi Arabia's Twittersphere, who is excerpted as the fourth accompanying article, the changes in the Interior Ministry were actually a pre-emptive move by bin Nayef in response to rumors that the other faction was orchestrating a move to fill the vacant deputy interior minister post with one of their men. Bin Nayef is considered the head of one faction; the other one is led by King Abdullah's son Mutaib (head of the Saudi National Guard) and his right-hand-man Khalid al-Tuwaijri (Saudi Arabia's answer to Cardinal Richelieu).

What next? Mujtahidd's crystal ball has Abdullah's faction making a move to add to a portfolio that already includes the National Guard, the Royal Guard, the governorship of Mecca and, according to him the Foreign Ministry. Potential moves he mentions include naming another of Abdullah's sons to a security position and a royal decree unifying the special forces and the Saudi emergency forces under a single command led by one of the king's sons-in-law. Stay tuned. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**



Meshaal bin Abdullah

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Meshaal_bin_Abdullah.PNG

Source:

مشعل بن عبدالله الأمير الذي تمنى أن يمثل 1% من والده

Mohammed Atif. "Mishaal bin Abdullah, the Prince Who Hopes to be 1% of what his Father is," 23 December 2014, al-Arabiya. <http://goo.gl/a0PM4q>

The prince also calmly responds to those who see him as the privileged "son of the king," noting in an interview with "Men" magazine: "I do not see it as privilege, quite the opposite there is great responsibility being the son of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz." On several occasions he has expressed his "desire to be like King Abdullah, if even only 1%."

Source: Mujtahidd Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/mujtahidd>), 23 December 2013. <https://twitter.com/mujtahidd/status/415106429255565312>

Mohammed bin Nayef found out that al-Tuwaijri and Mutaib intended to issue a royal decree appointing someone close to them as deputy minister and forcing the minister of interior to grant him broad powers... Mohammed bin Nayef took the initiative to block their path and fill the vacancy... Why did Mohammed bin Nayef choose someone from outside of the royal family? Because members of the Saud family will not accept appointment to a position such as this one other than by royal decree.

ISIS and the Syrian Regime

12 January 2014

“...ISIS became a rearguard for the regime in the so-called “liberated areas”...”

OE Watch Commentary: What is the nature of the relationship between the Syrian regime and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)? Recent fighting between ISIS and Syrian rebel groups has brought this question to the fore. The loose alliance between ISIS and other rebel groups, based on shared antagonism for the regime, is crumbling. Rebel groups increasingly see ISIS as an obstacle rather than a conduit for achieving their goal of regime overthrow. Thus, in early January the opposition Syrian National Coalition issued a statement accusing ISIS of being closely linked to and serving the interests of the Syrian regime, whether directly or indirectly.

There is logic to the general arguments linking ISIS to the regime. The first accompanying article, an op-ed from the regionally prominent Saudi daily al-Hayat, illustrates one way this link is drawn. The second accompanying article, from the pro-Syrian regime news website “Syria Steps,” illustrates the twofold response from the regime and its supporters. The first step entails highlighting foreign influence in other armed groups; the second involves efforts to debunk the three main arguments used to link ISIS to the Syrian regime: that the group was started by Syrian prisoners released by the regime in 2013; that the Syrian regime unleashed the group in order to put down the revolt by force under the guise of fighting terrorism; and the question of why ISIS and the regime do not seem to fight one another in places under ISIS control. None of these, according to the regime and its supporters, is convincing. As with rebel discourse, the regime’s line of reasoning has its own logic and appeal.

Might there be a middle ground in this regard? The third accompanying article, from a respected Syrian opposition website, argues against any middle ground within rebel ranks. It draws an analogy between ISIS and the Syrian regime, characterizing both as groups that rely on terror, violence, and intimidation to impose social order. The author identifies an “Islamic Third Way” within the opposition, which sees ISIS as an entity capable of



Flag of Islamic State of Iraq

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_Islamic_State_of_Iraq.svg

Source:

“داعش” وجنيف – 2 و “حزب الله”

Walid Shaqir. “ISIS, Geneva 2 and Hizbullah.” 10 January 2014, al-Hayat. <http://alhayat.com/OpinionsDetails/591114>

... for this reason the Syrian regime began handing some sites over to ISIS so people would be forced to choose between this takfiri organization and itself, beginning in Raqqa province roughly a year and half ago, after the regime released a group of militants from Syrian prisons and others fled from prisons in Iraq. ISIS became a rearguard for the regime in the so-called “liberated areas”...

(continued)

Continued: ISIS and the Syrian Regime

moderation and compromise. This he equates with the “Third Way” that first manifested itself early in the Syrian revolt: although opposed to the regime, it viewed armed rebellion as a recipe for sowing discord among Syrian society and, consequently, rejected it. Now, the author explains, this “Islamic Third Way” is making similar arguments about ISIS: although opposed to ISIS, they reject fighting against the group to prevent discord from metastasizing within rebel ranks.

An ideological debate about and with ISIS may ultimately be a healthy exercise for Syria’s rebels. Indeed, the rebel offensive against ISIS in Aleppo and Idlib seems to have tentatively concluded, with ISIS mostly retreating to areas under its control along the Euphrates Valley in eastern Syria. From there it may be momentarily left alone by an overstretched regime and rebel forces. The same cannot be said for rebels in newly “re-liberated” areas of Aleppo and Idlib. On the ground, the ball remains in the rebel court.
End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)

Source:

هل داعش من صنع النظام أم صنع الموساد !
Abu al-Tayyeb al-Halabi. “Is ISIS a Creation of the Regime or of Mossad?” 12 January 2014, Syria Steps. http://syriasteps.com/?d=110&id=114779&in_main_page=1

... the truth is the complete opposite. ISIS is nothing but an al-Qaeda terrorist group created by the Mossad, the CIA and the intelligence services of “Bandar bin Shaytan.” Their purpose is their terrorist revolution, which will end at the hands of the Syrian people and our brave army.

Source:

المعركة مع داعش و “التيار الثالث” الإسلامي
Sadiq abd al-Rahman. “The Battle with ISIS and the Islamic ‘Third Way’” 8 January 2014, The Republic. <http://goo.gl/lhTDij>

Despite the Syrian regime’s brutality and its having eluded political, national or moral rules, a group of educated Syrian opposition intellectuals and politicians has emerged calling themselves the “Third Way.” This group has refused to call what is taking place a revolution since the beginning. They have met with the regime despite opposing it, and describe what is taking place as a “crisis.” Analyses and critiques of this position have been made ad nauseum. Today, though, repeating them seems necessary, given the emergence of a counterpart to this “Third Way” among the ranks of the rebels themselves, specifically those who describe the battle with ISIS as “fitna” and see the group as an ally gone astray which must be set on the right path rather than defeated on the battlefield.

Jihad, Shariah and Their Implications for Security and Geopolitics

By Dr. Jevdet Rexhepi, Regional Functional Scholar-Eurasia, Cultural Knowledge Consortium, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

This research focuses on the Sunni Muslim tradition, which encompasses about 90-95% of the world’s Muslims. The idea isn’t that alternate narrations of Islam and interpretations of Islamic doctrine (in spiritual or political terms) do not exist or aren’t implemented (i.e., Shi’ism, Muslim Brotherhood), but rather that incorrect understanding of normative Islamic beliefs and practices writ large tends to proliferate.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/COCOM/EUCOM/Jihad-Shariah.pdf>

In Africa Force Is Often the Answer

January 2013

OE Watch Commentary: How appropriate that *déjà vu* is a French term, for, after fighting radical Islamists in northern Mali, French forces find themselves in a similar situation, doing battle in another one of their former colonies, this time against rebels in the Central African Republic (CAR). Though there are similarities between these two fights, one significant difference, at least so far, has been the outcomes. France's military actions in Mali resulted in many of the radical Islamists being routed, bringing some stability and security to the beleaguered nation, though the Islamists still periodically carry out attacks when French forces are not around. As for the CAR, the build-up of forces, both French and those contributed by the African Union (AU), has not yet been sufficient to completely deter the various militias from fighting each other. Numerous atrocities have been reported, including cannibalism, and there are fears the country could be on the brink of genocide. However, as more foreign forces pour into the CAR, it is hoped this can be averted and perhaps the nation can begin to achieve some modicum of stability, allowing it to begin to move forward.

To be sure, as the accompanying article relates, there were other instances of force used in Africa last year with results more like Mali (rather successful) than the CAR (uncertain, at best, if the situation will improve, heading towards endless killing fields at its worst). Perhaps the greatest success has been with one of Africa's longest-lasting conflicts, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where, as previously reported in these pages, the M23 Rebel Group, confronted by a UN Special Intervention Brigade, eventually surrendered.

Somalia is another country where force has begun to turn the tide of the country. The AU, Kenya, and Ethiopia have all played a role in narrowing the amount of land under control of al-Shabaab. Further progress against this al-Qaeda-linked group is expected to continue.

“In short, military intervention (generally African-led with a strong international component) has been the norm for solving complex conflicts on the continent [in 2013]. In Mali, the DRC and the CAR, but also in places like Somalia and Nigeria, with their own complex Islamist threats, the hard-line military approach has triumphed.”



French soldiers are seen patrolling a street in Bangui on December 8, 2013.

Source: <http://www.pressestv.ir/detail/2013/12/24/341592/french-troops-killed-car-presidential-guards/>

Source: Paul-Simon Handy and Liesl Louw-Vaudran, “2013: The year military solutions trumped African mediators,” Institute for Security Studies (South Africa), 19 Dec 2013, <http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/2013-the-year-military-solutions-trumped-african-mediators>

An absolutely catastrophic situation. This is how Adrian Edwards, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesperson, described the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) earlier this month. The stories pouring out of the capital Bangui and the hinterland of the landlocked CAR sketch a landscape of fear and horror.

Despite notable improvements in the last few decades and clear commitments, Africa still lacks a wide corpus of professional mediators.

Conflict prevention in Africa must take into account the ever-changing nature of the problem. Conflicts have become more fluid with non-conventional actors alternating between insurgency and normal life, making it difficult to draw a clear line between warring parties. The brutality of the conflict in the CAR and the addition of an unexpected religious element are a testimony to this.

The military onslaught against Boko Haram has largely failed up to now. Nigeria has to keep a door open to negotiations. But the command structure of Boko Haram is so loose

(continued)

Continued: In Africa Force Is Often the Answer

As the accompanying article clearly acknowledges, despite the success of military force in improving the stability and security in several African nations, it should not be the first response to a potential crisis. However, in 2013, mediation was often attempted but failed, not necessarily because of the weakness of the mediators, but because of the complexity of the crisis and the challenges posed in terms of the choice of negotiating partners. Unfortunately, trying to bargain with jihadists, rebels, and narcotraffickers is no easy task. Additionally, sometimes groups have no interest in peace, as conflict fuels their interests. In such instances, the conflict can only be solved by a substantial demonstration of lethal force.

*Though force may have to step in where mediation has failed to deter a conflict, mediation must lay the groundwork after force has been applied to ensure a lasting peace. This does not necessarily mean immediate elections, as many of these countries in turmoil have a weak and/or fractured political system. Negotiations can be a long process with small steps. Meanwhile, for countries such as France, the UK and America, putting their efforts towards developing the AU's military capabilities may help them avoid sending their own troops into the fray when an outside force is necessary to resolve a future conflict. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***

that, as in the case of Mali, it is extremely difficult to negotiate any kind of lasting settlement.

The liberal peacebuilding approach sees elections as the end stage of a process involving heavy military and civilian intervention. This generally only works after a long transition or a coup d'état that didn't alter the institutional fundamentals of political life...In the CAR, socio-political stability is anything but the norm. Rushing into elections now may just make matters worse and sow the seeds of another crisis.

In 2014, imaginative solutions will have to be found to ensure peace in countries where conflict has dragged on for too long. Even the most hardened generals know that no conflict can end without some kind of a political deal.

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>



South Sudan: The World's Newest Nation Struggles with Its Oldest Problem...Intertribal Conflict

10 October 2013

“The breakthrough [for the ceasefire agreement] comes as the South Sudanese army announced on Saturday that it had recaptured Bor, the Jonglei state capital from rebels. Bor had been under control of the rebels for around three weeks after rebels regained control of the key town for the second time since the conflict began..”

An estimated 500,000 people have been displaced, including these inside a UN compound, by fighting in South Sudan.
Source: <http://www.news.com.au/world/south-sudan-ready-for-ceasefire-with-rebels/story-fndir2ev-1226790947542>



OE Watch Commentary: South Sudan, after winning its protracted struggle for independence, is struggling again, with phrases such as “risk of all-out civil war” increasingly being heard. The promise of the new nation is quickly disintegrating into intertribal conflicts. As the accompanying article relates, however, there is a glimmer of hope, for on 18 January 2014 President Salva Kiir of South Sudan accepted a cessation of hostilities agreement with rebels who have been fighting to remove him for over a month.

Those rebels are from a different tribe than Kiir, and while there were possibly other factors involved in the conflict between government forces and rebels besides intertribal tensions, including a coup d'état which may or may not have been instigated by the former vice-president, tribal politics tend to permeate much of the new nation. To be sure, while the nation may be new, tribal animosities are not: though a large part of South Sudan's anger was directed at Sudan prior to the two splitting, inter-ethnic conflict far predates South Sudan's independence.

There had been hope that after independence the South Sudanese people would come together. Optimism that nationalism would

Source: “South Sudan's President Accepts Cessation of Hostilities Agreement,” Sudan Tribune, 19 Jan 2014, <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article49636>

Yien Mathew Chol, an assistant spokesman for the rebel delegation in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa, stated that the [ceasefire] document includes four areas. “First, there is provision for an immediate cessation of hostilities. Second, the agreement calls on the two parties to stop media campaigns and issuing propaganda statements against each other. Third, it calls for allowing humanitarian access to assist victims of the conflict. Fourth, it calls for the withdrawal of foreign troops from South Sudan...”

Despite earlier denials, Kampala and Juba have now admitted that Ugandan forces have fought alongside the South Sudanese army (SPLA) in countering the rebellion.

After conflict within the military began in the capital it spread to Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile states with significant sections of the army defecting.

The violence has claimed the lives of close to 10,000 people, according to the International Crisis Group (ICG), and forced half a million people to flee their homes.

The UN has accused both sides of committing war crimes and human right abuses.

(continued)

Continued: South Sudan: The World's Newest Nation Struggles with Its Oldest Problem...Intertribal Conflict

supersede tribalism has surrounded the birth of many other African countries. Here are words delivered in 1959 by Ahmed Sékou Touré, Guinea's first president: "In three or four years, no one will remember the tribal, ethnic, or religious rivalries which, in the recent past, caused so much damage to our country and its population."¹ That same year, during a debate on independence, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who would serve as Nigeria's first prime minister, related similar optimism, stating, "I am confident that when we have our own citizenship, our own national flag, our own national anthem, we shall find the flame of national unity burns bright and strong."² Unfortunately for some African nations there are flames present but they are not the fires of national unity.

*Some appear quite pessimistic regarding South Sudan's chance of survival. They cite the enormous number of internally displaced people being generated by the fighting, a lack of food for many, and potential large scale health disasters. Still, both sides agreed to sign the ceasefire, probably motivated, in part, by the army retaking some key towns, allowing the government to negotiate from a stronger position and the rebels to avoid additional losses. Thus, it may be too soon to say whether a country born from a civil war will now have its own civil war, but unless that country can find ways to enfranchise the tribes that feel marginalized and create a sense of national unity as a follow-on to the 18 January ceasefire – which, it should be noted, does not include all of the fighting with all of the various armed groups - the world's newest nation could become its newest failed state. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***

1. Martin Meredith, *The Fate of Africa* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), 157.

2 Ibid.

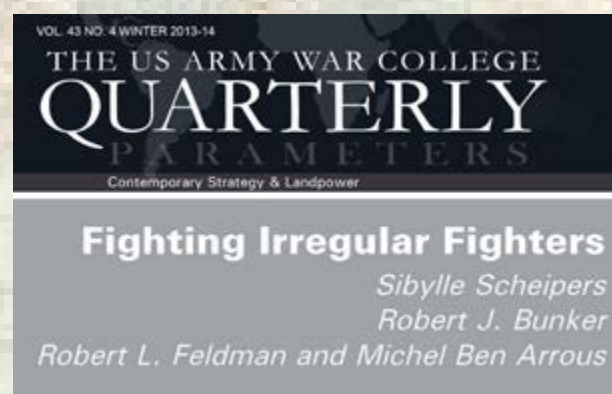
Confronting Africa's Sobels (Soldiers by Day, Rebels by Night)

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



Surprise at French Surprise of the Degree of Hatred in the Central African

9 October 2013

“So, for Ambassador Araud to say that France misunderstood how much Central Africans ‘desperately want to kill each other’ is mendacious and a cover for the results of their decades of mercenary interference in CAR along with neighboring states like Libya and Chad.”

OE Watch Commentary: Speaking at an event marking the 20th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, Gérard Araud, France’s UN Ambassador, stated, “In Central African Republic I think we had maybe underestimated the hatred and the resentment between the communities.”¹ He went on to say that this level of animosity between the Christian and Muslim populations has created a nearly impossible situation for the French and forces trying to establish security and stability in the war-torn country.

As the accompanying article, printed a day after Ambassador Araud’s speech, attests, it did not take long for African commentators to seize upon the ambassador’s speech. The author cynically rebuts Araud’s remarks, reminding readers that the French have been involved in the Central African Republic (CAR) for over 120 years, carving out a territory that bore no relation to ethnic, linguistic or other indigenous factors, without taking into account existing community boundaries. He goes on to detail France’s involvement in the various coups of the CAR, French (as well as Libyan and Chad) complicity in exploiting the country’s resources, and a host of other evils France perpetrated on its former colony, some of which many French would likely categorize as misconstrued or unfair, especially when he writes that the French seemingly have either learned little from their years of meddling in Africa or think others are stupid enough to swallow their simplistic stereotyping to hide their own complicity in this humanitarian crisis.

The French forces in the CAR do indeed find themselves in an extremely difficult situation, struggling to keep the peace while waiting for additional forces from the European Union and to arrive. For those who ascribe to an expansive definition of operational environment, one that includes the home front, the news for the French troops gets worse: a poll by the French Institute of Public Opinion shows that six out of ten French people are opposed to their country’s involvement in the CAR. This is far less support than the French public offered for the Mali intervention and perhaps reflects war weariness, as well as differences in the interventions. For Mali, the objectives were fairly clear: quickly drive out the radical Islamists, which, for the most part, the French successfully accomplished. The CAR, though, is a different story, a peacekeeping mission with a possibly prolonged timetable and uncertain outcome.

Whether naiveté, willful ignorance, or some other factor explains French surprise at the level of hatred between Muslims and Christians is uncertain. What is known, though, is that



French soldier on duty in Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic.
Source: <http://guardianlv.com/2013/12/heavy-fighting-in-central-african-republic/>

Source: Keith Sommerville, “France, Chad, Gaddafi and the CAR: Years of Meddling Should Not Be Ignored Now,” African Arguments, 14 Jan 2014, <http://africanarguments.org/2014/01/16/france-chad-gaddafi-and-the-car-years-of-meddling-should-not-be-ignored-now-by-keith-somerville/>

Before colonial occupation, the region was no different from any other – experiencing trade, inter-marriage and, at times, raiding and conflict between different communities. It wasn’t some peaceful Eden, but nor was it riven by endemic warfare or hatred between its peoples.

During demonstrations by schoolchildren and students in 1979, French army officers and NCOs commanded forces of Zairean and CAR troops that brutally suppressed the protests. France has remained a major political, economic and military player in CAR – intervening for ‘humanitarian’ reasons several times.

With this long and intense involvement, if there were such wells of hatred and a desperation on the part of Christian and Muslim communities to kill each other, then why didn’t they spot it before and why is it only surfacing now?

The CAR has diamonds, gold and uranium which over decades have drawn in the French, Libyans and Chadians.

(continued)

Continued: Surprise at French Surprise of the Degree of Hatred in the Central African

French troops have put themselves between these warring factions, and during the initial stage of the mission two French paratroopers, both in their early twenties, paid for the attempt to bring peace and stability to the CAR with their lives. End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)

1. "Central Africa Republic Religious Hatred Was Underestimated: France," Reuters, 15 Jan 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/15/us-centralafrican-france-un-idUSBREA0E1QC20140115>

People do not just harbour primitive hatreds – an excuse also trotted out by the international community for non-interference in Rwanda and Bosnia – but they do become brutalized by years of oppression, of being the victims of the swirling regional conflicts that criss-cross the borders of the central African region.

Not only have the people of the CAR suffered the depredations of their own governments and their foreign backers, but also of the Congolese rebels of Jean-Pierre Bemba and of Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army. Brutalization begets brutality and killing in desperation, not desperation for killing.



Central African Republic violence.

Source: <http://guardianlv.com/2013/12/heavy-fighting-in-central-african-republic/>

Zimbabwean Perspectives on U.S. Surveillance Operations

14 October 2013

“The [Western] intelligence agencies [are] vacuuming information in order to leverage and use it against us as weapons.”

OE Watch Commentary: On one hand, one might read the accompanying article – which offers a Zimbabwean’s perspective on the scale and intentions behind the U.S. surveillance operations – as a somewhat typical piece of anti-imperial, anti-Western rhetoric originating from the Zimbabwean diaspora. Indeed, Zimbabwe’s state-owned newspapers like The Herald frequently run similar stories venerating Harare by denigrating the West. Yet at closer inspection, this article offers various interesting and, indeed, new insights about how at least one African citizen understands the global role of the U.S. intelligence services.

The first and most salient revelation is the author’s general views on the nature of the United States’ grand security strategy in Africa: namely, that the U.S. is using its surveillance capabilities (and those of its partners) to counter Chinese presence on the continent through manipulation of channels of information. In one sense, this signals a shift in the way that the U.S. is perceived on the continent: namely, it suggests that U.S. influence is not derived from a physical, military footprint as such, but rather through intangible channels of knowledge and, by proxy, influence and intimidation. Moreover, this thesis also suggests that the author views the U.S. as playing catch-up in regards to its Africa policy, which, again, has been catalyzed by Washington’s apparent need to take its China containment policy from the Pacific Ocean to Sub-Saharan Africa.

The second revelation relates specifically to the author’s home, Zimbabwe: namely, the author suggests that the U.S.’s troubled relationship with Zimbabwe is a result of Washington feeling economically and ideologically threatened by Harare’s “indigenization” program, which demands that foreign- and white-owned business relinquish 51% of their shares to black Zimbabweans. This point is interesting on two fronts. First, it suggests that Zimbabweans believe the U.S. and the broader Western world to be clinging onto fears of Zimbabwe’s Marxist/socialist redistribution policies via a Cold War lens. Second, given that the author views the “West” as being primarily composed of five Anglophone (and primarily white) countries, there is an implicit racial undertone, suggesting that the U.S. and its allies likely feel unease about the ousting of foreigners and whites by an indigenous African government.

Third, and maybe most interesting, is that despite critiques of the West generally, the author nevertheless believes that the U.S. and the “five eyes” are legitimately fighting terrorism on the continent. Indeed, it is this last statement, which gives nuance to an otherwise caricatured article, that suggests that its author has reflected on such issues in detail, and holds opinions that are likely shared by others on the continent.

End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)

Source: Tsungai Chipato, “Why the West is spying and why Africa should be worried,” Mathaba, 19 January 2014: <http://www.mathaba.net/news/?x=633943>.

Article:

With Edward Snowden having shone a light on how “economic intelligence” is actively being gathered, many developing nations can at least find solace in finally understanding why it is always difficult for their diplomats to wrangle effective trade agreements with western powers.

Under the pretext of fighting terrorism, five developed nations pooled their intelligence services into a cooperative of 24 hour spying on the whole world.

The United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom in intelligence circles known as “the five eyes” have simply turned the whole world into a huge listening post.

For Zimbabwe and many other developing nations this directly affects their public and foreign policy agendas, information for the western world is power.

Zimbabwe’s indigenization act, although small compared to the grander strategy of the western worlds geopolitics, is still seen fundamentally and philosophically as an economic security threat to western hegemony, a cancer that could spread.

Having slept at the wheel when it came to garnering influence within Africa, President Obama has switched gears and used a gradually rising military presence within Africa in order to curtail China’s inroads.

Although legitimately fighting terrorism, one can easily observe how the scope of America within Africa has expanded to include the containment of China just as in East Asia and the Pacific. All this has been at the expense of African issues.

We are often left unaware of the sleight of hand that is occurring, with the “five eyes” intelligence agencies vacuuming information in order to leverage and use it against us as weapons.

Africans please take note that the Western world no longer hides information and knowledge in books, in our era they simply encrypt it.

OE Watch Commentary: *On the surface, Nigeria's passage of a series of anti-homosexuality laws has no obvious connection to security. Yet upon further investigation, its implications for national and human security are numerous, and indeed, are becoming a central part of the debate surrounding the newly instated laws.*

Just what are the new anti-homosexuality laws? On 13 January President Goodluck Jonathan ratified a series of bills – following the near passage of similar bills in Uganda – banning a range of homosexual activities in the country. Forbidden acts now include being in a homosexual relationship and entering into a homosexual marriage; even being present at a gathering of homosexuals can lead to incarceration. The laws are wildly popular in the country, with an estimated 90% of Nigerians agreeing with the statement: “homosexuality is wrong.”

What implications could these laws have for security? The first and most obvious relates to the simple protection of human rights in Nigeria. Indeed, homosexual rights advocates from around the world have derided the laws, including Secretary of State John Kerry, who said that they dangerously restrict freedom of assembly, association, and expression for all Nigerians. Indeed, for a continent that is increasingly taking the notion of human security more seriously than ever in its past, the Nigerian (and indeed, Ugandan) laws serve to undermine basic human freedoms and personal security.

Yet an entirely different set of security discussions has begun to percolate within the Nigerian media in relation to the laws. On one hand, some dissidents have been critical of the attention that President Goodluck Jonathan has invested in passing the laws while military Islamist group Boko Haram continues to ravage the north, most recently killing 18 in Borno on 21 January. Others, as the article notes, bemoan that the government is investing time in curtailing Nigerians' already diminished civil rights while a host of other development issues, including the provision of electricity, for instance, go unaddressed.

*On the other hand, some observers view the laws almost as a panacea to the country's Boko Haram problems. One line of reasoning runs that, given the laws' nearly universal approval in the country, Jonathan might use them as a lever to galvanize popular support for even greater limits on personal freedoms in the country in the service of fighting Boko Haram. (The country has already been heavily critiqued by organizations like Freedom House for trampling human rights in the service of its fight against the group.) Indeed, some have cited the bills' passage as the most notable accomplishment of his administration, suggesting that he will likely enjoy high approval ratings into the future. Others have suggested that the passage of the laws in the face of intense Western opposition might have similar effects, effectively helping to coalesce civil society in support of Jonathan and his security team's tactics, no matter how draconian. Others, in less nuanced lines of reasoning, have suggested that the simple passage of the laws was a prerequisite for focusing on the country's other developmental and security dilemmas, which the administration and legislative branches are now freed up to address. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)***

Source: Ini Ekott, “Anti-gay law: Jonathan draws praises from Nigerians, knocks from abroad,” Premium Times (Abuja, Nigeria), 13 January 2014: <http://premiumtimesng.com/news/153298-anti-gay-law-jonathan-draws-praises-nigerians-knocks-abroad.html>

Article:

Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan has assented to a bill outlawing gay relationships and same-sex marriage.

With the president's signature, anyone convicted for getting involved in gay relationship or entering into a same-sex marriage contract or civil union faces up to 14 years in jail. It is also a crime to have a meeting of homosexuals, or to operate or attend a gay club, society or organization. Public show of same-sex intimate affection is also outlawed.

Across the social media and blogosphere, majority of Nigerians heaped praises on a president they are more used to criticizing and pointed out how he has defied international pressure over the bill, and acted in a way deemed to be in Nigeria's interest.

“Jonathan got this one alone right. The Oyinbo(whites) can go to hell,” one Twitter post read...

News of the bill's signing promptly spurred an outpouring of anti-gay sentiments across the social media, with many Nigerians discountenancing minority concerns about how beneficial criminalizing peoples' way of life could be to a population struggling with insecurity, poverty and basic electricity.

“I applaud the president's passage of the Gay Bill. Now Boko Haram, epileptic power supply and broken infrastructure will be resolved,” another Twitter post read....

For many, the decision affirmed Nigeria's profoundly religious and cultural leaning, and symbolized a smack on the West widely seen here as notorious for expecting its values and beliefs adopted globally.

“In the context of Nigeria this is a populist move, perhaps designed to win votes ahead of next year's election. But the president should know it comes with a cost: it destroys any pretence Goodluck may once have had to reputable international statesmanship,” Sonja Eggerickx, said.

“I applaud the president's passage of the Gay Bill. Now Boko Haram, epileptic power supply, and broken infrastructure will be resolved.”

The Future of Eritrea's Relationship with the U.S

December 2013

“The long laundry list of Washington’s...malice against little Eritrea ... comes on the heels of a...far more devastating American hostility toward the existence of an independent Eritrea.”

OE Watch Commentary: Frequently described as “Africa’s North Korea,” Eritrea is infamous for being one of the continent’s most enigmatic and authoritarian states. For this reason, among others, Eritrea’s relationship with the United States is seen by some to be at its lowest point since the country gained independence from Ethiopia in 1991. Nevertheless, given its strategic location in the Horn of Africa, one of Sub-Saharan Africa’s most chronically insecure regions, it will remain a strategically important country from a U.S. security perspective.

Although the accompanying article suggests that some in the Eritrean diaspora might be urging for rapprochement with the U.S., Eritreans’ view of history (particularly with the U.S.) will inform how Asmara might approach such moves. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Eritrea appeared to be an eager ally of the United States and offered Washington access to its military bases; later, in 2004, Eritrea proclaimed itself a member of the “coalition of the willing” and told the United States that it would offer it access to its intelligence services as well. The U.S. ultimately declined both offers. Relations have since deteriorated, with the author of the article offering a chronology of perceived U.S. offenses towards Eritrea. For its part, the United States accused Eritrea of harboring terrorists who had planned to assassinate President Barack Obama in 2009.

Yet despite potentially thawing relations between the two, and the author of the accompanying article’s hope for rapprochement, a host of issues, particularly related to the Eritrean military establishment, will need to be resolved first. For one, Eritrean President Isaias Afiwerki, a noted dictator, has instituted mandatory military service of sixteen months for all men and women between the ages of 18 and 40. Yet observers note that once entering Eritrea’s military, the majority of recruits



Eritrean president Isaias Afwerki.
Source: <http://www.theguardian.com>

Source: Awet T. Weldmichael, “Eritrea: Bringing Eritrea in From the Cold - We Need to UN-Break the U.S.-Ethiopia-Eritrea Triangle,” African Arguments, 17 January 2014: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201401201182.html?viewall=1>.

Article:

In a span of a month, three towering figures in the American foreign policy establishment on Africa publicly called for an end to the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict and the rapprochement between the United States and Eritrea. All these are welcome signs of - or at least invitations for - the much needed thawing of relations between the United States and Eritrea.

The United States is not an innocent bystander in its estrangement with Eritrea nor has it by any measure been a neutral broker in the broken relations between its former allies, Eritrea and Ethiopia.

US-Eritrean relations deteriorated first because Washington betrayed its role as a guarantor of the June 2000 Algiers Agreement and tolerated - if not encouraged - Addis Ababa to renege on the binding ruling of the international court that in 2002 awarded to Eritrea the flash point of the border dispute.

When the Obama Administration took over, the figures who had helped negotiate the difficult peace agreement came back full force. Instead of being flexible and creative within the little room that they had left, the new foreign policy team lazily maintained the entrenched eight-year old policy: upping the pressure on Eritrea and pushing it further into the corner until it is cowed into line.

In 2009, Washington crafted a United Nations Security Council resolution to punish Asmara on the basis of some unverified and some unverifiable claims, and other utter

(continued)

Continued: The Future of Eritrea's Relationship with the U.S

*are unable to leave even after completing the compulsory service period. As such, Eritrea's military establishment has been described as a "giant prison," with deserters frequently abused, raped, or even murdered. The potentially insurmountable problems with its military notwithstanding, other issues that will surely impede better relations with the U.S. include Eritrea's severe restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly, and the press, as well as its deeply undemocratic governance patterns. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)***

fabrications of the Somalia Eritrea Monitoring Group. In maintaining the sanctions, American foreign policy architects were so adamant that in late December 2011 they created a dangerous precedent of denying the head of state of a UN member, and a defendant in a serious case at that, a hearing at the Security Council.

The long laundry list of Washington's consequential malice against little Eritrea during the short decade comes on the heels of an even longer-established, far more devastating American hostility toward the existence of an independent Eritrea, a baggage that Eritreans are quick to point to.

While seemingly impossible, however, it is not inconceivable for US-Eritrea relations to start afresh from a cleaner slate in spite, and not because, of their history.

That will first and foremost require US appreciation of its strategic interests with and in a stable Eritrean state and that it should endeavor to make the latter sustainable; an acknowledgment by both Eritrean and American policy makers that the US is not the custodian of resuming relations between Asmara and Addis Ababa; and a recognition that there may be other actors working to restore relations between the two countries (or, for that matter, to spoil them even further).

Rapprochement between Eritrea and the United States is not mutually exclusive with the existing US-Ethiopian relations; they are complimentary to one another.

South Sudan Violence Tests China's "Non-Interference"

December 2013

“If China intends to lead the mediation, it will face the risk of breaching the sacrosanct principle of non-interference. Beijing cannot afford the consequences of inaction, but its foreign policy principles shackle its hands and feet...”

OE Watch Commentary: Since 1954 China's non-interference policy has been a staple of Chinese foreign relations. The policy was much easier for China to implement when China was much more isolated in the world than it is now. The confrontation between South Sudan's President Salva Kiir and his political rival Riek Machar and their respective Dinka and Nuer ethnic constituencies is the latest incident affecting Chinese interests in Africa that places the viability of this policy into question.

An article written for China's CCTV News in December 2013 described the conflict in South Sudan as a “headache” for China because it endangered the lives of Chinese citizens and put the future of a huge oil field in doubt. The article recognizes that China's non-interference policy is based on the “cornerstone principle” that other countries treat China in the same way. However, it also says that China's food and energy security is dependent on China's external supply chain to Africa, and that the importance of strict compliance with this policy needs to be questioned when the threats China faces to its oil supply are greater than the trade-off in adhering to it. The dilemma, according to the author, is that when China intervened in the Sudan-South Sudan oil dispute in 2012, South Sudan accused China of telling South Sudan to stop pumping oil, while Sudan accused China of stealing oil. Now, if China intends to mediate between South Sudan's ethnic factions, each faction will likely accuse China of supporting the other, which could lead to reprisals against Chinese citizens in South Sudan.

China is providing the bulk of aid to South Sudan's mining industry, as well as aid to Kenya to develop rail links to South Sudan to export minerals to China [1]. China also consumes more than 80% of South Sudanese oil exports. China has such a heavy and growing footprint in Africa that it may become an “inadvertent empire” in not only Central Asia, but also parts of Africa. Throughout history empires protected their assets and citizens with military forces, and China may soon be inclined to do the same, or else forfeit some of its key economic interests in Africa. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

1. For more information on “China's Inadvertent Empire” in the Central Asian context, see: <http://nationalinterest.org/article/chinas-inadvertent-empire-7615>

Source: “南苏丹暴力让中国不安 (South Sudan Violence Makes China Uncomfortable),” [cctvnews.com](http://www.cctvnews.com), 26 December 2013.
Source: <http://www.cctvnews.com/detail.asp?id=9435>

South Sudan Violence Makes China Uncomfortable

“The new round of violence in South Sudan makes governments around the world worried and Beijing is no exception. Conflict between the rebels and the Government of South Sudan endangers the lives of Chinese citizens in the country, but also places the future of a huge oil field in South Sudan in doubt.

The violence brings instability to a region, where many people had hopes that after South Sudan officially received independence from Sudan, the region's bloody civil war of many years out of the shadows could be stabilized. The conflict in particular makes a headache for China. Prior to South Sudan's independence, Beijing invested heavily in Sudan's oil industry. Most of China's pursuits of oil are now located in a completely different country [South Sudan].

Beijing has invested a lot in South Sudan since the country's inception in the form of various development projects to provide loans and assistance to the Government of South Sudan, including a provision of assistance to South Sudan's mining industry agreement signed in September of this year. China's oil companies in the oil-rich country are also very active.

On Monday, Foreign Ministry spokesman said: “We will make joint efforts with the parties concerned to promote dialogue and negotiations to resolve their differences, prompting the situation in South Sudan to find stability as soon as possible.” However, the choices are limited as Beijing has long insisted on the principle of non-interference in other countries' politics.

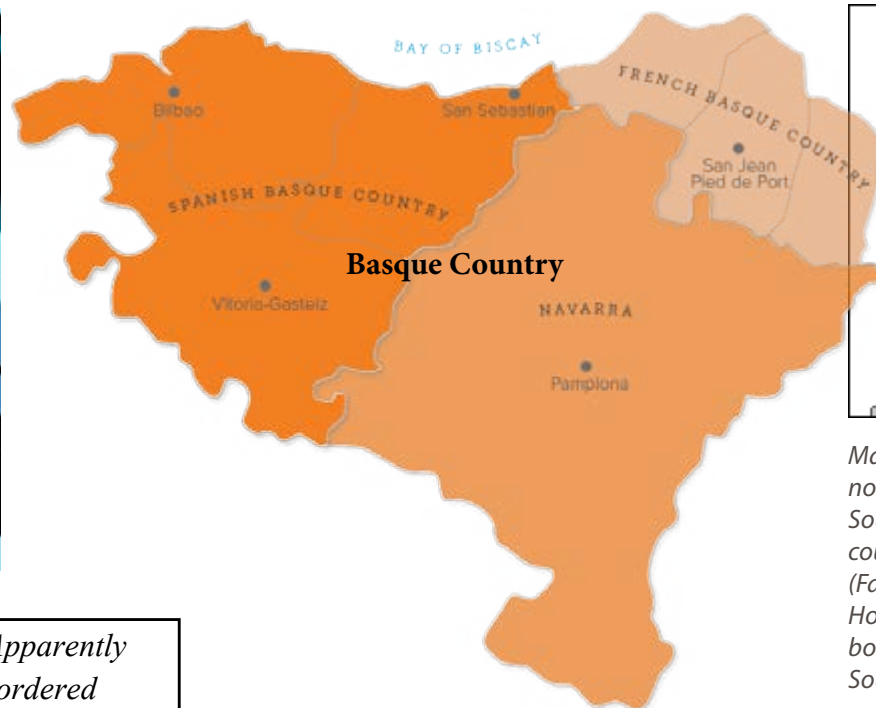
China has always regarded this as a cornerstone principle in the country's foreign policy, in part because China hopes other countries will give Beijing the same treatment. However, as domestic companies becoming global players, China's non-interference policy may conflict with other national interests. When other countries, such as South Sudan's civil unrest, threaten these interests, Beijing must make difficult trade-offs about whether the importance of strict compliance to the principle of non-interference exceeds the potential threats to oil supply. Also, in the lives of the affected areas affected by the riots of Chinese citizens what should we do?

If China intends to lead mediation, it will face the risk of breaching the sacrosanct principle of non-interference. Beijing can not afford the consequences of inaction, but its foreign policy principles shackle its hands and feet.

“Chinese foreign policy analysts are beginning to question whether it is time for China to reassess its non-interference Policy when critical Chinese interests are at stake, such as in South Sudan, whose capital, Juba, saw an inter-ethnic power struggle since December 2013.”

Is the ETA Still Around?

December 2013



Map showing Basque Country (Euskal Herria) region in northern Spain and southern France.

Source: <http://www.euskoguide.com/about-basque-country/where-is-the-basque-country.html>

(Far left) Logo for Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Freedom) with the motto "Keep up on both" written below.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ETA>

OE Watch Commentary: Apparently so. A Spanish judge recently ordered the detention of a group of persons he determined to be ETA leadership (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna [Basque Homeland and Freedom] is an armed Basque nationalist and separatist organization).

Apparently they were attempting to strengthen linkages to membership inside prison. Some Spaniards are not in agreement with government policies promoting amnesties and/or pardons for ETA members. They feel that the ETA is not intending to abandon its violent ways, and that victims of the ETA are disrespected by too much leniency toward the group. The attached are translations of brief excerpts from the sources. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

Source: Ángela Martialay, "El juez Velasco ordena el ingreso en prisión de los detenidos en la operación Jaque," Libertad Digital, Madrid, 13 de enero de 2014, http://www.libertaddigital.com/espana/2014-01-13/el-juez-velasco-ordena-el-ingreso-en-prision-de-los-detenidos-en-la-operacion-jaque-1276508141/?utm_source=7&utm_medium=masleido&utm_campaign=masleido (appreciation to Eduardo Mackenzie of Colombian News)

Article 1:

This Monday, Judge Eloy Velasco ordered the unconditional and without bail encarcelation of eight persons detained in "Operation Check" against the network of the terrorist gang, as prosecutor Miguel Ángel Carballo had requested."

In his order, Velasco explains that the documentation confiscated during last week's police searches confirms "the leadership role of the KT [Koordinadora Taldea], the coordinating nucleus that includes representatives of the EPPK [Euskal Preso Politikoen Kolektiboa]," collective reference to the prisoners from the ETA. The magistrate emphasized that the ETA "objective would be to "promote exercise of control by the KT from outside [prison] by way of the leadership of the EPPK on the inside." The magistrate underlined that "they constitute and belong to the ETA."

Source: Mariano Alonso interviewing Enrique Múgica Herzog (well-known Spanish lawyer and politician), "Mientras ETA hable de conflicto, es que tiene intención de continuar," Libertad Digital, Madrid, 14 de enero de 2014, <http://www.libertaddigital.com/espana/2014-01-14/enrique-mugica-mientras-eta-hable-de-conflicto-es-que-tiene-intencion-de-continuar-1276508123/> (appreciation to Eduardo Mackenzie of Colombian News)

Article 2:

Mariano Alonso: "Victims of the ETA have asked for relief from the Public Defender's Office because they feel trampled by the results of the [Parot] doctrine that has released [from prison] vicious etarras [members of ETA]. If public defender Soledad Becerril were to ask your advice on this matter, what would you tell her?"

Enrique Múgica : "Soledad did well. Because what she asks is why has there been such a rush to let those terrorist go free. Now that there is talk of information that they have moved forward with the detention of the prison front leadership, the same should be applied in this case. Why have the judges moved with such swiftness to free ETA members as though they were in some sort of horse race, to see who wins? What Soledad is saying to them is, "Not so fast."

Mariano Alonso: "I hesitate to ask if you are in agreement [with the notion] that the negotiation (with the ETA) are key to the end of the ETA."

Enrique Múgica: "No, Man, no! To begin with, from a fundamental ethical point, simply ethical, not political, it does not fit to negotiate with a terrorist band that has killed hundreds of Spaniards, among them members of his own party. And what the ETA has brought to the [political?] situation in which he finds himself is the actions of elements of the State Security Forces.

Worrisome Security Phenomenon in Argentina

December 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *This past Christmas season in Argentina (remembering that December on that side of the world is in summertime) included a wave of mass looting. The situation revealed what many Argentines are, retrospectively, claiming to be a weak internal security capacity. Some claim that the various police forces had gone understaffed and underpaid. The national government moved to increase salaries, but now appears to be blaming the security forces themselves. A significant police strike occurred and the looting, facilitated by social media, apparently continue into the new year. Some Argentines hope that changes in the penal code (apparently specifying greater consequences for mutinous police behavior) will help. How Argentina handles this disturbing phenomena will be of interest worldwide. Attached are extracts from a few of the many articles covering the story. End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)*



(Above) Supermarket being looted in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Source: <http://en.mercopress.com/2013/12/04/looting-spreads-in-argentina-s-third-largest-city-as-police-go-on-strike>

Source: APR, “Argentina, en alerta máxima por amenaza de saqueos (Argentina, in maximum alert due to the threat of looting),” El Economista.com, 19 December, 2013, <http://eleconomista.com.mx/internacional/2013/12/19/argentina-alerta-maxima-amenaza-saqueos>

Article 1:

“Argentinean security forces are in maximum alert facing the threat of massive looting throughout the country.” (Demarest translation)

Source: EFE, “Gobierno argentino decreta alzas salariales para las fuerzas de seguridad tras saqueos,” EMOL, 23 December, 2013, <http://www.emol.com/noticias/internacional/2013/12/23/636255/gobierno-argentino-decreta-aumentos-salariales-para-las-fuerzas-de-seguridad.html>

Article 2:

“By way of a public decree published today in the national Official Bulletin, the Argentinean Chief Executive increased and included new salary supplements for the security forces after a tense month of December featuring a wave of violence and looting in a large part of the country.” (Demarest translation)

Source: DPA, “Detienen a 16 policías por los acuartelamientos en Argentina,” Notitarde.com, 16 January 2014, <http://www.notitarde.com/Internacional/Detienen-a-16-policias-por-los-acuartelamientos-en-Argentina--/2014/01/16/297447>

Article 3:

“The arrest has been ordered for one ex-agent and sixteen police officers who protagonized the first mutiny on the 3rd of this past December. The prosecutor told the newspaper La Voz del Interior de Córdoba that it involves the first uniformed personnel who disregarded the orders of their superiors and went on to instigate others to insubordination and to remain in quarters (dereliction).”

Source: El Comercio (Peru), “Cristina Fernández culpa a la policía de los saqueos en Argentina,” El Comercio.com, 14 December, 2013, <http://elcomercio.pe/mundo/actualidad/cristina-fernandez-culpa-policia-saqueos-argentina-noticia-1673205>

Article 4:

“The President of Argentina, Cristina Fernandez, implicated the police in the violent looting that swept the country in recent days, accusing it of ‘organizing the delinquency in order to rob people and businesses, instilling fear and terror.’”

(continued)

Megateo, the Narco King of Catatumbo, Colombia

2 January 2013

OE Watch Commentary: 15 years ago Víctor Ramón Navarro, aka Megateo, was not even on the radar of authorities, but today he is the king of drug trafficking in a remote and highly profitable production region in Colombia known as Catatumbo. Megateo started his criminal career as a messenger in the Popular Liberation Army (EPL), a paramilitary organization. This group demobilized in 1991, but an estimated one-fifth of the guerillas did not accept their fate and either joined other groups or went on to form their own, as was the case with Megateo.

In the late 90s, when the Colombian government was immersed in combating drug cartels, a paramilitary group entered Catatumbo and killed Megateo's mother and his two sisters. Following that incident he dove headfirst into the world of drug trafficking. By bribing local officials and residents in Catatumbo with money and gifts, Megateo was able to gain the confidence of the latter in order to operate with impunity. If Megateo's offers of gifts and money were not accepted, he laid two choices on the table: leave Catatumbo or be prepared to die. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel and Gonzalez)**

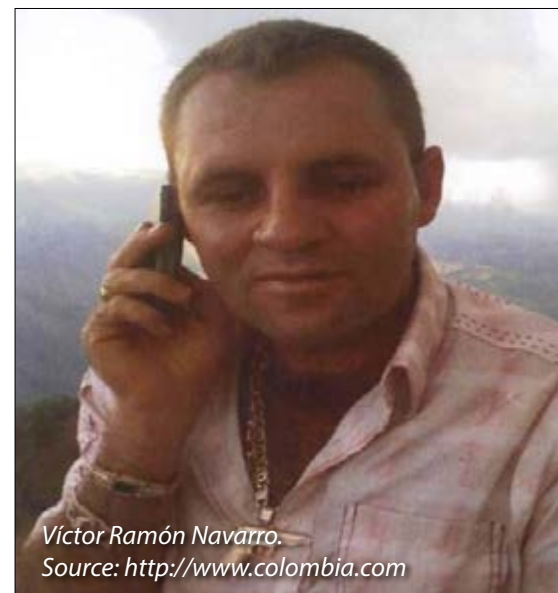
Víctor Ramón Navarro, aka Megateo, is a prominent Colombian drug trafficker who has managed to maintain power in a country that has been successful in dismantling paramilitary groups and arresting even the most notorious cartel heads.

Today, Megateo controls an estimated 3,460 square km of land in Catatumbo (area along the Colombia/Venezuela border) which he uses to grow and process cocaine. Between 2011 and 2012, growing areas for cocaine increased from 3,490 hectares to 4,519 hectares in Norte de Santander which is where Catatumbo is located. In comparison with other Colombian states, Norte de Santander ranks second amongst those which actually increased cocaine production between 2011 and 2012. It is believed that nearly all cocaine produced by Megateo in Catatumbo is trafficked into the United States, Canada, the Dominican Republic, and Europe.

In addition to drug trafficking, Ramón Navarro is known to corrupt authorities, kidnap, and charge extortion fees. His influence in Catatumbo became apparent earlier this year when men under his control blocked multiple roadways in order to stop authorities from destroying cocaine fields in the area. As it currently stands, the US Department of State is offering a USD \$5 million reward for information that would lead to his capture.

The Problem with Arresting Megateo:

The ability of individuals such as Megateo to corrupt authorities and government officials is enormous. A government official from Catatumbo provided information indicating that at least eight Army Colonels who worked or are currently working in Catatumbo are on Megateo's payroll. Another state official indicated that on at least two occasions, police and army soldiers could have arrested Megateo on the spot but instead let him go.



Víctor Ramón Navarro.
Source: <http://www.colombia.com>

Betrayal Within:

In April 2006, 17 undercover Administrative Department of Security (DAS) agents were sent from Bogotá in an operation aimed at arresting Megateo. During the operation, Carlos Alberto Suárez Reyes, one of the agents, intentionally led fellow DAS agents and soldiers directly into a minefield that had been set up by Megateo. Suárez Reyes survived as he jumped out of the vehicle before the trucks drove over the mine fields. He was later arrested in 2009 and is currently serving a 40 year prison sentence.

In another instance, an Army informant known as "El Grillo" successfully infiltrated Megateo's organization, but his identity was later given up by an Army Lieutenant and Captain who were paid \$174,000. El Grillo was subsequently killed in front of his own father. Army Sgt. Carlos Andrés Copete suffered the same fate after it was discovered that he had infiltrated Megateo's ranks at the end of 2011. He was shot 30 times. His identity was also revealed to Megateo by fellow Army soldiers.

If the FARC Agrees to Peace Talks, How Would Megateo Benefit?

The Colombian government is currently in the process of negotiating peace talks with the FARC. However, many have speculated that even if the Colombian government is able to make demobilization talks work, that FARC controlled zones in the northwestern sector of the country would simply fall under control of Megateo; a situation that would basically take Colombian authorities back to square one. It is also likely that those FARC members not in agreement with peace talks would either create smaller paramilitary groups or join the ranks of Megateo and/or other drug trafficking organizations. However, if Colombia were able to bring law enforcement and social programs to Catatumbo where Megateo maintains his principal operational base, this tendency could be possibly reversed.

Source: "Alias Megateo, narco y amo del Catatumbo colombiano," El Pais, Accessed on 2 January 2013 from <http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/judicial/noticias/alias-megateo-narco-y-amo-catatumbo-colombiano-0>

Mexican Drug Cartels Host Holiday Parties in Tamaulipas

25 December 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *Los Zetas and the Gulf Cartel are operational in nearly all of Mexico, but their strongholds lie in Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon. In these areas they are able to conduct their operations with high levels of impunity, so much so that local authorities are even known to provide them with security if they decide to host public celebrations. This is evidenced by recent Christmas parties thrown by both cartels in Tamaulipas.*

In Ciudad Victoria municipal and state police provided security outside a party thrown by Los Zetas for residents of the city. As part of this event Los Zetas rented the Victoria Music Hall and provided live music. They also rented bounce houses for the children and handed out gifts to attendees. One of the banners hung by Los Zetas aimed to discredit the government with the following message: “the government behaved irresponsibly in Ciudad Victoria by not providing gifts and happiness to children in need.” The underlying message of this statement is obvious: Los Zetas are more capable than the government in caring for the people of Ciudad Victoria.

*The Gulf Cartel hosted a Christmas Eve party in Tampico, a city located approximately 400 km from the US border. As part of this event Gulf Cartel operators handed out gifts, hot meals, and cash in areas throughout the city. This entire event was filmed, and, in one instance, a gunman handing out a gift to a woman was recorded saying, “Good evening, Ma’am. Merry Christmas to you from the Gulf Cartel.” In other parts of the video attendees are heard happily cheering for the gifts they received from the cartel. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel and Gonzalez)***



Source: <http://www.elblogdelnarco.net/2013/12/video-fotos-zetas-organizan-narcoposada.html>

Source: “Zetas organizan Narcoposada y regalan juguetes y electrodomesticos en Cd Victoria, Tamaulipas,” Blogdelnarco, Accessed on 23 December 2013 from <http://www.elblogdelnarco.net/2013/12/video-fotos-zetas-organizan-narcoposada.html>

Los Zetas Throw Holiday Party in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas

Los Zetas recently hosted a holiday party in Ciudad Victoria Tamaulipas. Families who attended the party received appliances and toys as gifts from the group. A message posted by Los Zetas and hung at the party has been translated as follows:

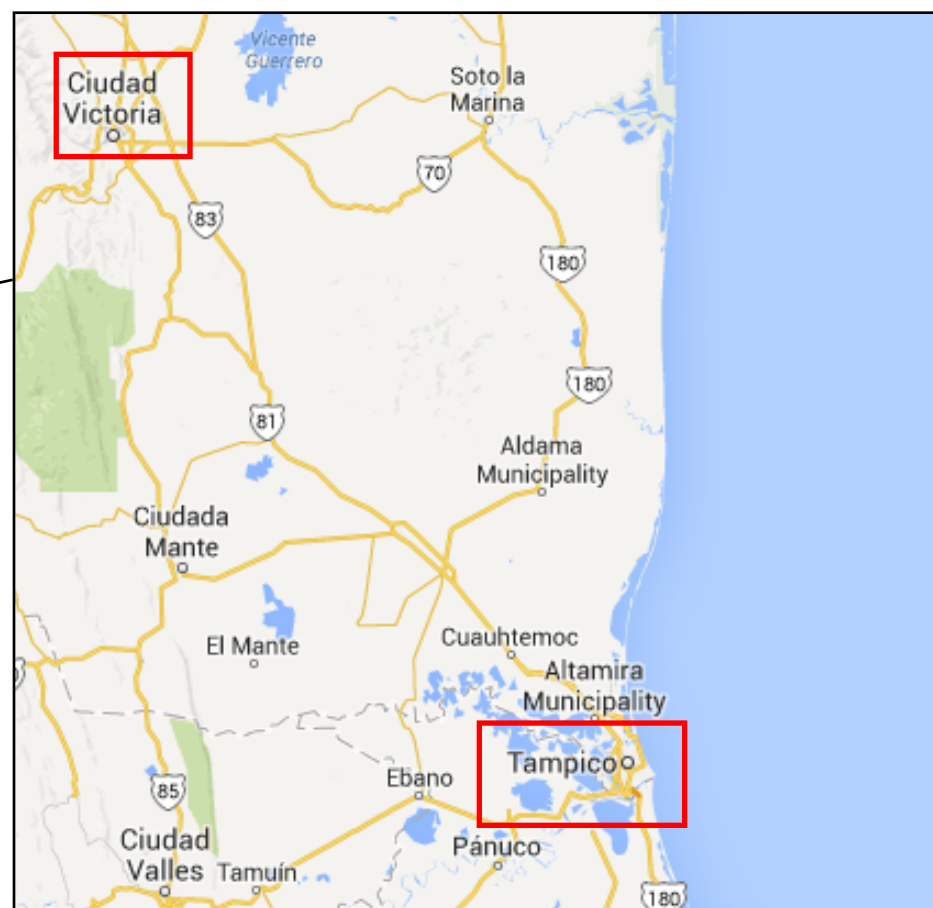
“We want to thank families from Ciudad Victoria for joining us in celebrating the birth of a being that was born to inspire and motivate us to serve our people. We want all children from Ciudad Victoria to receive a gift. We hope that you are enjoying yourselves and that you like the gifts. We hope you have a very good Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Members of this organization that love and respect Ciudad Victoria thank you for participating. We also want to reinstate our commitment to take care of our people. We want to build a fair society where all people have the same opportunities. We regret that our government cannot fulfill their responsibilities to bring happiness and toys to our children that cannot afford to buy them in stores or in the United States.

As long as there are hungry children, we will continue to go out in the streets looking for resources. Once again, thank you for attending and we will see you next year. Sincerely, Los Zetas from Coca.”

(continued)

Continued: Mexican Drug Cartels Host Holiday Parties in Tamaulipas



Video capture of Gulf Cartel operators distributing gifts.
Source: <http://www.historiasdelnarco.com/2013/12/video-el-cartel-del-golfo-cdg.html>

Source: “Los narcos de México regalaron juguetes en la Nochebuena,” La Cronica, Accessed on 25 December 2013 from <http://www.historiasdelnarco.com/2013/12/video-el-cartel-del-golfo-cdg.html>

Video of Gulf Cartel Operators Delivering Christmas Gifts in Tampico, Tamaulipas Posted on the Internet

For the Gulf cartel, hosting public parties is nothing new. For example, in 2005 the group organized a party to celebrate Children's Day in Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila complete with clowns, music, and sweets. Again in 2006, they hosted the same event in Reynosa, Tamaulipas during which time thousands of gifts were handed out to the 17,000 attendees. And just recently, the Gulf Cartel hosted a Christmas Eve party in Tampico, Tamaulipas. As part of the celebration, gunman handed out gifts, food, and cash at the Carlos Canseco Hospital, the General Hospital, and a bus station. The entire event was filmed by the Gulf Cartel and later posted on YouTube. To view footage filmed at the party, please click on the following link: <http://www.historiasdelnarco.com/2013/12/video-el-cartel-del-golfo-cdg.html>

Navy Conducts Minor Drug Bust in Central Mexico with Larger Implications

16 January 2014

OE Watch Commentary: The first two articles describe how on 16 January the Mexican Navy conducted what on the surface seemed to be a minor drug bust. Responding to an anonymous tip, marines arrested two suspects in possession of prohibited firearms and small (by Mexican standards) amounts of drugs. However, the bust had bigger implications.

As the third article describes, it would later emerge that the suspects were actually local liaisons for the Knights Templar and Beltrán Leyva criminal organizations, which were operating in a trendy and relatively affluent neighborhood of Mexico City. One suspect allegedly coordinated international smuggling operations while the other presumably was a domestic distributor. They also had military weapons and unsuccessfully attempted to bribe the arresting marines.

The incident also raises other questions. While the Mexican Navy regularly operates in coastal communities, inland operations are rare and are usually limited to special operations forces pursuing high-value targets. Indeed, President Peña Nieto has consistently expressed his preference to use civilian law enforcement in the drug war. The Navy has maintained a disciplined and laconic approach to press releases about counternarcotics operations since the advent of the current administration. The official Navy press release cited here (article one) uses very specific and qualifying, if not apologetic, language: the marines just happened to be in the neighborhood, no shots were fired, human rights were respected. Nevertheless, the anonymous tip was forwarded to them specifically and they did have a significant enough presence to respond immediately. Therefore, despite the national leadership's rhetoric and vision, Mexico's military forces remain, for the time being, a ready, if not preferred, response force.

End OE Watch Commentary (Freese)



Mexican Naval Regional Command Areas of Responsibility; it is noteworthy that although the Navy General Headquarters is in Mexico City, inland regions are not part of the Navy's traditional AORs.

Source: <http://www.semar.gob.mx/s/armada-mexico/fuerza-infanteria/cuerpo-im/tradiciones-im.html>

“It is important to show that the Navy personnel disarmed and detained the men ... without firing a single shot.”

Source: Staff Author(s), “La Armada de México Asegura a Dos Personas en el Distrito Federal [Mexican Navy Arrests Two Persons in Federal District],” Secretaría de Marina Comunicado de Prensa [Navy Department Press Release] 003/2014, 16 January 2014, <http://www.semar.gob.mx/s/sala-prensa/comunicados-2014/101-sala-prensa/2014/2397-comunicado-003-2014.html>

Article One Excerpt:

... as a result of a citizen's tip, naval personnel arrested two men in a building located in the Hipódromo Condesa colonia (subdivision) in Mexico City ... [marines] were driving [in the area] and received a tip from a citizen, who informed them that there were armed individuals in a nearby residence. The marines spotted one armed individual who ... went inside the residence. A pursuit ensued and two men were arrested ... the navy seized a long gun, 50 doses of a herb with characteristics of marijuana, and two vehicles. It is important to show that the Navy personnel disarmed and detained the men, identified as Francisco Javier Valles Zúñiga and Erick Coria Urbina, without firing a single shot. With absolute respect for their human rights, these individuals were handed over to and placed under the disposition of the Federal Public Prosecutor in Mexico City, in order to determine their legal situation.

(continued)

Continued: Navy Conducts Minor Drug Bust in Central Mexico with Larger Implications

Source: Jorge Becerril and Lorena López, “Por denuncia anónima, operativo de Marina en Hipódromo Condesa [Through Anonymous Tip, Navy Operation in Hipódromo Condesa]”, Milenio, 16 January 2014, http://www.milenio.com/policia/Marina-realiza-operativo-Hipodromo-Condesa_cateo_0_227977678.html

Article Two Excerpt:

Approximately sixteen marines located the armed individual, who entered the building at 70 Ometusco Street, but he was pursued and arrested without a shot fired, along with another suspect ... Residents in the departamento (district) said they had seen two suspects approximately forty years of age who made “suspicious movements” during the night and who constantly looked at multiple luxury vehicles.

Source: Rubén Mosso, “Detenidos en la Condesa eran enlaces del narco en el DF [Individuals Arrested in Condesa were Drug Trafficker Liaisons in Federal District]”, Milenio, 20 January 2014, http://www.milenio.com/policia/Consignan-penal-Veracruz-narcotrafico_0_230377302.html



Mexican Naval Infantry (Marines)

Source: <http://www.semar.gob.mx/s/armada-mexico/fuerza-infanteria/cuerpo-im/tradiciones-im.html>

Article Three Excerpt:

Federal officials revealed that the arrested men were Francisco Javier Zúñiga or Óscar Cortés Hernández and Erick Coria; these same individuals attempted to escape by offering money to the Marines. The officials indicated that Javier Zúñiga was a liaison for the Beltrán Leyva and Knights Templar organizations to smuggle drugs to the U.S., particularly methamphetamines and cocaine. Moreover, Erick was liaison for the Knights Templar and he resided in the Federal District; they mentioned that he was a “pretty young” person who bought cocaine in the Federal District and sent it to Michoacán ... The Attorney General’s Office added that, during the operation, personnel seized a long gun with sixty cartridges, four grenade launchers, cellular telephones, computer equipment, two vehicles, and various documents.

Methamphetamine: Robust Illegal Networks

February 2014

“In fact, the drug in its pill form – locally known as “yaba” which means “crazy medicine” given its ability to keep underpaid workers going for long hours – has grown in popularity.”

OE Watch Commentary: Rising domestic demand throughout Indo-Pacific Asia for methamphetamines has bolstered the illegal drug trade in Southeast Asia. Burma (Myanmar) has long been associated with the production and smuggling of opium from its “Golden Triangle.” Joining this continuous flow of opiates is a growing load of “Yaba” (methamphetamines) destined for regional markets. This increased trade is financing ethnic armies in Burma (Myanmar), making government corruption more lucrative in bordering nations and strengthening transnational criminal organizations (TCO). The burgeoning networks supporting the illegal drug trade are enhancing the TCOs’ ability to engage in human trafficking and other smuggling activities. Implications for social and government destabilization are mounting. Regional political rhetoric and government policy continue to focus on heroin as the greatest concern, while popular press reports and blogs increasingly highlight the impact of methamphetamine trafficking and use. Thailand faces the combined challenges of being both the preferred route for moving these drugs and a major consumer as well.

The Integrated Regional Information Networks-IRIN, a service of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, provides comprehensive comment on Thailand’s approach to the problem from the viewpoint of local social activists and UN agency reports. The full article highlights human rights abuse and increased HIV risks. It is also critical of the government programs for controlling the illegal drug market. The International Business Times, in its India edition, emphasizes the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 2012 Report. Jeremy Douglas, UNODC regional representative for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, is quoted extensively and makes the linkage between the growth of methamphetamine use and



Thai police commandos stand guard in front of confiscated narcotics before they were destroyed to mark the UN’s World Drug. They destroyed methamphetamine tablets, crystal meth and heroin worth about \$320m. [Pornchai Kittiwongsakul/AFP] Source: http://khabarsoutheastasia.com/en_GB/articles/apwi/articles/newsbriefs/2013/06/29/newsbrief-04

Source: The International Business Times, “Meth Pills, Crystal Meth Seizures Jump To Record Highs In Asia In 2012: UN,” November 9, 2013, <http://www.ibtimes.com/meth-pills-crystal-meth-seizures-jump-record-highs-asia-2012-un-1463276>

INDONESIA has suspended intelligence exchanges and military cooperation until Tony Abbott explains the circumstances of Australia’s alleged spying in 2009 against Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, his wife and close advisers.

“Facing the common problem of people smuggling, Indonesia and Australia have coordinated operations, coordinated patrolling in the sea area - I have asked for this to be suspended until everything is clear,” Dr Yudhoyono said in a national address.

...Canberra has refused to confirm or deny this undertaking...

Tony Abbott has refused to apologize over revelations Australian spies monitored Mr. Yudhoyono’s mobile phone, but expressed regret at any embarrassment felt by the President...

“The report confirmed that methamphetamine is now the first- or second-most common illicit drug in 13 of the 15 Asia-Pacific countries that were surveyed...”

(continued)

Continued: Methamphetamine: Robust Illegal Networks

broader criminal activity. The website of Burma Link, managed by Burmese expats and refugees, tells how the government of Burma (Myanmar) has created a “free zone” for drug movement along border areas. This is supported by reporting in the more main stream source, The Irrawaddy.

The steady increase of drug trafficking across the region over the past decade, is now reflected in robust criminal organizations and expanding illicit networks. This is a de facto infrastructure for black markets, anti-government activities, and innovations in insurgency. End OE Watch Commentary (Welch)

Source: IRIN, “Rethinking Thailand’s War On Methamphetamines,” January 13, 2014 <http://www.irinnews.org/report/99449/rethinking-thailand-s-war-on-methamphetamines>

Despite an aggressive crackdown on drugs, Thailand’s fight against methamphetamines is failing, activists say. With supply and demand rising, these highly addictive substances, commonly known as “meth”, are now the drug of choice....

In East and Southeast Asia, Thailand ranked first in drug-related arrests, of which more than 90 percent involved meth, the UNODC report says. In 2012 the country was second only to China in seizures of meth pills.

Thailand’s Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) revealed that in 2013 there were almost 50,000 more drug arrests and about 40 million more meth pills seized, compared to 2012.

Meth has become cheaper and easier to obtain because levels of manufacturing and trafficking from Myanmar continue to increase as a result of opium eradication efforts there, advocates say. A single meth pill costs as little as US\$4 on the street in Thailand.

“...There is a drug trade “free zone” near Burmese army base in Namlim Pa...”



Source: The International Business Times, “Meth Pills, Crystal Meth Seizures Jump To Record Highs In Asia In 2012: UN,” November 9, 2013, <http://www.ibtimes.com/meth-pills-crystal-meth-seizures-jump-record-highs-asia-2012-un-1463276>

Seizures of methamphetamine reached record highs in Southeast and East Asia in 2012, according to a UN report, with 227 million methamphetamine pills recovered, constituting a 60 percent rise from 2011....

“While regional integration positively facilitates the free flow of goods, services, investment, capital and labor, it is also being exploited by transnational organized crime to expand its activities in our region,” Jeremy Douglas, UNODC regional representative for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, said in a statement...

While Myanmar had been fairly isolated from the international community until its new reformist government began opening up its markets in 2011, insurgents have used illicit drug production and sales as a means to finance their operations against the former military junta. And, despite the recent improvements seen on the country’s political front, drug production remains high.

In Asia, the price range of methamphetamine, which can be ingested, smoked, snorted or injected, varies between \$3 a pill in Laos to \$20 in Singapore.

“International drug-trafficking groups seek to use South Asia as a major base, given the high availability there of the precursor chemicals necessary to manufacture illicit synthetic drugs,” Douglas said. “They also continue to use the Pacific region as a transit point for trafficking methamphetamines and precursor chemicals to and from Asia.”

(continued)

Continued: Methamphetamine: Robust Illegal Networks



A large quantity of amphetamines left behind at a recently abandoned Burma army post is further proof that drug abuse is rampant in the ranks of Burma's armed forces, say officials with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA).

Source: <http://democracyforburma.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/kia-soldier-030512.jpg>

*“...There is a drug trade “free zone” near
Burmese army base in Namlim Pa...”*

Source: Burma Link, “Drug users and dealers move to “free zone” near Burmese military base in Namlim Pa,” August 24, 2013 <http://www.burmalink.org/drug-users-and-dealers-move-to-free-zone-near-burmese-military-base-in-namlim-pa/>

Drug use has been increasing among local youth in Kachin and northern Shan State. Poppy cultivation and drug use among locals are more prevalent in areas close to Burmese army bases as government troops allow local farmers grow poppy fields in their controlled territory....

*“...Most of the drug facilities are reportedly run
by People’s Militia Forces, which, like Border
Guard Forces, consist of ethnic soldiers but
are controlled by the government...”*

Source: The Irrawaddy, “In Palaung Territory, Govt-Controlled Militias Allegedly Fuel Drug Trade,” December 20, 2013 <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/multimedia-burma/palaung-territory-govt-controlled-militias-allegedly-fuel-drug-trade.html>

....A crucial issue is the involvement of government troops, known as the Burma Army, in the drug business. In the history of ceasefires with ethnic rebel groups, Burma Army soldiers have often received free business licenses in border areas, including in Palaung territory. “The commander of the division operating here needs 80 million kyats per month to pay his soldiers,” ... “Because the government does not give him enough, he resorts to other sources of income, including the drug business.”

....Some Palaung make larger allegations. “Burmese soldiers know all about the drug business, but they do and say nothing,” says Mai Aung Moe Wai, secretary of the recently created Linkar Ra (“anti-drug”) Youth Group in Kutkhai T-township. “Isn’t it evidence of a government strategy to bring people into submission?”

....The drug trade in Palaung areas is aggravated by a virtually total economic dependence on neighboring China. “More than 80 percent of our consumption products are Chinese, and we sell most of ours, including human resources—tens of thousands of workers—for a low rate to China,” ... Tea leaves, the traditional Palaung crop, cannot compete with cheap Chinese tea flooding Burma, so many local farmers grow poppy.

The Third Plenum: Accelerating the Building of China's New-Type Combat Forces Force" as Soon as Possible

January 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *There has been a lot of press in China about reforms from the recent Third Plenary Session of the 18th Communist Party of China Central Committee. Much emphasis has been placed on social and economic reforms. However, there have also been military reforms.*

The accompanying article, written by two members of the People's Liberation Army General Staff Department's Army Aviation Department, focuses on China's need to "accelerate the building of new-type combat forces." According to Chinese President Xi Jinping, building new-type combat forces should be considered "a strategic focal point." These combat forces, while non-descript, are defined as something that should be "a product of marriage between advanced military technology and new-type combat ideology... Once technological advances...[are]... applied to military purposes, they immediately cause changes or even a revolution in the method of fighting..." Chinese analysts view Western progress in informationization as a positive attribute, pointing out that China was still stuck in a mechanization warfare mindset. According to the authors, China's "very rapid economic and social development, a new generation of information technology, new sources of energy, and other emerging strategic industries are rising vigorously, and that provides a resource guarantee for the building of new-type combat forces."

Likely adding fuel to a push for accelerating the building of new-type combat forces is concern over growing U.S. presence in the region. The authors noted that, "a Western power has strengthened further its military deployment in the western Pacific region, deepened its military alliances with the countries on our periphery, and strategically strengthened its guard and its containment of us." The authors undoubtedly are referring to the United States.

The last half of the article goes on to outline a strategy for building these new-type combat forces. The authors explain that to best accomplish this, the military must use innovations in theory as foresight, required capabilities as a driver, information technology as a guide, systems construction as support, and military-civilian integration as a foundation.

The Third Plenums, which have taken place approximately every five years since 1978, hold great significance in China. According to a recent article from Caixin, since Deng Xiaoping broke ground on the Third Plenums in 1978, they have been synonymous with reform.

*The article clearly shows the importance of encouraging the country's innovation. As it goes, innovation and technology will likely be what defines China's new-type combat forces, which should give rise to a more modern and thus more competitive military. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)***

Source: "Yuan Jichang and Chen Xiangdong, 以改革精神推进新型作战力量建设袁 (Use of the Spirit of Reform to Advance the Building of New-Type Combat Forces), Jiefangjun Bao, January 1, 2014, <http://www.chinamil.com.cn/jfjbmap/content/2014-01/01/content_62589.htm>

The Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee stressed the need to "accelerate the building of new-type combat forces." Chairman Xi has clearly pointed out the need to keep the building of new-type combat forces as a strategic focal point. Stepping up the building of new-type combat forces is an important task in deepening reform of national defense and the armed forces, and it is a matter of real importance in achieving the goal of having strong armed forces...

...
New-type combat forces are a product of a marriage between advanced military technology and new-type combat ideology. (Citing a thesis by Friedrich Engels) Once technological advances can be, and have been, applied to military purposes, they immediately cause changes or even a revolution in the method of fighting... The development of military technology guided by informatization saw progress with each passing day. That deeply shocked traditional security concepts, it profoundly changed the shape of warfare and the forms of combat operations, and it prompted revolutionary changes in the entire military sphere...

Now, with our country's very rapid economic and social development, a new generation of information technology, new sources of energy, and other emerging strategic industries are rising vigorously, and that provides a resource guarantee for the building of new-type combat forces.

...
A Western power has strengthened further its military deployment in the western Pacific region, deepened its military alliances with the countries on our periphery, and strategically strengthened its guard and its containment of us...

Building military power commensurate with our country's big power status and suited to our armed forces' missions and tasks, and exerting effort on resolving significant contradictions and problems which hinder our national defense and armed forces construction and development, urgently requires the development of new-type combat forces having Chinese characteristics, and using the generation of combat power of a new nature to drive an overall leap in reform and development of the entire armed forces.

Thoroughly research and understand the fundamental requirements in the building of new-type combat forces...

A Pundit's View: It is Necessary to Form "Space Force" and "Cyber Force" as Soon as Possible

January 2014



OE Watch Commentary: *There have been a number of cyber- and space related developments in China in the past several months. China's 2013 White Paper talks about the Communist Party of China creating a cyber security task force, the building of a cyber territorial defense force, and the development of digitized forces. The report noted that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) would "enhance" the building of the force, not "establish" it. Thus, the report about forming a cyber force "as soon as possible" makes little sense.*

*Since 1999 there have been reports of how China's reserve force has applied its information warfare opposing force in mock battles with the regular PLA forces. These methods included releasing clone information and information bombs, developing network spy stations and changing network data, applying information deception, conducting information reconnaissance, and planting information bombs. With regard to militias, two US researchers reported that 64 groups are designated as either information militias or network militias. The report noted the relationship of the groups to Chinese developmental programs and high-tech development zones, as well as the groups' mobilization potential, possible wartime roles, geographic dispersion, and functions, roles, and missions. In February 2013 the Mandiant Report, a product of a US software firm that has investigated the PLA's use of cyber for several years, highlighted PLA cyber and reconnaissance activities that emanated from a civilian building in Shanghai, where PLA forces were observed and monitored. Thus, there appears to be nothing new in the necessity to form a cyber force. It has existed for some years. Likewise the PLA has trumpeted its space forces for a similar period of time. The rationale behind the necessity appears to be a media response to the creation of a cyber command in the US. Perhaps in this way the PLA feels it can more openly discuss its own force, noting that it was created in response to US actions and thereby deflecting attention from the fact that this force has existed for years. The development of a space force is designed, in PLA lingo, to "capture the new high ground." **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)***

Source: Song Zhongping, "A Pundit's View: It is Necessary to Form 'Space Force' and 'Cyber Force' as Soon as Possible," Guoji Xianqu Daobao Online, 27 December 2013

Song Zhongping, "A Pundit's View: It is Necessary to Form 'Space Force' and 'Cyber Force' as Soon as Possible," Guoji Xianqu Daobao Online, 27 December 2013

In recent years, China has developed some advanced weapons and equipment, which have been delivered to arm the troops. Now and in the future China is developing and will continue to develop more new-type weapons and equipment that suit the needs of military modernization. But how China will actually do it mainly depends on the following considerations.

First of all, this has something to do with the intensification and optimization of the Navy, the Air Force, and the Second Artillery Corps. In this regard, it is necessary to streamline the ground force in size and to enhance its quality as well; give priority to the development of strategic reserve force and quick reaction force; adjust the structural proportion of the Chinese armed forces to make it more reasonably structured, more closely responsive to the needs of actual combat, and capable of delivering combat strength faster and up to higher efficiency; gradually build a strategic air force and a blue-water navy based on informatization standards; and build up a Second Artillery force possessing a gigantic "trump-card" power plus "nuclear and conventional" striking capabilities. On the other hand, when conditions are ripe in every aspect, we should start, as soon as possible and as a priority undertaking, to build new services and arms – for instance, "space force" and "cyber force" – as new components of China's armed forces. Second, it is necessary to do a good job in building up both basic and applied military scientific research capability across the board. Third, it is necessary to stress the importance of training for qualified military professionals. Qualified professionals as we refer to in here include not only qualified professionals engaging in basic and applied scientific research but also those specializing in military strategy planning, command, as well as engineering and technical work. Fourth, it is necessary to intensify the sense of all-out defense. To be sure, war in the future will be characterized by informatization and long-range, beyond-visual-range operations. However, it is definitely not the case that the outcome of war is determined only by a couple of weapons or equipment sets, but rather it depends on a country's integrated national strength and war-making potential.

China at the Center: Dual-Use Technologies and Skewed Mutual Dependencies

January 2014

“China should encourage defense enterprises to develop civilian industries and top civilian industries to enter sensitive defense sectors”

OE Watch Commentary: As China's overseas military commitments increase in places like the Gulf of Aden, the Mekong Delta, and central Asia, it is increasingly apparent to Chinese military planners that a modern military places great demands on a nation's technology base. Beyond the impact of individual weapons, the interoperability of individual weapon systems, as well as the coordination among different services, relies on technologies that are technically complex, as well as financial-capital intensive. Part of China's solution to these challenges is to leverage its commercial sector. Yet, China has a strategy that goes one step beyond engineering a system to develop weapons. It aims to connect its economy with other countries in a skewed manner that makes, the Chinese name for China - 中国 which translates as “middle (or central) state”- relevant to how it perceives itself and manages its foreign relations.

The first article covers the roll-out of its Beidou navigation and positioning system, a mostly civilian undertaking for land, sea, and air transportation providers. In modern commerce almost nothing of significance moves without internal positioning guidance or external tracking for coordinating multiple streams of goods. Beidou is also a system that can be used to track and coordinate military formations and weapons. The Chinese have invested heavily in Beidou because they are nervous about their dependence on the US-operated GPS. In case of conflict, they could be denied use of GPS through encryption or other means. While GPS denial is unlikely, short of war, given the collateral damage to the commerce of neutral countries, such critical service denial, were it to occur, would be devastating to China's ability to coordinate its military as well as its economy. The article also highlights that China is encouraging other nations to use Beidou as a strategy to employ its dual-use technologies as a means to develop mutually beneficial relations with its Asian neighbors. It is also a means by which a Chinese-operated system could provide a service that creates a dependency for its neighbors.

The second article builds on the theme of mutual benefits with China at the center through the development of free trade areas (FTA). While many countries participate in FTAs and find them value-adding, their long-term impact is to create economic blocs centered on an anchor country. For example, the U.S. anchors the North American FTA while Brazil and Germany anchor Mercosur and the European Union respectively. Even with FTAs between democratic countries, by virtue of the size and value of its market the anchoring country exerts subtle pressure on the other bloc



Beidou navigation satellite system logo.
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Beidou_navigation_satellite_system.jpg

Source: “Beidou to Cover World by 2020 With 30 Satellites,” Xinhuanet, 28 Dec 2013. <http://www.cast.cn/CastEn/Show.asp?ArticleID=45565> 1/7/2014

Beidou, Chinese GPS for Asian Countries

China is planning to expand its homegrown Beidou navigation system by 2020 and make it accurate to within centimeters...and can be further improved to within centimeters to compete with the dominant US Global Positioning System. The navigation system has been providing accurate and stable services to Asia-Pacific users since China launched it a year ago and other countries in Asia are welcome to use it.

Source: “China's Asian Import-Export Figures Indicative of Growing Ties”, Caijing, 10 December 2013. <http://english.caijing.com.cn/2013-12-10/113671862.html>

China Uses Its Economy to Boost Mutual Ties to Asian Neighbors

Year-on-year import and export figures released by the Chinese government indicate growing ties with ASEAN and increases in bilateral trade with nearly all countries in Asia with the exception of Japan and India. Evidence of increasing consumerism in China came from export figures from Australia, the Philippines and Vietnam, all of whom showed healthy increases of exports to China. Imports from China rose significantly in Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, showing that Chinese companies are increasing their spread into Southeast Asia and are taking advantage of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement.

(continued)

Continued: China at the Center: Dual-Use Technologies and Skewed Mutual Dependencies

countries to adopt standards and laws that conform to those of the anchoring country. China seeks to be the anchor country in East Asia, and in its handling of rare earths and regional sovereignty disputes its authoritarian government has proven its willingness to exert both overt and subtle pressure on trading partners to conform to its norms.

China's government has a keen interest in the intersection of economics, civilian production, and military capacity, as shown in the third article's expression of its explicit national industrial strategy to develop dual-use

technologies. As the world's largest manufacturer and one of the largest producers of high-tech products, China possesses a broad industrial supply base attuned to producing goods of dual military-civilian derivation and application. In the Chinese model, commercial equipment variants are developed and sold domestically as well as exported, the profits of which are then used to develop these goods' military cousins.
End OE Watch Commentary (Zandoli)

Source: "Good for Defense and Economy", Xinhua News Agency, 6 December 2013.
<http://english.people.com.cn/90786/8476554.html#>

Coordinated Development of Military and Civilian Industries

There are two key factors in the coordinated development of military and civilian industries. First, China should encourage defense enterprises to develop civilian industries and top civilian industries to enter sensitive defense sectors such as scientific research and weapons' production. Second, defense enterprises should...promote the development of military and civilian dual-use technologies in order to help two-way technology transformation.

Turkey and China: Unlikely Strategic Partners

By Ms. Karen Kaya

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 really at the level of a strategic partnership, the burgeoning Sino-Turkish relationship, which has remained unconsidered and understudied, is worth examining in order to assess the implications it may have for the U.S. and its defense community. This article analyzes the Turkey-China relationship in light of their strategic interests and discusses why it is unlikely that they will become true strategic partners, given the wide divergence between these interests.



<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Turkey-and-China.pdf>

From One Olympic Host to the Next: China on the Volgograd “Black Widows”

January 2014

“The explosion, which showed that Russia’s Sochi Winter Olympics is an ‘excessive investment,’ is actually aimed to support the focal point of the terrorist forces, which is to gain media attention.”



OE Watch Commentary: In 2008 China hosted the Summer Olympics in Beijing, which were seen as a logistical and security success, as well as a herald of China’s growing international prominence. Although there were several bus bombings in the weeks before the Olympics that were claimed by the Pakistan-based and Uyghur-led Turkistan Islamic Party, no attacks occurred during the Games. China also deflected concerns about the bus bombings by saying they were related to accidental explosions or crazed individuals, not organized groups that target foreigners.

Beijing’s Olympic success is something Russia would like to emulate. However, Caucasus Emirate leader Doku Umarov has urged his militants to use maximum force to disrupt the Sochi Olympics, which will start on 7 February. The back-to-back “Black Widow” suicide bombings in Volgograd on 30 and 31 December 2013, which killed more than 30 people at a train station and on a trolley bus, show that the Sochi Games may not go as smoothly as the Beijing Games. Even if they do, security concerns in Sochi may overshadow events on the field, which did not happen in Beijing. An

Caucasus Emirate leader Doku Umarov issued a video threatening Russia’s Sochi Winter Olympics, which are scheduled for February 2014, and in December 2013 “Black Widows” carried out the threat in Volgograd. Source: http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20120922/176152844.html

Source: “伏爾加格勒爆炸，炸彈因何而響 (Volgograd Bombings: Why did they make a ‘Bang’)” people.com.cn, 1 January 2014.

On December 29, the Russia Volgograd train bombings occurred and, as of now, there are at least 17 people who have been reported dead and many injured. The Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Russian Federation decided that this was a terrorist attack. Obviously, this is a typical terrorist attack suicide bombing and the attackers are likely to be from Chechnya, Dagestan and other turbulent regions—“Black Widow’s” aim is to disturb and destroy Sochi Winter Olympics.

The so-called “black widow” is a mostly Chechen war legacy; if the rebels lost a husband or father or brother, female relatives voluntarily or by coercion make the jihad for a “dedication.” Through sinister means, they act resolutely and create horrifying “human bomb” spectacles in Russia. The Sochi Winter Olympics is just such an occasion.

In order to show the country’s image while improving the domestic support, Putin spared no expense in organizing the Winter Olympics. But this approach also gave the rebels just the leveraging power of opportunity. Since Putin made a big parade, met foreign guests and delegations and attracted for Sochi global media attention, which is not far from the Caucasus, one the eve of or during the Winter Olympics the rebels can make their own “jihad” to seize the media forum.

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Continued: From One Olympic Host to the Next: China on the Volgograd “Black Widows”

article for a mainstream website in China, People.com, discusses why this may be so.

The article praised President Putin’s sparing no expense in organizing the Winter Olympics while improving domestic support for the Games with parades, foreign guests and media attention. However, it laid blame on Putin for providing the rebels with the leveraging power they need to upset the Games, which are located not far from rebel bases in the North Caucasus. This, according to the article, allows the rebels to easily “seize the media forum” with its attacks. The subsequent criticism of Russia after the attacks for excessive investment in the Olympics was an example the article gives of the rebels winning the narrative, drawing attention away from the Games, and refocusing attention on Russian failures and rebel successes.

In fact, it is true. Chechen rebel leader Umarov recently publicly called on his supporters “to use maximum force” to destroy the Sochi Winter Olympics. The explosion, which showed that Russia’s Sochi Winter Olympics is an “excessive investment,” is actually aimed to support the focal point of the terrorist forces, which is to gain media attention. And for this, there are still a lot of worrying problems.

The article offers the perspective that Russia’s hosting the Olympics is a great victory for Russia and President Putin, but the decision to host it in Sochi was not worth the risk and would have been like China hosting its Olympics in Lhasa, Tibet, or Urumqi, Xinjiang, just to show those regions are fully stable and secure, when, in fact, they are not. Yet, it also shows that China, which is dealing with terrorist threats in its homeland, understands that the narratives that accompany terrorist attacks are usually more important strategically than the attacks themselves. End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)

[n.b. Since the writing of this commentary, there have been various reports suggesting that Umarov has been killed. It is not clear what, if any, effect this may have on plans by the Caucasus Emirate to disrupt the games.]

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

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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.

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China's Experts See Taliban Rise in Afghanistan, But Government Stays Out

January 2014

“So, after the U.S. withdrawal, the situation in Afghanistan is still confusing and very complicated.”

OE Watch Commentary: Before the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, China had stable but informal relations with the Taliban in Afghanistan. Pakistan, which had direct contacts to China and the Taliban, was able to act as an intermediary between the two governments. As a result, the Taliban did not allow anti-Chinese Uighur militants to target China, and, for the most part, Chinese interests and personnel were protected in Afghanistan and Pakistan. After 2001 this situation changed, when the anti-Chinese militants came under control of the anti-Pakistan Pakistani Taliban and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. In the last decade Chinese laborers have been attacked and kidnapped in Afghanistan, and the Turkistan Islamic Party, the Uighur militant group in Pakistan, has carried out several attacks in Xinjiang and praised several other Uighur “lone wolf” operations, including in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square in November 2013.

In a Chinese-language interview, China Institute of International Affairs expert Guoxian Gang says that China expects the Taliban to return to power in Afghanistan. According to him, the situation after the NATO and U.S. withdrawal will be confusing, and negotiations among the Afghan government, the U.S. and the Taliban will fail. He believes that the Taliban see themselves as the winners and control rural areas of the country, while the Afghan government only controls “city traffic.” He also believes the Taliban doubt that the Afghan government can survive on its own after the U.S. withdrawal, which is another disincentive for the Taliban to negotiate. At the same time, he believes the Taliban want the U.S. to withdraw, and, as a result, the Taliban will not take any major military actions, such as launching a major offensive, that compel the U.S. to return.

Guaxian Gang recognizes that any predictions about Afghanistan’s future are too difficult to ascertain right now. Beijing also likely sees Afghanistan post-2013 as a country which could explode or stabilize, and whose leadership may be the Afghan government or the Taliban or a mixture of the two, with warlords still in power throughout the country. As a result, China has not become closely involved with the post-2013 development or stabilization initiatives in Afghanistan, likely because it does not want to be perceived by the Afghan government or the Taliban as taking sides. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



Leading Chinese experts do not believe current Afghan President Karzai, who visited Chinese President Xi Jinping in September 2013 in Beijing, will stay in power and manage relations with China like he has since 2001 for much longer. However, the Chinese government and military are likely going to take a wait-and-see approach in Afghanistan after 2013 due the unpredictability of affairs in the country. Source: <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/karzai-meets-china-leaders-amid-security-concerns>

Source: “Post-Counter-terrorism Era Peace Talks with the Taliban Unlikely” people.com.cn, 27 December 2013.

China Experts See Taliban Rise in Afghanistan, But Government Stays Out

The deputy director of the China Institute of International Affairs, Guoxian Gang, interprets the international situation in 2013 and prospects for 2014 in international hot spots.

Why do the Taliban not want to negotiate? Guoxian Gang said that, first, the Taliban think they are “winners” and that although at the beginning of the war in Afghanistan the Taliban regime was overthrown, it is also making a comeback. The Afghan government and U.S. forces only control city traffic arteries, while many rural areas are controlled by the Taliban. After the withdrawal of U.S. troops, the Taliban think its advantage will be even greater, in which case it may not consider it necessary to have negotiations. Second, the Taliban might think after the U.S. withdrawal, the Karzai government may find it difficult to survive. As far as the Taliban is concerned, it was waiting for the withdrawal of NATO troops. Controlling Afghanistan is not necessarily something that the Taliban can achieve easily.

Because after the U.S. withdrawal, the U.S. will leave behind consultants to help Karzai and give him aid. And if after the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops, the Taliban launched a major offensive, then maybe some U.S. troops will go back. So after the U.S. withdrawal, the situation in Afghanistan is still confusing and very complicated.

North Korean New Year's Rhetoric

9 January 2014

OE Watch Commentary: While North Korean rhetoric continues to espouse allegiance to the socialist cause, in reality Pyongyang's political system remains centered upon a feudal autocracy where the supreme ruler makes all key decisions. From official North Korean statements, as this excerpt illustrates, the country's young leader, Kim Jong Un, proclaims that the leadership is committed to the defense of socialism and strengthening the revolutionary ranks, which, in essence, translates into strengthening his personal control over the country. The reference to "purging factionalists" is North Korean newspeak for murdering his uncle (and possible political challenger). Despite his endless speechmaking, Kim Jong Un remains fully devoted to perpetuating the autocratic political system bequeathed to him from his father and grandfather.

However, given the minor increase in information access, there are increasing doubts that this fabricated patriotic rhetoric will continue to prove convincing among North Korean people today. While still just a trickle, there has been a steady stream of new forms of entertainment and news within the North Korean information space. Not only foreign news, but also soap operas and movies (some of it provided by North Korean refugees living abroad) have made their way into a few North Korean homes. Cell phones are also becoming increasingly popular. While any sort of social networking is certain to be crushed by the North Korean "big brother," even this small window to the outside world could prove to be a powerful catalyst for social change in North Korea. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kim)**

Source: "N. Korea's ideology remains the same," Interfax, 9 January 2014. <http://www.interfax.com/>

North Korean 2014 New Year's address

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has called on the nation to strengthen the ideological-political foundations of socialism in the country in the 2014 New Year's address, the text of which Interfax has obtained from the North Korean Embassy in Moscow. "The ideological-political positions are a stronghold of decisive significance, the strengthening of which determines the outcome of the struggle for the defense of socialism. The strengthening of the revolutionary ranks in ideological-political terms is the most important task for us," Kim said. "We showed unambiguously in our last year's struggle that our ideas, our strength, and our style of activity are the best, and nothing can stop the process of our sacred cause, which is moving ahead toward our ambitious ideals and goals," he said. Kim pointed out that the Workers' Party "took decisive measures to purge it from factionalists" last year. "By making the right decision at the appropriate time, our Party managed to detect and eliminate a gang of anti-Party counterrevolutionary factionalists, which has further consolidated the Party ranks and the revolution and solidified our single-hearted unity a hundredfold. Through this struggle, our Party has become even more determined to increase its combative functions and role," Kim said. The North Korean leader also called for "steadily reinforcing the People's Army" and "strengthening the ideological-political upbringing of the warriors so that they be reliable and strong in their ideas and convictions...."



Debriefing the Latest Border Incident

13 January 2014



OE Watch Commentary: An incident on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border that took place on 11 January over construction of a road near the village of Hojai-Alo (Tajikistan) is the latest in a series of clashes in the Batken Province in the past year. The accompanying article from Fergana News provides a basic sequence of events. Each government is accusing the other of provoking the violence and firing the first shots. Previous incidents also ignited because of construction in a disputed area, but there are a few things that make this particular incident somewhat different.

First, the video of the briefing (in Russian) by the Kyrgyz Border Guards, available on Kloop, is interesting not only for its public relations and information operations aspects, but also because it also shows the border according to Kyrgyzstan and how much effort there is being put toward completing the road that would bypass Hojai-Alo (the briefing includes photos of fairly modern construction equipment). The video also shows the positions of each side's forces (from the Kyrgyz perspective), including the location where Tajiks launched mortars. Second, as the Fergana article mentions, the two governments held a meeting on border demarcation just a few days before the incident and appeared to be making some progress on resolving border issues.

“Clashes between local residents and border guards in these mountainous areas have repeatedly occurred in the past, however, this time one side allegedly used not only firearms, but mortars, injuring six soldiers of Kyrgyzstan...”

Kyrgyzstan closed its entire border with Tajikistan. Deputy Prime Minister Tokon Mamytov gave reporters details of yesterday's incident

The shootout, which took place on Saturday at the Kyrgyz-Tajik border, has become the most serious in the past few years. Clashes between local residents and border guards in these mountainous areas have repeatedly occurred in the past, however, this time one side allegedly used not only firearms, but mortars, injuring six soldiers of Kyrgyzstan...

...The Tajik side accuses its neighbors that Kyrgyz construction workers resumed work on the road “Koktash – Aksai Tamdyk” and opened fire at the demand to halt work. The Kyrgyz side refutes this version...Deputy Interior Minister Kursan Asanov, “On January 7 we had a meeting in Dushanbe on demarcation. We reached progressive solutions to the border issues...we also reached an agreement on joint border patrols...given the complications of the situation and eliminating an interethnic (clash), it was decided to close the border with Tajikistan entirely...in spite of everything, the road construction continues...”

(continued)

Continued: Debriefing the Latest Border Incident

*While each side blamed the other for starting the clash, there have been a few reports that each was conducting an internal investigation, and in Kyrgyzstan there has been criticism of leadership in the Border Guards Service. One thing that went largely unnoticed is that the two sides did conduct a joint border patrol in Batken on 14 January (see: <http://fergana.ikipress.org/news:214782/>) as they had agreed to do during the meeting in Dushanbe. This is in contrast to Kyrgyzstan's closure of the border, media predictions in both countries (and in Russia) of a larger conflict, and the increase in forces allegedly taking place on the border. The joint border patrol might be more of a diplomatic gesture than a long-term solution, but, considering all that has happened, it could be the first of its kind following an incident. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)***

Source: Ivashchenko, Yekaterina and Kislov, Danil. "Кыргызстан закрыл всю границу с Таджикистаном. Подробности вчерашнего инцидента рассказал журналистам вице-премьер Токон Мамытов (Kyrgyzstan closed all of the border with Tajikistan. Deputy Prime Minister Tokon Mamytov gave reporters details of yesterday's incident)," Fergana News, 12 January 2014. <http://www.fergananews.com/news/21677>



Video Source: Atambayev, Nurmukhammed. "Видео: Погранслужба Кыргызстана показывает схему конфликта на границе с Таджикистаном (Video: the Border Guards of Kyrgyzstan show a map of the conflict on the border with Tajikistan)," Kloop, 13 January 2014. <http://kloop.kg/blog/2014/01/13/video-pogransluzhba-kyrgyzstana-pokazy-vaet-shemu-konflikta-na-granitse-s-tadzhikistanom/>

The Goals of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Its Impact on Central Asia and the United States

By Mr. Matt Stein

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) has been an active terrorist organization in the Central Asia region since its formation in 1998. Its original goal was to overthrow the government of Uzbekistan and establish an Islamic caliphate in the Fergana Valley region. When the terrorist attacks on 9/11 took place, the IMU was operating out of northern Afghanistan. Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) dislodged the IMU from its support areas, and the organization changed its priorities, particularly targeting the government of Uzbekistan. This brief study examines the history, current operations, and goals of the IMU to help determine what threat the organization poses for the governments of Central Asia and for the United States while its forces remain in Afghanistan.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/IMU-Goals.pdf>



Defining Peacekeeping in Kazakhstan

19 December 2013

“I feel negatively about this because our peacekeepers have already been in Tajikistan and Iraq...”

OE Watch Commentary: The Ministry of Defense and senior leaders in Kazakhstan periodically discuss involvement with international peacekeeping missions. As the accompanying article shows, there had been opposing viewpoints in the run up to a vote on 20 December 2013 by parliament to send soldiers on UN peacekeeping missions. It is worth remembering that Kazakhstan's lower chamber of parliament rejected a proposal in June 2012 that would have deployed four officers to the headquarters of International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) in Kabul, Afghanistan. On 20 December Kazakhstan's parliament reportedly voted in favor of sending peacekeepers, though there has been little mention of this since the vote.

The number of experts quoted in the article is small, but does reflect a difference in the perspectives of those in the military and senior leaders. The president of the veterans group mentions Kazakhstan's involvement in Tajikistan (during the Tajik Civil War with the Commonwealth of Independent States' Peacekeeping Force) and Iraq (engineer and ordinance disposal units from 2003-2008) and believes that the state has forgotten about soldiers who participated in previous peacekeeping missions. Tajikistan and Iraq are rarely talked about in the media and, as such, it is difficult to gauge the status of veterans of these missions. The two officers in the article do not say anything specific about a peacekeeping mission, but could be referring to Kazakhstan's peacekeeping brigade (KAZBRIG) or the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) reaction force, both of which have conducted joint peacekeeping exercises with international forces. Foreign Minister Idrisov makes some distinction in what role Kazakhs might play in future peacekeeping missions; however, none of the three mentioned that Kazakhstan has already participated in UN peacekeeping and political missions and operations in the past several years.

According to UN reports, one military observer from Kazakhstan was involved with the UN political mission in Nepal from 2007-09, several policemen were involved in the UN hybrid (with the) peacekeeping operation in 2010 and 2012, and four experts were involved (in an unknown capacity) in the UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan in 2011. These past numbers are smaller than what the government has been considering (the recent proposal would deploy 20 total personnel, in groups of five to various UN operations around the world) and might simply have gone unnoticed by many in Kazakhstan. It is possible that they may not have viewed this past involvement as peacekeeping, at least based on their experiences in Tajikistan or Iraq. Looking ahead, Kazakhstan has been preparing for peacekeeping through KAZBRIG and the CSTO, and the deployment of observers could be a step toward that goal. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**



“Kazakh forces conduct training at the Peace Operations Training Center outside the city of Zarqa, Jordan in March 2013.” Source: http://www.potc.mil.jo/archive_news.shtm

Source: Aimbetova, Madina. “Миссия выполнима (Mission Possible?),” Vremya (Time), 19 December 2013. <http://www.time.kz/news/politics/2013/12/19/missija-vipolnima>

Mission Impossible?

(On) December 20 the country's parliament is expected to consider the possible participation of Kazakhstan in peacekeeping missions under UN auspices. We asked various experts if it is an international obligation of a government...Lieutenant Colonel Daulet Jumabek, a reservist and current lawyer, “I cannot say that I entirely approve, but when it comes to officers on contract, rather than conscripts, then why not?...”

Strongly against this initiative is Sergei Pashevich, the president of “Combat Brotherhood”, an organization of veterans. “I feel negatively about this because our peacekeepers have already been in Tajikistan and Iraq...Many of those that were in Tajikistan are now suffering without work...most importantly, when these people return, who will they be – heroes or outcasts?...”...Additionally, Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrisov said that this is not about classic peacekeepers, but about observers in military missions...

Russia Fields New Kit for the Troops

23 December 2013

*“I think that a Russian made infantry soldier system will appear in the next three years,”
-Yury Borisov, first deputy chair of the Russian Military-Industrial Commission*

OE Watch Commentary:

Modernization is a common theme in the Russian defense community.

Usually, discussions of modernization focus on major weapon systems, such as the Topol-M intercontinental ballistic missile system, the T-90 tank, etc. However, Russia has recently made significant efforts to increase the quality of personal equipment for the rank-and-file troops serving as infantrymen, artillerymen, rocket launcher operators, machine gunners, driver-mechanics, and scouts. This is quite a change for a Russian Army that abandoned the use of portyanki (foot wraps) only last year (foot wraps were commonly used in the pre-industrial age before the wide-scale adoption of socks). Current plans involve a personal equipment system, known as ratnik (warrior), which has recently passed field testing and could start to be fielded within three years. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

Source: “Ratnik” Will Go to the Troops, RIA-Novosti (online), 23 December 2013, <<http://ria.ru/>>, accessed 17 January 2014

“Ratnik” Will Go to the Troops

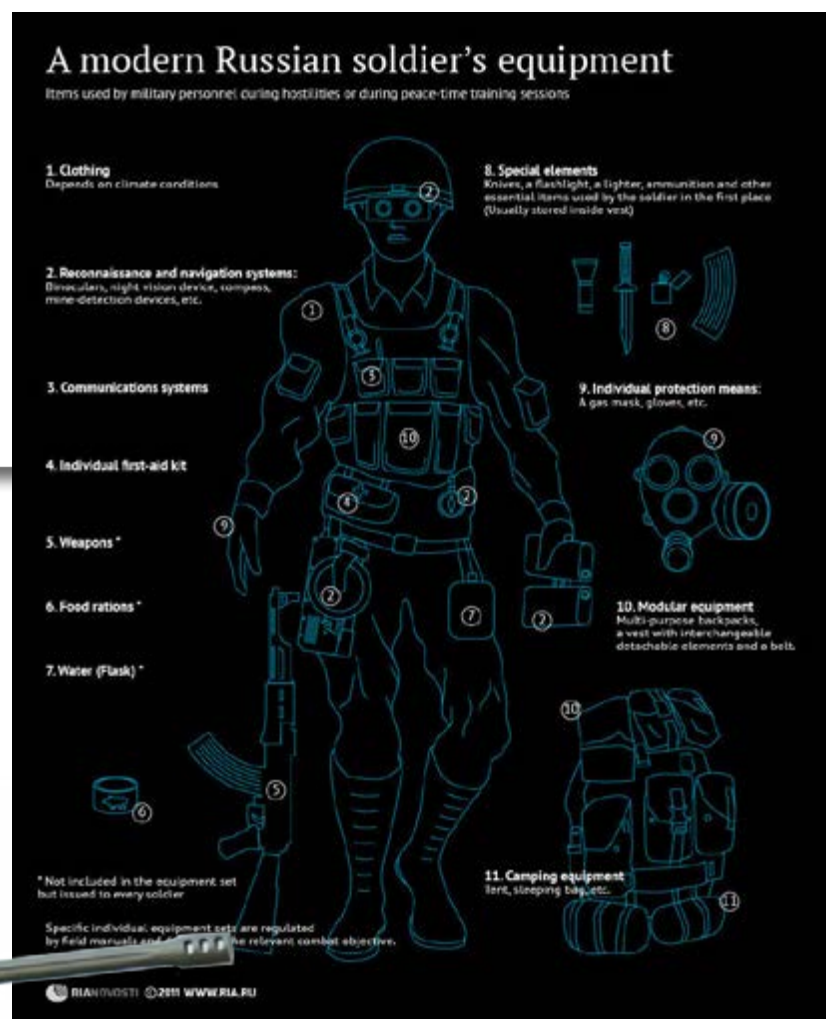
One of the innovations, to which the attention of the militarized departments and the expert community has been focused, is the Ratnik Future Soldier Gear. As anticipated, it is expected to start being added to the during the summer of 2014.

Government tests of the gear, which began in the fall of 2013, will be completed in May 2014. Chief of the General Staff, Sergei Shoygu has confirmed that the Army will begin purchases of these sets in 2014...

“Ratnik” is a combination of state-of-the-art small arms, protective equipment, and reconnaissance and communications equipment, consisting of approximately 10 different subsystems... The gear is called upon to provide the effective protection of the soldier from various destructive factors on the battlefield...

The “Ratnik” set includes approximately 50 different components, including small arms, targeting systems, and electronic communications, navigation and target designation equipment...

The belief that the military doesn’t have a sense of humor is smashed to pieces by the naming designations, which are assigned to the various components of “Ratnik,” including: the “Privet” [Greeting] 23-millimeter rubber bullet, the VOG-25P and GP-25(30) “Podkidysh” [Foundling] 40-millimeter round, the “Ekstaz” [Ecstasy] Reusable Light-Sound Grenade, the “Nezhnost” [Tenderness] handcuffs, and many others.



New BTR Delivered for State Trials

17 December 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *The BTR-MDM is a tracked armored personnel carrier for mechanized Airborne Forces (VDV) based on the BMD-4(Infantry Fighting Vehicle) chassis. The BTR-MDM is a replacement for the aging BTR-D. The new BTR-MDM is relatively lightly armored compared to other BTRs in order to keep weight lower for airborne operations. Two can be carried by a IL-76 or one slung from a MI-26 helicopter, and the platform is allegedly capable of being airdropped. The BTR-MDM is significantly larger than its predecessor, capable of hauling 2000 kg or 13 fully armed troops (plus crew).*

The VDV has long been a high profile unit in the Russian Armed Forces, and often conduct what would be considered special operations in the West. It maintains far higher standards of readiness than the most of the Ground Forces, and has been successful in procuring resources in the Russian Ministry of Defense, so it is no surprise that BTR-MDM and BMD-4 would be the first new armored personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles to enter the inventory in quite some time. End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)

Source: “The Traktornyie Zavody Concern Has Shipped the First Government Defense Procurement BTR-MDMs Early”, Interfax-AVN (online), 19 December 2013, < <http://www.militarynews.ru>>, accessed 17 January 2014.

BTR-MDM Delivered for Trials

The Kurganmashzavod enterprise, which is part of the Traktornyie Zavody concern, has delivered the first two BTR-MDM vehicles for scheduled state trials early, the concern’s press service announces.

“Two BMD-4M vehicles for the Airborne Troops of Russia are in the phase of preparation for shipment out for state trials also. They are to arrive at their destination at the start of 2014,” the announcement received by Interfax-AVN on Thursday says.

It is specified that, in accordance with the concluded contract, the Defense Ministry will in the first half of 2014 acquire 10 BMD-4Ms and BTR-MDMs apiece. The vehicles are to go to the military units of Tula and Ryazan.

“As part of the long-term contract for major overhaul of the BMD-1 with their being brought to BMD-2 class, VMK Volgogradskiy Traktorny Zavod has conveyed to the Airborne Troops a battalion outfit of BMD-2 airborne combat vehicles. Next year the troops will acquire BMD-2s for a further six full-strength battalions of Airborne Troops,” the press service announced.

The KontsernTraktornyie Zavody machine building-industrial group is one of the biggest Russian integrators of scientific and technical and industrial-engineering resources in machine building in Russia and overseas. The group manages more than 20 major enterprises located in 10 components of the Russian Federation and also in Denmark, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Serbia, and Ukraine...

BTR-MDM Vitals

Personnel

Crew 2
Troops 13

Dimensions and Weight

Weight 13.2 t
Length ~ 6.1 m
Width ~ 3.1 m
Height ~ 2.5 m

Armament

Machine guns 1 x 7.62-mm

Mobility

Engine 2V-06-2 diesel
Engine power 450 hp
Maximum road speed 70 km/h
Amphibious speed on water 10 km/h
Range 500 km

Maneuverability

Gradient 60%
Side slope 30%
Vertical step 0.8 m
Trench 1.8 m
Fording Amphibious



BTR-MDM photo source: Courtesy Vitaly Kuzmin

The \$15 Billion Russia-Ukraine Deal

January 2014

OE Watch Commentary: On 17 December Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych in Moscow. Upon concluding their meeting the two leaders announced reaching 14 bilateral agreements. In the context of poor Ukraine-Russia relations since Yanukovych took office almost four years ago, this was a surprisingly large number.

Within the framework of the agreements Yanukovych agreed to a \$15 billion loan from Putin, along with major discounts on Russian gas, in exchange for Ukraine abandoning its intention to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union, which Western leaders and Ukrainian citizens expected to happen on 29 November in Vilnius. At the time of this writing many details about these agreements remain private, but currently available information shows that the deal disproportionately favors Russia.

Recent polling data indicated that the majority of Ukrainians favor European integration; according to some Western reports, as many as one million Ukrainian citizens came out to protest this deal. Reportedly, the authorities responded to the peaceful protests with violence.

Yanukovych's sharp move away from Europe surprised many—both in the East and the West. Indeed, as late as 6 November, only days before turning down the Association Agreement on 29 November, Yanukovych restated his oft-stated promise to move Ukraine closer to the EU. "By choosing to get closer to the European Union, we are making a pragmatic choice for optimal and rational modernization," he said during the World Economic Forum in Kiev.

As the accompanying excerpts indicate, high-level Ukrainian officials such as Prime Minister Mykola Azarov were quick to point out that the deal with Russia does not prevent Ukraine's European integration, and that the Russian deal only reinforces Ukraine's sovereignty. Ukraine accepted the Russian deal because it was a better, by comparison, for Ukraine, than the Association Agreement, Azarov said.

Yet the Russian government, for its part, was just as quick to point out that Russia could easily take away the \$15 billion loan should Ukraine pursue European integration, according to the excerpt from News.mail.ru. Furthermore, the loan does nothing to resolve Ukraine's fundamental—and dire—economic problems. It only provides a short-term and temporary fix, according to experts quoted in Finmarket.ru.

In this context it is difficult to see how the Russia-Ukraine deal will truly benefit the Ukrainian people. It is even harder to see as realistic Azarov's claim that Ukraine will sign an association agreement with Europe in the foreseeable future. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)**

Source: "Россия может отобрать у Украины \$15 млрд кредита из-за евроинтеграции (Russia Could Take \$15 Billion Loan from Ukraine Because of Euro Integration)," News.mail.ru, 23 December 2013. <http://news.mail.ru/inworld/ukraina/global/112/politics/16228751/>

Russia Could Take \$15 Billion Loan from Ukraine Because of Euro Integration

The \$15 billion credit to Ukraine has been set up based on rigid procedure and Russia can always demand repayment. First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov made this announcement at an interview with TV channel "Russia 24."

"This loan is provided in such a way that we will always have the possibility of demanding the repayment of this loan from the Ukrainian government, and according to the most stringent legal procedures. Russia fully provided for its rights in legal terms," said Mr. Shuvalov...

We note that Dmitry Shuvalov made this statement answering a question about whether or not Ukraine, upon receiving credit from Russia, could decide to sign the association agreement with the European Union....

Source: "Россия-Украина: неотложная помощь или медвежья услуга" (Russia-Ukraine: Emergency Assistance or a Hindrance?)," Finmarket.ru, 23 December 2013. <http://www.finmarket.ru/main/article/3586294>

Russia-Ukraine: Emergency Assistance or a Hindrance?

..."We made a decision when it became absolutely clear we sign the [European] agreement and get a crisis. This is absolutely clear, and I answer for this. So we had no other choice but to change our decision and find other ways to support Ukraine," - said [Ukraine's Prime Minister Mykola] Azarov. He considers erroneous only the fact that the people were not given a clear explanation by the authorities. "History will prove who is right," said the Prime Minister, expressing assurance that Ukraine will sign the association agreement with the E.U., but on more favorable for Ukraine conditions.

"The word 'blackmail' in international politics has a certain meaning, and when you get help in difficult times - it is not called blackmail. Russia was trying to protect their interests," he said, adding that the agreement with Russia reinforces Ukraine's sovereignty...

...In their review, analysts unanimously note that the agreement between Ukraine and the Russian Federation have positive impact on Ukraine's balance of payments... At the same time, experts agree that the effect of the agreements will be a short-term one, while medium-and long-term risks are likely to increase. "Ukraine's main problem is not short-term liquidity, but the need for structural reforms in the country. At the same time, Russian assistance will resolve precisely short-term issues, but in no way the structural imbalances in the economy," - said [Goldman Sachs analyst Andrew] Matheny...

Ahead of Sochi Olympics, Cossack Brigades and Lifted Ban on Demonstrations

11 November 2013

OE Watch Commentary: With the winter Olympic in Sochi only weeks away, Russian President Vladimir Putin reversed his decree of 19 August 2013, which banned all demonstrations during the duration of the games. He issued a new decree on 4 January, allowing demonstrations with restrictions: they must be held in designated areas and demonstrators must receive prior approval of the authorities, including approval for the number of demonstrators.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov further clarified the new decree in RIA Novosti (RIA News) on 4 January: all such protests are subject not only to city authorities, but also to those of the regional FSB and the Interior Ministry. The accompanying 7 January excerpt from Gazeta.ru (Newspaper) cites the relevant portion of the decree. Neither the decree nor Peskov provided further details on how the authorities will determine whether or not to allow a demonstration to take place.

Putin's 2013 degree banning protests came only weeks before he signed a controversial anti-gay law, decried by many civil rights activists and analysts both in the West and in Russia. Putin's subsequent ban on protests in this context appeared as a ban on, among other things, gay activists' right to protest this law. In addition, the ban on demonstrations followed a video, released in July 2013, by (allegedly, recently deceased) extremist Chechen rebel Doku Umarov, urging use of all means necessary, including violence, to disrupt the Olympics.

Putin's reversal of the ban came only days after twin bombings shook the city of Volgograd on December 29 and 30, approximately 400 miles northeast of Sochi. The bombings left at least 31 dead and dozens wounded, and raised concerns that these tragic events could be a preview of what is to come during the Olympics.

It is possible that Putin reversed the ban to project an image of strength after the Volgograd bombings. It is also possible his decision was related to security capabilities. Perhaps allowing controlled demonstrations to be held rather than



Two of the 410 Cossack troops that arrived at Sochi.

Source: <http://news2night.com/en/news/ohranjat-porjadok-na-olimpiade-v-sochi-budut-410-kazakov#.UufVghDnYcV>

Source: “В Сочи вступил указ президента о регулировке властями сторонних мероприятий” (In Sochi, Presidential Decree on Authorities' Regulation of Outside Activities Takes Effect),” Gazeta.ru (Newspaper), 7 January 2014. http://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2014/01/07/n_5860725.shtml

In Sochi, Presidential Decree on Authorities' Regulation of Outside Activities Takes Effect

...“Meetings, rallies, demonstrations, marches and picketing unassociated with conducting the Olympic and Paralympic Games, in the period from January 7 to March 21 2014 may be carried out in places and (or) along the routes of the participants of the public event, with the number of participants during the time interval defined by the municipal administration of Sochi in agreement with the respective regional office of the Russian Interior Ministry and the respective regional office of security, “ stated Putin's decree...

Source: “Песков пояснил изменения, внесенные в указ о безопасности в ходе ОИ” (Peskov Clarified Changes to Decree on Security During the Olympics),” RIA Novosti (RIA News), 4 January 2014. http://ria.ru/sochi2014_around_games/20140104/987880630.html

Peskov Clarified Changes to Decree on Security during Olympics

...Peskov reminded that according to the previously issued presidential decree, all public rallies and demonstrations are subject not only to city authorities, but also those of the regional FSB offices and of the Interior Ministry .

(continued)

Continued: Ahead of Sochi Olympics, Cossack Brigades and Lifted Ban on Demonstrations

banning all demonstrations outright will make it easier for security forces to handle them. It may be possible that passing a law that allows demonstrations, without clarifying who will be allowed to hold the protest, may reduce immediate tensions and still give the government complete authority in denying protests that it does not want to take place.

*Whatever the reasons for lifting the ban, Putin continues to step up security measures ahead of the games. The accompanying excerpt from RIA Novosti on 9 January highlights an interesting aspect: hundreds of Cossacks and Cossack brigades will be providing security during games, including checking identity documents. Historically, the Cossacks played an important role in helping the Russian Empire expand in many regions, including the Caucasus. It is an odd choice in the overall context and security concerns ahead of the games. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***

“The President instructed the organizers of the Olympic Games together with the leadership of Krasnodar Region and the City of Sochi to pick area in the city, where it would be possible to hold free rallies, demonstrations and other activities , including , if necessary – those of a protest nature,” said the president’s spokesman.

Source: “Сотни казаков прибыли в Сочи для охраны порядка во время Олимпиады” (Hundreds of Kazakhs Arrived to Sochi To Protect Order During the Olympics),” RIA Novosti (RIA News), 9 January 2014. <http://ria.ru/sochi2014/20140109/988327449.html>

Hundreds of Cossacks Arrived to Sochi to Protect Order during the Olympics

As representative of the Kuban Cossack Army told RIA Novosti on Thursday, Cossacks have been entrusted to ensure the safety of athletes, foreign delegations and tourists. They will be serving only in Cossack uniforms and with the police.

“Four hundred and ten Cossacks went to Sochi on Wednesday...” said the agency’s interlocutor.

Kuban – is the first in Russia region where Cossack brigades began to act since September 1 2012. Initially, the number of such teams did not exceed one thousand, now, together with the police in the region, about 1,500 Cossacks ensure rule of law. The powers of the Cossack brigades include checking identity documents, which confirm identity. Cossacks also have the authority to bring violators to internal affairs agencies.

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

By Ray Finch, FMSO

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

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



Senegal's Seizure of Russian Trawler Oleg Naydyonov

January 2014

OE Watch Commentary: On 4 January Senegal's military seized the Russian trawler Oleg Naydyonov and its crew 46 miles off the coast of Guinea-Bissau. The Senegalese military reportedly used force and injured some crew members, which consisted of 62 Russians and 20 Guinea-Bissau citizens.

Senegal's government stated that the trawler was fishing illegally and threatened a \$830,000 fine for this violation. Furthermore, the vessel was a repeat offender, according to the Senegal's military officials—it had been fined twice for illegal fishing in Senegalese waters and briefly detained once.

The Russian authorities claimed the ship possessed all the required paperwork, blaming Greenpeace for what happened without explaining exactly how Greenpeace accomplished this. Earlier in 2013 the Russian government brought piracy charges against 30 Greenpeace activists, whom they arrested but released on substantially reduced charges of hooliganism in December 2013, following an international outcry over these charges. Prior to that, two years ago, the Oleg Naydyonov's crew reportedly covered its identifying marks as it engaged in what the Senegalese authorities described as illegal fishing. At the time, Greenpeace activists painted the words "pillage!" and "plunder!" on the trawler to expose its illegal activities.

Broadly speaking, Russia has stepped up its bilateral and multilateral involvement throughout African in recent years, as the Kremlin has been reviving its Cold War relationships in this region. Whatever decisions the Kremlin makes will be within this framework.

Senegal, in particular, along with other West African nations, has long suffered from illegal fishing in general. In addition, even the legal fishing in their waters can be problematic: small fishermen find it difficult to compete with large industrial fishing vessels. Indeed, in April 2011 the Senegalese government revoked over 20 fishing licenses from Russian, Ukrainian, Belizean, and Mauritanian trawlers. According to the United Nations, continuous overfishing by foreign governments and illegal fishing drives impoverished individuals in West Africa towards crime and into even deeper poverty.



The Oleg Naydenov (pictured below) being approached by members of Green Peace near the Port of Dakar.
Source: <http://www.greenpeace.org>

Source: "Сенегал назвал причину задержания российского траулера «Олег Найденов» (Senegal Names Reason for Detention of Russian Trawler "Oleg Naydyonov."), Izvestiya (News), 9 January 2014. <http://izvestia.ru/news/563720>

...Moscow and Dakar are sure that the conflict surrounding the Oleg Naydyonov and its crew will be resolved in the nearest future. This was announced on Thursday in the Russian diplomatic service upon the conclusion of the Russian Ambassador's meeting in Dakar with the head of the Senegalese Foreign Ministry...

In addition, Russian diplomatic service reported that, according to the Senegalese side, the reason for Oleg Naydyonov's detention is the ship's violation of fishing rules in the exclusive economic zone of the country.

[According to Russian Foreign Ministry's statement] "Minister Ndiaye said that the reason for the detention of Oleg Naydyonov "was repeated violations rules of fishing by the Russian vessel in the exclusive economic zone of Senegal, promising to send in the Russian Embassy in Dakar relevant official materials . Simultaneously, the minister noted that the Senegalese side of taking the necessary steps for the speediest resolution of this situation."...

(continued)



Continued: Senegal's Seizure of Russian Trawler Oleg Naydyonov

These trends are destabilizing for politics and security in the region. In Somalia, for example, illegal fishing in the 1990s created an incentive for some fishermen to turn to piracy, according to some officials.

Comprehensive information on this issue will be difficult, if not impossible, to find in the mainstream Russian press, which typically either reports only the barebones and most recent facts, as the accompanying excerpts from Izvestiya (News) and Lenta.ru (Ribbon) suggest, or openly leans towards the pro-Kremlin point of view, at times suggesting the need for the Russian government to increase pressure on Senegal. More fringe publications, such as the accompanying excerpt from the far left Sovetskaya Rossiya (Soviet Russia), talk about Senegal behaving as a “terrorist,” and describe the Russian government as being helpless to assist the injured Russian citizens aboard the detained vessel.

*As these events are playing out and more details are coming to light, the Russian press produces little to help further clarify the situation for Russian citizens. Unfortunately, in the eyes of an average Russian reader, this context could only add credibility to fringe publications such as Sovetskaya Rossiya. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***

Source: “Парламент Сенегала освободил траулер ‘Олег Найденов’ ” (Senegalese Parliament Freed Trawler Oleg Naydyonov),” Lenta.ru (Ribbon), 17 January 2014. <http://lenta.ru/news/2014/01/17/free/>

The Senegalese parliament ruled to release the Russian trawler Oleg Naydyonov... According to the sources, the deputies made this decision based on the opinion that the detention of the trawler spoils bilateral relations between Russia and Senegal. Minister of Fisheries and Maritime Economy of Senegal Haidar al-Ali, sources said, however, is delaying the execution of the parliament’s ruling...

[Earlier], Senegal accused Russian sailors in illegal fishing in their waters. The Fishery Agency, in turn, stated that the fishing in the economic zone of Guinea-Bissau was conducted with all required documents. The Russian department called the actions of Senegalese authorities an act of economic war.

Source: “Беспомощное попустительство” (Helpless Connivance),” Sovetskaya Rossiya (Soviet Russia), 20 January 2014. <http://www.sovross.ru/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=595725>

...The Senegalese authorities behave as terrorists, trying to negotiate a ransom (even as they call it fine) for the hostages. Those crew members injured during the arrest of the trawler, including the captain, Vadim Mantorov, are denied adequate medical care. It is not allowed to deliver water on the ship, convoyed in the port off Dakar, garbage is not disposed of...

Aside from formal protests, to which the authorities of the 13-million African nation pay no attention, Russia cannot help its citizens with anything. Earlier Russian Ambassador could not meet with Senegal’s president Macki Sall, although the meeting was planned and announced. The Senegalese side had not even considered it necessary to describe the reasons why the meeting did not happen...

OE Watch Commentary: *There have been repeated attempts over the past 20 years to revamp the physical fitness program for Russian soldiers. Early attempts were plagued by a shortage of funds and lack of clear guidance. Five years ago (February 2009) Russian defense officials released a strategic plan which outlined the development of a physical fitness training program within the Armed Forces up to 2020. This past summer (July 2013) final revisions were made to the manual covering military physical fitness. <http://www.rg.ru/2013/09/06/podgotovka-dok.html>*

According to this detailed manual, Russian soldiers will conduct some form of physical training daily (5X per week) for a minimum of 50 minutes per session. There are separate requirements for contract soldiers and officers. This thorough manual includes specific instructions on what exercises to include, how to perform them correctly, for how long, uniforms, competitive events, standards, etc. It also covers many different types of obstacle course training and how physical training should be conducted prior to the possible advent of hostilities (where there is much greater emphasis upon combat-related tasks). There is a separate section on hand-to-hand combat, which includes instructions and diagrams on everything from flipping one's opponent to using an entrenching tool as a weapon.

Depending upon one's status (e.g., cadet, conscript, contract soldier, officer), there are a number of different testing requirements, conducted at specific intervals. The "usual" annual physical fitness test consists of a 100-m sprint, pull-ups, and a 3-km run, although the manual includes a number of other possible options. As the article excerpt indicates, the new procedures appear to be working, as test scores indicate that overall military physical fitness continues to improve. The excerpt also lists a variety of different competitions to improve physical fitness and morale. Soldiers and their commanders who score well are eligible for various incentives, to include wearing the badge portrayed in the accompanying image.

The current Kremlin leadership understands the importance of sport and physical fitness within Russian society, to include the military. Recent legislation has been enacted designed to curtail alcohol and tobacco use. Funding

Basic standards
PHYSICAL TRAINING FOR
Undergoing military service by conscription

Exercise	Units	Servicemen who have served less than 6 months			Servicemen who have served more than 6 months		
		12	10	7	13	11	9
Pull-ups	number						
single obstacle	mins	2.20	2.25	2.35	2.15	2.20	2.30
100m run	seconds	14.4	15.0	16.0	14.2	14.6	15.6
1 km run	mins	3.30	3.40	4.10	3.25	3.35	4.05
3 km run	mins	12.4	13.1	13.4	12.3	12.4	13.2
10 km march	mins	56.0	58.0	62.0	56.0	58.0	60.0
Rating		exc .	v-good	avg.	exc .	v-good	avg.

Source: “В ЮВО значительно повысился уровень физической подготовленности военнослужащих,” [In the Southern Military District the Physical Fitness of Servicemen Has Risen Considerably] Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, 9 Dec 13, <http://www.mil.ru>

Physical Training Increased in Southern Military District

A rise by a factor of 2.5 in the level of physical fitness among servicemen has been noted in the Southern Military District Troops according to the results of 2013.

Around 60,000 servicemen were tested during the final check of physical training in the military district troops. The percentage of positive assessments was over 80....

...In 2012 around 70 excellent marks were noted at the Southern Military District Directorate. According to the results of 2013, approximately 190 servicemen obtained excellent results, which exceeded last year's figures by a factor of over 2.5.

Southern Military District physical training specialists also underwent a professional fitness check. According to the results of the work of a Russian Federation Armed Forces Physical Training Directorate commission, around 90% of Southern Military District physical training specialists were assessed as “good” or “excellent.”

...Furthermore, specialists believe that the material incentives determined by the relevant guidelines of the Russian Federation Ministry of Defense are one of the main reasons for the rise in the motivation of servicemen to improve their physical training. Today every serviceman has the opportunity to raise his pay by passing the physical



Military Sports Badge
Source: <http://twower.livejournal.com/>

(continued)

Continued: Russian Physical Fitness

has been proposed and allocated to increase the number of gymnasiums, swimming pools and recreation centers throughout the entire country. By emphasizing improved physical fitness within the military, the Russian leadership may well enhance the health of the entire country. End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

training standards with an “excellent” mark or confirming his skill in a sports category. ...Within the framework of the Southern Military District Spartacist Games the military district organized and conducted championships in kettlebell lifting, army hand-to-hand combat, military pentathlon, shooting with regular-issue weapons, officers’ triathlon, paramilitary cross country running, swimming, and orienteering....

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>

Suicide in the Russian Army

26 September 2013

OE Watch Commentary: Regardless of the country, suicide within the military remains a daunting problem. According to experts, there are a number of factors which contribute to this negative phenomenon within the ranks, e.g., stress, PTSD, age, weapon availability, substance abuse, etc. The Russian military leadership has also struggled with this problem, and the excerpt from the accompanying article comes from one of the country's most revered military journals, Voennaya Mysl (Military Thought). The article discusses the history of suicide within the Russian Armed Forces and a possible corrective action.

This article is noteworthy for the frankness of its content. Suicide retains a powerful stigma, and, irrespective of country, admission is often linked to some form of social breakdown. In the Soviet period the topic was mostly taboo, for in defending the workers' paradise a soldier would not think of taking his own life. Still the problem persisted, and until quite recently there existed an unwillingness to openly discuss this painful topic in the Russian military. The publication of this article may indicate a change toward greater transparency in addressing this problem.

The authors trace attempts by the Russian government to prevent suicide within the ranks. A few centuries ago those who took their own lives would be denied a Christian burial or fulfillment of their last will. If unsuccessful, the would-be suicide could be whipped or excommunicated. Over time, penalties were included for those who might have been responsible for instigating the suicide attempt. While mental health treatment had been proposed by the early 19th century, it was not until the 20th century that the emphasis moved from punishment toward providing medical care and uncovering the causes of this destructive behavior.

The article describes how the traumatic social shocks of the 1990s exacerbated the problem of suicide in Russian society, especially within the military. However, rather than confronting this problem in a systemic matter, various haphazard solutions were proposed. The article suggests that the leadership must examine the underlying causes which can contribute to suicidal behavior. The authors conclude by arguing that legislation needs to be expanded to penalize those who might be responsible for those who instigate or force someone to take this desperate step. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**



Emblem of the Russian Federation Ground Forces.
Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org>

Source: S.G. Brusentsov, V.Ye. Loba, "Самоубийство в русской армии: История, причины, методы профилактики" [Suicide in the Russian Army: History, Causes, Methods of Prevention], Military Thought, 1 Jul 13 - 30 Sep 13, Vol 3, 2013.

Suicide in the Russian Army: History, Causes, Methods of Prevention

...At the turn of the 20th century, Emile Durkheim, the author of the first fundamental sociological work on suicide, remarked that propensity for suicide among servicemen is 25% to 90% percent greater than among civilians. The same fully applies to the Russian Armed Forces. "Despite the habitually tough legal and religious sanctions, the incidence of suicide in the Russian Army was four times more frequent than in the country at large."³ And nowadays the Army continues to display the same trend.

Why "military suicide" looks so disturbing in Russia is also because a community with a thousand-year history behind it, that has withstood the Tartar Yoke, aggression on the part of the New and Old World states, a grueling fight with the Hitler armies, that contrived to preserve its sacred human values throughout the years of militant communism, has always seen "the man with a rifle" as protector of civilians, an embodiment of national security and life stability. That is why suicide in the army is not only having a negative impact on the moral climate in the collective and the combat readiness of troops, but also forms in the public a generally negative attitude to army service.

criminological description of suicidal behavior suggests the following regularities: officers in the prerevolutionary Russian Army committed suicide several times more frequently than did rankers. The most prone to suicide appeared to be men in junior officer ranks....

...The criminological description of suicidal behavior in today's army suggests the following regularities: servicemen under contract are mostly driven to suicide by injustice and lawlessness in tackling service matters, unsettled daily state, uncertain future, everyday alcohol abuse, family quarrels. The main reasons why conscripts take their life are problems of adjustment to military service owing to poor pre-conscription training, feeble psychological motivation and depressed mood of the serviceman due to defects in upbringing, the everyday situation in the family, ridicule and taunts on the part of fellow-servicemen, a difficult moral climate in some military collectives, excessive physical and psychic loads in undermanned units, and other negative factors in military service activity.

...Both the retrospective analysis of suicidal behavior among servicemen and contemporary state of the army milieu reflect the same criminal regularities of suicidal behavior that the authorities try to counter, doing it rather haphazardly, however.... Falling back on the available material that is not exhaustive, we propose introducing criminal punishment as a containment factor for suicidal behavior among servicemen, resorting to invaluable historical experience...

...Whether this proposal will take long or not so long to be fixed in law we are not discussing, but one thing is clear - the history of the matter of criminal liability for suicide ought to be continued.

Otkuda Ugroza? [From Whence the Threat?]

29 December 2013

OE Watch Commentary: 2013 ended on an ominous note in Russia, as a pair of explosions ripped through the city of Volgograd just before the New Year's holiday. Two months earlier a similar terrorist act, allegedly perpetrated by a suicide bomber aligned with a local jihadi cause, occurred in the city.

The motives behind these terrorist acts are not altogether clear. According to a video released three weeks after the December explosions, a terrorist group from the restive North Caucasus republic of Dagestan assumed responsibility and claimed that the bombings were a response to Russian authorities' actions in this region. The alleged perpetrators also warned that future terrorist acts would be carried out, to include disrupting the upcoming Winter Olympic Games to be held in Sochi, located some 400 miles from Volgograd. Russian authorities, from the president on down, have promised that they will do everything possible to thwart any future attack.

The threat of radical Islamic terrorism in the North Caucasus is nothing new, and since the announcement was made in 2007 that Russia would be hosting the Olympic Games in this region, various groups have warned of terrorist attacks. While Kremlin authorities have certainly beefed up security in the region, questions have now arisen over Russia's overall security priorities since 2007.

In the brief accompanying excerpt, Georgiy Mirsky, one of Russia's most prominent experts in Middle East studies, rhetorically asks whom the Kremlin has portrayed as the "enemy" over the past few years. According to him, instead of focusing on the deadly form of radical Islam which has been metastasizing in some of the traditional Islamic republics of Russia, the Kremlin leadership has used its extensive propaganda machine to create enemies out of the Americans, liberals and homosexuals. And this misinformation is already bearing fruit. According to recent poll data, more than half of the Russian population now views the US as the greatest security threat to their country. After the December explosions, not surprisingly (although not officially endorsed by the Kremlin), many Russian social media sites claimed that the West (particularly the US) was responsible for these terrorist acts (e.g. <http://voprosik.net/ssha-prodolzhayut-podderzhku-terroristov/>). This misrepresentation of Russia's actual threats will not contribute to critical security analysis for the Olympic Games. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“If you were to judge by the message of the official propaganda... it would appear that the main enemies of our country are the Americans, liberals and homosexuals.”

Source: Georgiy Mirsky, “Опять Волгоград: так где враг?” [Again Volgograd: Where is the Enemy?], blog entry, 29 December 2013. http://echo.msk.ru/blog/georgy_mirsky/1228078-echo/

Again Volgograd: Where is the Enemy?

And immediately talk began: why now, why in Volgograd, is this explosion associated with the Olympics? These questions distract from the main point.... As our Foreign Minister Lavrov commented after suicide bombers blew themselves up at two Moscow metro stations when he pointed out the link between these terrorist attacks and the area between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Everyone knows that this is the headquarters of the Taliban and al-Qaeda's Nest, 'the transnational Islamist terrorist international.' That's where, as they say, the legs grow....

...But there is one fundamental difference between the villains in America and Europe and the terrorist attacks in Russia. In the west, they do not think of the annihilation of the United States or Britain, but here they have an important task - to destroy Russia. It is naive to think that the purpose of explosions in Volgograd was merely to intimidate people....

...No, the purpose is different: to ensure that ethnic Russians, with redoubled fury say: "There's no living with these Caucasians and we need to figure out how to get rid of them." And then the Muslims - also with redoubled fury - say: "How can you live near a Russian, when they see a terrorist in every Muslim."

...I repeat, their objective is to destroy the Russian Federation, not so much to cut off the [North] Caucasus as to tear away Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, to plant on these lands the green banner of the Caliphate. That's why they are sending these unfortunate zombie woman to press the button on their suicide belts....

...Do our authorities understand all of this? I do not know. If you were to judge by the message of the official propaganda, for instance, according to the Dmitry Kiselev, Prokhanov, Shevchenko, Dugin, Kurginyan, etc... [all Kremlin-favored media mouth-pieces], it would appear that the main enemies of our country are the Americans, liberals and homosexuals. And if our leaders truly believe this to be the case, then the situation is bad, very bad.

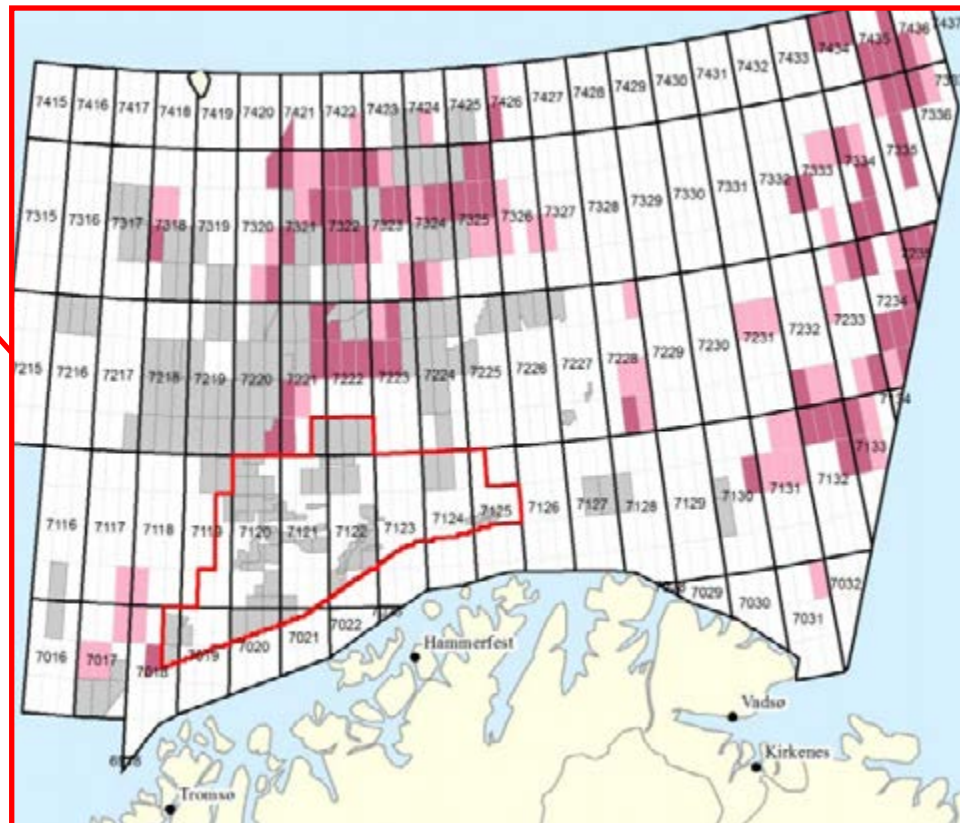


Memorial dedicated to hero Mikhail Panikakha.
Source: <http://s1.1zoom.net/big0/581/300858-alexfas01.jpg>

Russia's Growing Presence in the Arctic; is not just for the Halibut

January 2014

“USA is attempting to take a lead role in the Arctic and receives clear support from NATO members Norway, Denmark and Canada. Russian fishermen are being hit the hardest, claims a Russian fisheries veteran.”



Oil company's interest in exploring the waters located on the easternmost end of the Norwegian shelf, in the immediate vicinity to the Russian border. (Photo: Npd.no)

Source: <http://barentsobserver.com/en/energy/2014/01/oil-companies-eye-licenses-along-russian-border-28-01>

OE Watch Commentary: In December Vyacheslav Zilanov published a book entitled, *Russia Loses the Arctic?* Gunnar Sætra reviewed it. Zilanov was a Deputy Minister of Fisheries in the Soviet Union and participated in international fishing negotiations in the 1970s. Now retired, he spent his career in Soviet/Russian fisheries management.

Russia has recently begun reintroducing significant military force into the Arctic, explaining these actions in terms of the untapped gas and oil reserves that the region contains. Zilanov argues that Russia's primary concern in the region should be fishing. The fishing industry needs priority over the oil and gas industry for environmental and economic reasons. Petroleum extraction may only be a temporary economic factor, while fish are a renewable resource that lasts “for all eternity.” Moreover, Russia could lose out by focusing on energy extraction. Norway is better equipped both technologically and economically to extract oil and gas in the north. An oil disaster in the Norwegian Exclusive Economic Zone could have major consequences for the joint Norwegian-Russian fish stocks, since ocean currents in the north will transport any oil spill into the Russian zone. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

Source: Gunnar Sætra, Barents Observer, <http://barentsobserver.com>, January 6, 2014. (BarentsObserver.com is an internet news service, which offers daily news from and about the Barents Region and the Arctic. The site is run by the Norwegian Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes, Norway.)

Russia Loses the Arctic?

“The Arctic is primarily a large body of water that is surrounded by five countries: Russia, USA, Canada, Greenland/Denmark and Norway. Four of these are NATO members. Consequently, Zilanov believes that Russia must be on guard. He also claims that Russia has achieved particularly poor maritime delimitation agreements with its neighbors to both the east (USA) and west (Norway). The Russian negotiators have, according to Zilanov, simply given their neighbors areas of sea that are too large, both the Bering Sea and the Barents Sea. Russian fishermen are the biggest losers because they are either prohibited from important fishing grounds or at risk of becoming so. The worst of all is the agreement with USA concerning the Bering Sea. The Russian negotiators traded good fishing grounds for areas with nearly no fish at all. This is due among other things to the fact that the fishing industry has been shut out of the Russian negotiating delegations, while their counterparts have had professional fisheries expertise.”

“Today we sell healthy fish, which comes from a pure and cold Barents Sea. If we lose this brand, tens of thousands of workers in Russia and Norway as well as the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland will lose their jobs.”

“He also fears that a possible opening for the oil exploration activities on Svalbard can lead to a race in which several of the major countries that have ratified the Svalbard Treaty sign up, including USA, China, Japan and United Kingdom.”

RIA Novosti's Choice: 2014's Main Events in the Defense Sphere

16 October 2013

OE Watch Commentary: Russian military developments in 2014 will integrate technology into the force and harvest the fruit of prior financial projects, such as the commissioning of the Yasen class submarine, whose keel laying began in 1993. RIA Novosti notes that the Navy will be augmented by Borey and Yasen Class submarines; the Army will receive Ratnik Future Soldier Gear; the aerobatic YAK-130 combat-trainer team will have its first public showing; T-50 fighter aircraft (PAK FA or Advanced Frontal Aviation Aircraft Complex Project) will be tested; dual price information will be used to purchase military products; lump-sum monetary payments will be made to servicemen for housing; an automated system to permit the management of the Electronic State Defense Order (GOZ) will begin operations in January; new medical companies will be created; a National Defense Command and Control Center will be built; and a Defense Construction Plan for the period 2016-2020 will be submitted to President Vladimir Putin by 1 April. The stated goal is to bring the level of state-of-the-art weaponry and equipment in the Armed Forces to the level of 30% of the force in 2014.

Novosti left several important items off this list. Perhaps the most important is the continued construction of the Arctic military infrastructure. This process has been ongoing since at least 2008 and has gained tremendous momentum in the past two years. Further, the Internal Troops and other Armed Forces elements will be a major source of security at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, and a new military education package is being developed. Finally, unannounced inspections of the military districts will continue. Thus, the reform package initiated before 2013 by the team of Anatoliy Serdyukov and Nikolay Makarov has been implemented, corrected, or superseded by that of the new team of Sergey Shoygu and Valeriy Gerasimov, who clearly have their own priorities in place for advancing the reform package. While the overall aim of reform appears similar, the methodology appears different. What will intrigue Russian military specialists over the coming months will be the "extras" that are self-generated in the military by the reform process. Already there is talk of a return of the divisional element to the Army, a relook at the number of contract servicemen in the force and the place of their employment, and a number of recommendations for new centers of military study. For example, General of the Army Makhmut Gareev has called for a Defense Ministry Main Military Science Committee, a Ministry of Defense Center for Scientific and Technical Information, and an Academy of Defense Problems. He notes that he is very concerned with nonmilitary methods, as well as military ones. Thus the Russian military appears to have a very busy year ahead of it indeed. **(End OE Watch Commentary. Thomas)**

Source: Ye. Fatkin, Ye. Maklyuchenko, I. Belogurov, I. Lushnikov, and D. Lyukin, "RIA Novosti's Choice: 2014's Main Events in the Defense Sphere," RIA Novosti Online, 23 December 2013

The acceptance into the inventory of the third Series 955 Borey Class strategic missile submarine – the Vladimir Monomakh – will become one of the most anticipated events of the coming year. The saga with the additional launches of the Bulava intercontinental ballistic missile must also be resolved next year. As anticipated, there will be five additional launches and, in the process, a large portion of them – will occur from onboard the Vladimir Monomakh. The Russian Ministry of Defense will also begin the construction of the National State Defense Command and Control Center in 2014. Several very important laws will enter into force, among which are a lump-sum monetary payment (YeDV) to servicemen to acquire housing and flexible price formation for military products. As expected, the lead Nuclear Attack Submarine Severodvinsk (Project 885, code name Yasen) should be accepted into the Navy's composition by 25 December, however, in the event of the shift of this date, they could raise the St. Andrew's Flag on the first Yasen submarine in the first days of the New Year. Kalibr and Oniks missile complexes are in the armament of these attack submarines. This very state-of-the-art and low noise domestic submarine, as the shipbuilders call it, was built along with the Borey submarines at Sevmash, the largest domestic defense shipyard, in Severodvinsk. The keel laying of the Yasen Class submarine took place in 1993 – thus, the formally latest submarine was built over the course of 20 years. The Severodvinsk was launched only in 2010. "Ratnik" combines state-of-the-art small arms, effective protective equipment, and reconnaissance and communications equipment, a total of approximately 10 different subsystems. Besides its combat functionality, the gear is called upon to provide the effective protection of the soldier from various destructive factors on the battlefield. The "Ratnik" set includes approximately 50 different elements, including small arms, aiming systems, and electronic communications, navigation and target designation equipment. The assertion, which states that military personnel don't have a sense of humor, is smashed to pieces by those designations, which they are assigning to weapons in our troops: the "Privet" [Greeting] 23-millimeter rubber bullet, the VOG-25P and GP-25(30) "Podkidysh" [Foundling] 40-millimeter round, the "Ekstaz" [Ecstasy] Reusable Light-Sound Grenade, the "Nezhnost" [Tenderness] handcuffs, and many others.

Death of Umarov?

17 January 2014

OE Watch Commentary: According to Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov, Doku Umarov, the head of the international terrorist organization called the Caucasus Emirate, is dead. As the first excerpt indicates, Kadyrov claimed that a recording of a conversation among the Caucasus Emirate's emirs confirmed his suspicion about Umarov's death. In the conversation, posted by Kadyrov, the emirs discussed and mourned his death, as well as debated the potential candidates for the new head emir.

Though there has not been an official statement from Russian authorities confirming Umarov's death, Federation Council member from Chechnya Ziyad Sabsabi also claimed that the information was reliable and had been confirmed by multiple sources. According to the second excerpt, Sabsabi attributes Umarov's death to joint efforts between special forces and private citizens.



Doku Khamatovich Umarov
"Russia's Most Wanted Man Threatens Sochi 2014 Olympics", Kangas, OE Watch August 2013.
Source: http://www.newsru.com/russia/03jul2013/umarov_sochi.html

Labeled the "Osama bin Laden of Russia," Umarov held the number one spot on Russia's most wanted list and is also on the United States' list of international terrorists. Umarov, 49, had a long history of terrorist activity in the region, as he fought in both the First and Second Chechen Wars. In 2006 he was president of the unrecognized Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, which was then replaced in 2007 by the Caucasus Emirate, a jihadist terrorist group working to unite an Islamic Caucasus state under sharia law.

Umarov and the Emirate claimed responsibility for multiple deadly terrorist attacks in Russia, including the 2010 Moscow metro suicide bombings and the Domodedovo suicide attack in 2011, which killed 40 and 36 people respectively. In 2012 he instructed his followers to avoid attacks on civilians, but the upcoming 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics have been a recent source of fuel for Umarov and his followers. In June Umarov posted a YouTube video referring to the Games as "Satanic Acts" and called for his jihadist followers to disrupt the Olympics in any and all ways possible on the grounds that the multibillion dollar event was taking place on the "bones of [their] ancestors."

Umarov's death could be a short-term blow to the Caucasus Emirate's efforts to disrupt the upcoming Sochi Olympics, but it will not end the group's activities all together. Though it may ease Olympic officials' and other nations' fears of a terrorist attack, ultimately the Caucasus Emirate's efforts will not end with the loss of Umarov. There are others willing to take his place who will continue to carry out their ultimate goal of trying to establish a Caucasus caliphate. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kangas)**

Source: "Кадыров заявил о новых доказательствах смерти Умарова (Kadyrov announces new proof about the death of Umarov)," RIA Novosti, January 17, 2014, <http://ria.ru/incidents/20140117/989768090.html>

Article #1:

Leader of Chechnya Ramzan Kadyrov announced that he received new evidence about the death of military leader Doku Umarov as his death was indicated in negotiations of his militants.

"I said earlier that he was not alive, and then we received a voice recording of these so-called emirs in which they declare his death, console each other and discuss candidates for the new emir," said Kadyrov on his Instagram.

In December of last year, Kadyrov already said that he considered Doku Umarov to be dead.

Source: "Сенатор от Чечни уверен в достоверности данных о гибели Доку Умарова (Senator from Chechnya sure about the reliability of the information about Doku Umarov's death)," RIA Novosti, January 17, 2014, <http://ria.ru/incidents/20140117/989768090.html>

Article #2:

The information about the death of Doku Umarov, published by president of Chechnya Ramzan Kadyrov, is reliable and was confirmed by multiple sources, reported Federation Council member from Chechnya, Ziyad Sabsabi, to RIA Novosti.

"We confirm this information. Since it was given by the head of the Republic, it cannot be not true," said the senator.

According to Sabsabi, the death of Umarov was the result of a long-term joint effort in which Special Forces and citizens worked together.

Chinese Perspectives of NATO after the Arab Uprisings

In the past decade operations from Afghanistan, to the Horn of Africa, to Libya placed NATO in the position of a “global security hub” facing challenges far beyond the “North Atlantic.”¹ During the same decade the Shanghai Five, which formed in 1996 but changed its name to Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001, evolved into the preeminent security, military, economic and, more recently, cultural hub for the 17 countries in Eurasia that constitute its members, observers, dialogue partners and guests. China’s supremacy in the SCO, and recent NATO operations in regions and on issues that affect China have led to opportunities for NATO–Chinese cooperation on areas of perceived mutual interest.

In 2010 optimism about NATO-Chinese relations reached a high point, with NATO officials foreseeing more cooperation and Chinese officials reciprocating in their statements and actions. However, the Arab uprisings of 2011, and particularly the NATO intervention in Libya, shifted the discourse in China about NATO back to the concerns China had in the 1990s related to NATO’s post-Cold War expansion and intervention in the former Yugoslavia. Since 2011 Chinese suspicions of NATO have influenced Chinese policy towards NATO. China’s foremost objective may now be to roll back NATO, particularly in the SCO’s perceived sphere of influence.

This essay retraces the change in Chinese perceptions about NATO from 2010 to 2012, examines Chinese perceptions of the SCO’s role in Eurasia compared to NATO, and analyzes China’s strategic view of Turkey as a “swing country” that, if pulled into the SCO sphere of influence, would end NATO’s ability to project power in Eurasia and permanently stifle NATO influence beyond the North Atlantic.

2010: Good Vibes

At the Lisbon Summit in November 2010, NATO launched the “New Strategic Concept,” which included three main goals: collective defense, crisis management, and partnership and engagement. NATO saw China as a key toward achieving the third goal, even though China was – and still is – the only permanent member of the UN Security Council with no formalized relations with NATO.² The hope was that NATO and China could develop common threat perceptions on issues ranging from Afghanistan and Central Asia, to maritime piracy, to weapons of mass destruction proliferation and deal with those threats together as a basis for future cooperation.

After Lisbon American experts argued that the increasingly global nature of 21st century security challenges meant “transatlantic actors and the Chinese may mutually benefit from closer cooperation.”³ Their argument was strengthened by the visit of NATO Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy, James Appathurai, to China in 2010 to explore the possibility of China as a NATO “non-member partner.”⁴ That same year the British editor of China-based but neutral *Global Times English* wrote that “Afghanistan offers common cause for Shanghai Cooperation Organization and NATO” and “it is not a tough stretch to view NATO and SCO helping Afghans together.”⁵ NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen similarly also said in 2011 that “NATO and China could develop a deeper relationship, comparable to the NATO-Russia Council.”⁶



Mr. James Appathurai
Source: <http://www.nato.int/cv/is/spokesmn/appathurai-img.htm>



Chinese diplomat and currently Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs He Yafei.
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/He_Yafei

On the Chinese side, in 2010 Ambassador He Yafei, who was then Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations and Other International Organizations and is now the Chinese Vice-Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, called for a “new global partnership that is more equal, more balanced, and has mutual and shared benefits.”⁷ Some American scholars interpreted the context of this statement to mean that Ambassador He supported greater NATO-China partnership and engagement.⁸ Also in 2010 China’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu said China “will continue to carry out exchanges with NATO at corresponding levels based on a new security outlook featuring mutual trust, equality and mutual benefit.”⁹ Consistent with Ma Zhaoxu’s statement, NATO and China agreed to cooperate on countering piracy in the Indian Ocean in 2010, and in March 2011 the commander of NATO’s counterpiracy maritime forces hosted a meeting with the commander of the Chinese counterpiracy task force.¹⁰

2011: Suspicions Arise

The year 2010 was a high point for China-NATO relations. This momentum, however, was disrupted by the Arab uprisings and NATO operations in Libya in 2011. China quickly turned back the clock to memories of the NATO intervention in Yugoslavia in 1999 and viewed NATO as a geopolitical challenger rather than potential ally.

(continued)

Continued: Chinese Perspectives of NATO after the Arab Uprisings

The key event in 2011 that triggered the shift in Chinese perceptions toward NATO was NATO's intervention in Libya's civil war. NATO air support and weapons supplies to the rebels turned the tide of the war in favor of the rebels, who overthrew the Chinese- and Russian-backed Qaddafi government. Several hundred rebels in Libya, including at least one Han Chinese convert to Islam, then traveled to Syria, where they supported the Syrian rebels against another Russian-backed and, at least initially, Chinese-backed government.¹¹

China quickly drew comparisons between NATO's intervention in Libya and NATO's bombing campaign in the former Yugoslavia in 1999, which forced an end to the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. In China's collective memory, however, the NATO air strike on the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in 1999 remains the most powerful and lasting image of that campaign.¹² Although a UN investigation subsequently revealed the strike was an error, Chinese officials and analysts claimed the strike was deliberate retribution for China's opposition to the NATO intervention in Yugoslavia, and have invoked this memory to incite anti-American protests.¹³

In 2011 Chinese military experts writing in *People's Daily* attempted to draw a connection between the NATO intervention in Libya and NATO operations in Afghanistan and the former Yugoslavia to argue that NATO's "extra-territorial use of force is designed... to spread its tentacles to many corners of the world."¹⁴ A *People's Daily* article from June 2012, for example, blamed the "turmoil and instability" in Afghanistan and Libya on NATO and said that the NATO interventions in both countries were an evolution from NATO's "attack" on Yugoslavia in 1999.¹⁶

An editorial written in *China Daily* similarly argued that "historical experience has shown that NATO humanitarian interventions are only an excuse for military intervention in other countries' domestic affairs.... They claim to be motivated by morality, but in fact they are driven by narrow political and economic interests."¹⁷ The author characterized the intervention in Libya as a "a brutal NATO attack" and said he was "pained by the misery of the Libyan people." He "appealed to people across the world to unite against NATO's action and join the efforts to restore peace in Libya."¹⁸

Ambassador He Yafei also voiced opposition to U.S. and NATO support for the anti-government protestors in Syria in 2011. At a special session of UN Human Rights Council on Syria he said, "We reject any pressure tactics on human rights issues" and that the "threat of force should be ruled out in dealing with the Syrian crisis." Unlike President Obama, who said that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad must go, Ambassador He supported the al-Assad government and said "China welcomed the moves taken by the Syrian government, such as lifting of the state of emergency and beginning of political reforms, as well as a call for national dialogue and decision to investigate all the recent events."¹⁹ That same year, Ambassador He also wrote that the "Obama administration's pivot to Asia has aroused a great deal of suspicion in China."²⁰

New Visions of SCO

In 2012, while Chinese suspicions of NATO were growing, Chinese influence over the SCO also reached its highest level. That year China hosted the SCO Summit in Beijing. Key issues on the agenda included the civil war in Syria, the role of the SCO in Afghanistan after the NATO withdrawal, rules for admission of new SCO members, and Iran's nuclear program. All of the SCO resolutions on these issues favored SCO geopolitical interests vis-à-vis NATO. China declared that the SCO would counter NATO "interventionism" in Syria, Afghanistan joined the SCO as an "observer," Turkey was placed under consideration to become an SCO "dialogue partner," and the SCO condemned Western sanctions on Iran.²¹

Chinese military experts portrayed the SCO as an "eastern NATO," and international media outlets, such as al-Jazeera, suggested that Chinese-Russian cooperation in the SCO was equivalent to a "NATO of the east."²² Shen Jiru, one of China's foremost experts at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, argued that because China and Russia are Asia-Pacific powers, the SCO should extend its mandate to the Asia-Pacific as well. According to him, this would restrain NATO's evolving role as the "world's security center," which, unlike the United Nations, does not require Chinese and Russian approval to carry out military operations.²³

However, the China Strategic Studies Network argued that because Russia remained "wary of China" due to the "rapid rise of China," SCO military cooperation could not reach the level of NATO's military cooperation.²⁴ At the same time it noted that since Russia perceived "NATO's eastward expansion" and the Color Revolutions as an effort to contain Russia, the cooperation of China and Russia in the SCO could reduce the pressure on Russia from NATO. According to the Strategic Studies Network, this cooperation would be a "powerful constraining force on the Western World."²⁵



Shen Jiru

Source: http://www.shfsy.com/en_who/show.asp?iid=261

(continued)

Continued: Chinese Perspectives of NATO after the Arab Uprisings

Chinese government statements argued that comparisons between the SCO and NATO were unfounded because the SCO only encourages security cooperation but “does not have military functions, so it cannot be compared to NATO.”²⁶ The Communist Party of China News Network also argued that the SCO is not comparable to NATO but, if anything, it is superior to NATO. First, it suggests that NATO is a product of the Cold War and has “lagged behind the times.” Whereas NATO is “a military alliance with a political structure” that remains “committed an external containment strategy,” the SCO does not “have the nature of an alliance, and its security cooperation is not directed against any third country or third party.” Second, it suggests that the SCO’s “coexistence of diverse civilizations reflects the developing trend of the times.” Whereas “Western countries seek democratic transformation in Central Asia through ‘Color Revolutions,’” the SCO promotes “peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems.”²⁷

Turkey Missile Defense: More than Just a Deal

In addition to Chinese suspicions of NATO and suggestions of the SCO as a better model than NATO, the recent Chinese missile defense deal with Turkey shows that strategically China may be seeking to roll back NATO. As early as 2010 China held joint aerial exercises with Turkey in Konya, where NATO’s Anatolian Eagle exercises also took place.²⁸ This was the first such collaboration between a NATO member and China and may have been a harbinger of the September 2013 announcement by the Turkish Undersecretariat for Defense Industries that Turkey would purchase China’s FD-2000 surface-to-air missile over competing bids, including the U.S. Patriot, Europe’s Aster 30 SAMP/T and Russia’s S-300.



For China, the missile defense deal was a major victory. In July 2013 an article in *EastDay*, a Chinese military affairs website, recognized that the significance of this prospective sale extended far beyond economics. The article argued that even if China lost money on the deal, since the Chinese bid was one-billion dollars less than competing bids, the deal was still worth it because China would gain access to classified NATO information.²⁹ In October 2013 NATO also voiced concern that integrating the Chinese system with the Patriot system could lead to the leak or transfer of classified information about the Patriot system to China.³⁰

Yet, of greater significance than intelligence gathering, the *EastDay* article also recognized the geopolitical advantage China gained because of increased engagement with Turkey. The article argued that Turkey was the “soft underbelly” of NATO and that the missile deal could help China’s strategy to break the efforts of NATO’s “Big Brother,” the U.S., to surround China.³¹ China may view Turkey, with its inability to join the European Union, public opposition to Israel, and increasingly conservative domestic agenda, as estranged from the transatlantic agenda. China may take advantage of these vulnerable points in Turkey’s long-term relationship with NATO to offer Turkey a path of further engagement with the SCO, which is more welcoming of Turkey than the EU and does not comment on Turkish domestic politics or its relations with Israel and other countries with which the SCO has good relations but NATO does not, such as Iran. China’s view of Turkey as NATO’s “soft underbelly” is backed by its perception of Turkey as the lynchpin of NATO’s eastward expansion, which threatens China’s security. The *EastDay* article said that “U.S. and NATO military forces in Afghanistan have far exceeded the necessary use of force against terrorism. Therefore, the potential significance of NATO and the U.S. as a villain is obvious.” According to the article, NATO first “infiltrated” Asia when Turkey joined NATO in 1952, and the war in Afghanistan has finally allowed NATO to “heavily deploy in Central Asia, which shows the aggressive true intentions of NATO.”³² China’s expanding military relations and Turkey’s own “pivot to Asia,” with hints of Turkey increasing cooperation – and even joining – the SCO as recently as November 2013, suggest that China’s geopolitical ambition to detach Turkey from NATO and bring Turkey into China’s own Eurasian orbit is consistent with Chinese rhetoric since 2011.³³

Conclusion

This essay showed that Chinese view of NATO has evolved from reluctant support for more cooperation with NATO to greater suspicion of NATO since NATO’s intervention in Libya in 2011. China also tends to see NATO through the lens that it views U.S. grand strategy, i.e., as seeking to contain China and other Eurasian powers, such as Russia and Iran.

The SCO also is a mechanism for China to project power in Eurasia and limit NATO influence, but in a way that does not appear to be a unilateral Chinese initiative. The SCO therefore provides China a buffer from clashing directly with NATO or the U.S. on issues where there would otherwise be friction, such as the civil war in Syria and Iran’s nuclear program. China also uses the SCO as a way to supplement Chinese foreign policy interests. For example, selling the missile defense system to Turkey and detaching Turkey from NATO is a way to bring Turkey closer to choosing the SCO over NATO and therefore reducing the Western footprint in China’s “backyard” in Central Asia.

Despite China’s changing perceptions, China never ruled out cooperation with NATO. However, it appears that such cooperation will be more likely the further away it takes place from China’s perceived spheres of influence. This leaves combating piracy in the Indian Ocean as one possibility for cooperation, while counterterrorism in Central Asia and Afghanistan or NATO-Chinese activities in maritime East Asia are much less likely to receive support from Beijing or the SCO.

Continued: Chinese Perspectives of NATO after the Arab Uprisings

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