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Counter UAV Tactics and the 'Leer-3' Electronic Warfare System

OE Watch Commentary: The Leer-3 RB-341V electronic warfare (EW) system consists of three Orlan-10 UAVs and a command and control post on a KamAZ-5350 chassis. The Leer-3's primary mission is to suppress cellular communications. It accomplishes this mission by using jammers onboard the UAVs to disrupt communications. The UAVs also have disposable jammers, which can be dropped on the ground. The Leer-3 is not found in the EW companies of maneuver brigades, but is instead found in EW brigades and centers.

The Leer-3 is reportedly capable of not only disrupting 3G and 4G cellular networks, but also of spoofing their cellular towers, allowing the Leer-3 operator to transmit information (texts, audio, video, internet, etc.) to subscribers, including smartphones, in the covered area. The Leer-3 has reportedly already been successfully employed in Syria. Lieutenant General Sergey Kuralenko reported that the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation sent out instant messages to the armed formations in Syria with application forms for an armistice. The Russian military also used text messages to inform Aleppo residents about humanitarian corridors and assistance distribution locations, despite the fact that the cellular communications infrastructure of Aleppo was largely destroyed. The capability to communicate with subscribers in conditions where the cellular infrastructure is inoperable or nonexistent, could expand the usage of the Leer-3 from the battlefield to domestic disaster response purposes.

The accompanying article posted by the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation discusses another use of the Leer-3: as a counter-UAV weapon. The Radiotechnical Troops and Leer-3 operators (Ground Forces personnel) work in conjunction to first detect, and then "knock out" the UAV's navigation system, presumably causing the UAV to crash. Although not stated, it is likely that the Leer-3 has some sort of GPS spoofing capability. If such a capability was present, this counter-UAV tactic would likely involve the Radiotechnical Troops identifying and then relaying the coordinates of a hostile UAV to the Leer-3 operators. After the Leer-3 operators have an approximate location, they then would attempt to position the Leer-3 relatively near (possibly above) the hostile UAV in order to broadcast a false GPS signal to the hostile UAV. Once false data begins to be fed to the hostile UAV, the geographic location and altitude of the hostile UAV may be changed to land or crash the hostile UAV at will.

Regardless of the ability to conduct counter-UAV operations, a GPS spoofer or jammer mounted on the Leer-3 (or any UAV) would be far more effective than the same equipment on the earth's surface. This is due to Leer-3's ability to position itself between the satellite broadcasting the GPS signal and the GPS receivers on the ground in a given area. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

“With the aid of the modern Leer-3 electronic warfare system the specialists knocked out the navigation systems of notional enemy UAVs.”

Source: “В Общевоинской Армии ЗВО Проведена Тренировка Групп По Борьбе С Беспилотниками (Groups to Combat UAVs Trained in Western Military District Combined-Arms Army),” *Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation*, 29 June 2017. http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12131418@egNews

A training session for groups to counter notional enemy radio-controlled UAVs has been held in the Western Military District's combined-arms combined formation stationed in Leningrad Oblast. The groups mainly include air defense specialists, but provision was also made to involve electronic warfare specialists and radiotechnical troops.

Questions of cooperation and of combining various stations and systems of electronic suppression and reconnaissance – both new-generation and ones adopted earlier – were being rehearsed...With the aid of the modern Leer-3 electronic warfare system the specialists knocked out the navigation systems of notional enemy UAVs, more than 100 kilometers from where the electronic warfare subunit was deployed.

The servicemen of the radiotechnical troop subunits in turn used actual targets to resolve tasks of detecting reconnaissance and strike UAVs flying at minimum and intermediate altitudes and of transmitting data to automated jamming stations.



RB-341V Leer-3 ECM system with UAV

Source: Vitaly Kuzmin Military Blog, <http://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/Static-displays-Park-Patriot/i-jFtd8w/A>, CC BY 4.0 [<http://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Copyright-policy>]

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The Mission, Structure, and Size of the Russian Radiotechnical Troops

OE Watch Commentary: The Radiotechnical Troops are a subordinate unit to the Aerospace Defense Forces (VKS) responsible for manning and maintaining many of the strategic defense radars and other early warning infrastructure operated by Russia. They work closely with strategic air defense units (S-300s, S-400s, S-500s), space monitoring forces, and civil air traffic control. The accompanying excerpts from an interview with the Chief of Radiotechnical Troops, Major General Andrey Koban, mention some interesting details about the mission, structure, and size of the organization. According to Major General Koban, the Radiotechnical Troops consist of approximately 6000 personnel organized into regiments and separate subunits, who work around the clock to conduct constant airspace surveillance. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

“As of today the Radiotechnical Troops have several dozen radiotechnical regiments and several hundred radiotechnical subunits stationed throughout RF territory...the Radiotechnical Troops stand around-the-clock alert duty, i.e., they are conducting airspace surveillance constantly. Around 6,000 persons go on alert duty each day, every 24 hours.”

Source: Anatoliy Yermolin and Aleksey Durnovo, “Задачи и техническая оснащенность радиотехнических войск воздушно-космических сил РФ (Missions and Technical Outfitting of Russian Federation Aerospace Forces Radiotechnical Troops),” *Ekho Moskvy Online*, 10 June 2017. <http://echo.msk.ru/programs/voensovet/1997342-echo/>

[Durnovo] ...Our guest is Major General Andrey Koban, Chief of Aerospace Forces Radiotechnical Troops. Andrey Yakovlevich, good afternoon...

[Koban] Yes, in fact the Radiotechnical Troops were 65 years old in December of last year. They took their origin from the Observation, Warning, and Communications Troops. Back in those far-off times, including during the Great Patriotic War, the Observation, Warning, and Communications Troops of that time listened to airspace and reported on an air enemy attack specifically from what they were hearing. Subsequently radar became operational with the Radiotechnical Troops, and as of today this is a highly intelligent combat arm which performs a number of very serious missions. They engage in securing the state border in airspace and monitor the procedure for airspace use on Russian Federation territory.

[Yermolin] And what do you have to perform this mission? What do the troops represent? How do you see and hear now? Do you use ordinary border guard personnel? As a graduate of a border guard school, I know border guard personnel are obligated to work with you.

[Koban] Indeed, airspace reconnaissance and aerospace surveillance are a very serious, comprehensive mission, and the Radiotechnical Troops perform it in coordination of course with border guard personnel, with other military command and control entities, and with electronic intelligence assets. In peacetime a very strong interworking has been organized with air traffic control entities. At the present time the federal targeted program for upgrading the federal system of airspace reconnaissance and surveillance has concluded its functioning, but this does not mean that self-improvement of reconnaissance has halted. Further measures have been planned as part of the state program for improving the country's defense capability. Nevertheless, answering the first part of the question, I will put it as follows: people of course are the basis of the Radiotechnical Troops. As of today the Radiotechnical Troops have several dozen radiotechnical regiments and several hundred radiotechnical subunits stationed throughout RF territory. In 2014 we began active work of airspace surveillance in our state's Arctic zone... The Radiotechnical Troops have radar and radar complexes in the inventory which are sources of data and carry out direct airspace reconnaissance. All this information is put together, generalized, and analyzed in automation equipment complexes. As of today the electronic intelligence collection system has an echeloned component, i.e., the grouping is echeloned. Air information also is processed in stages...

[Koban] ...Based on the missions, the Radiotechnical Troops stand around-the-clock alert duty, i.e., they are conducting airspace surveillance constantly. Around 6,000 persons go on alert duty each day, every 24 hours...Specialists at command posts process this data. I already said in answering the question “What is this that is flying armed with certain weapons?” Because no one needs unprocessed data, because both flocks of birds and some kind of balloons can appear in airspace which generally carry no kind of threat. It is very important to filter this data from those airborne objects which indeed are necessary not only to the Radiotechnical Troops, but also to military command and control entities...Therefore this information is necessary specifically to move aircraft to a certain region of airspace so it can use this radar to lock onto the airborne object and then act against it. In addition to aviation, aerospace situation information is output to the SAM Troops...



Nebo-M Radars as a Key Component of Russian Aerospace Defense

OE Watch Commentary: The Russian Federation is very concerned with protecting its state borders from aircraft that are equipped with stealth technologies. Due to the electromagnetic properties of different types of radars, the Russians use a combination of different, networked radars to find, fix, target, track, and engage for air defense purposes. The Radiotechnical Troops (the primary operators of strategic air defense radars) operate radars primarily in the VHF (very high frequency) and UHF (ultra-high frequency) bandwidths to find and fix targets. This information is then transferred to the strategic air defense units (S-300s/S-400s) that then target, track, and if necessary, engage. In order for this ‘kill chain’ to be successful, radars must not only be effective, but they must also be networked to ‘hand off’ to one another as required.

The Radiotechnical Troops utilize several different series of radars to accomplish their mission, but appear to be gravitating towards two primary systems: the fixed site Voronezh series radar and the mobile Nebo series radar. These radars primarily operate in the VHF band range. The electromagnetic properties of the VHF bandwidth make VHF far more effective at detecting stealth-enabled aircraft than other bandwidths. Unfortunately, VHF radars have some significant disadvantages, namely large size, poor or no mobility, low spatial resolution, susceptibility to clutter, and a slow scan rate. Since the 1990s, the Russians have put a strong emphasis on defeating stealth technologies, including developing and fielding more technologically advanced VHF radar systems, and fielding ‘hybrid’ radar systems that use different bands to find, fix, and track aircraft and missiles.

The accompanying article from *Svobodnaya Pressa* discusses the capabilities of the 55Zh6M Nebo-M radar system. The Nebo-M is a relatively new system, passing state trials in 2011, but as the article states, there are already plans to upgrade its capabilities. The Nebo-M consists of three active electronically scanned array (AESA) truck-mounted radar systems, operating in VHF (RLM-M), UHF (RLM-D), and S-band (RLM-S). The Nebo-M works by using its VHF radar to initially detect an aircraft or missile. This information is then passed to the UHF, then S-band radar, and eventually (if required) to an air defense weapon system. Not only is data passed between the Nebo-M radars for tipping and cueing purposes, but the different radars’ data are also combined to determine the aircraft or missile’s location.

If the Nebo-M is as effective at detecting stealth-enabled aircraft as Russian reports suggest, and if Russia has fielded a reliable communications network and air defense command and control system to effectively ‘hand off’ data from sensor to sensor, overcoming Russian air defense capabilities with stealth-enabled technologies may be a difficult prospect. Furthermore, targeting Russian air defense capabilities may also become very difficult. If Russia’s strategic air defense system operates as described, high value air defense assets, such as S-300s, S-400s, (and eventually) S-500s will not need to continuously scan (emit), instead they may wait to turn on their targeting radars shortly before they fire, making them much more difficult to find. Although the radars of the Radiotechnical Troops emit massive amounts of energy and are easy to detect, they may be hundreds (Nebo series) or thousands (Voronezh series) of kilometers away from the objects they are detecting. Not only are there technical difficulties with destroying radars that are often well within the borders of Russia, there are also political constraints, due to fears of escalation.

End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)

Source: Vladimir Tuchkov, “«Воронеж» и «Небо-М» против «Minuteman» и F-22 (‘Voronezh’ and ‘Nebo-M’ Versus the Minuteman ICBM and the F-22),” *Svobodnaya Pressa Online*, 13 June 2017. <https://svpressa.ru/war21/article/174535/>

The Aerospace Forces (VKS) Radiotechnical Troops plan to conduct the modernization of the Nebo-M radar complex, Radiotechnical Troops Chief Major-General Andrey Koban reported...

The Nebo-M radar complex, which was developed by Nizhniy Novgorod Scientific Research Institute of Radio Equipment, is characterized by the Radiotechnical Troops Chief as having no equivalents in the world. It is multipurpose and is capable of detecting all classes of airborne targets, while possessing a long operating range and the highest resolution based upon the detection and determination of the accurate coordinates of air border violators. And the detection altitude is such that the Nebo-M is capable of “seeing” objects – ballistic missiles and low-orbital satellites...

The Nebo-M is capable of accomplishing three missions at the same time: transmitting target designations to air defense missile subunits (in particular, to operate in support of S-300 and S-400 air defense missile systems), playing the role of an early radar detection system, and, finally, to be an echelon in the strategic missile attack warning system (SPRN)...the Nebo-M radar complex doesn’t have an equivalent in the world based upon several characteristics. First of all – based upon its multi-functionality, while accomplishing the missions of the missile attack warning system, of the early radar detection system, and of target designations for air defense missile systems, which is supported by the operation of a complex of three frequency ranges at the same time – VHF, UHF, and S-Band.

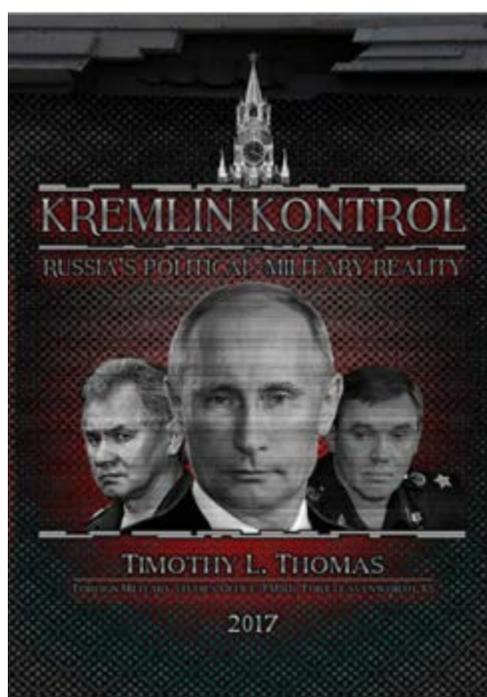
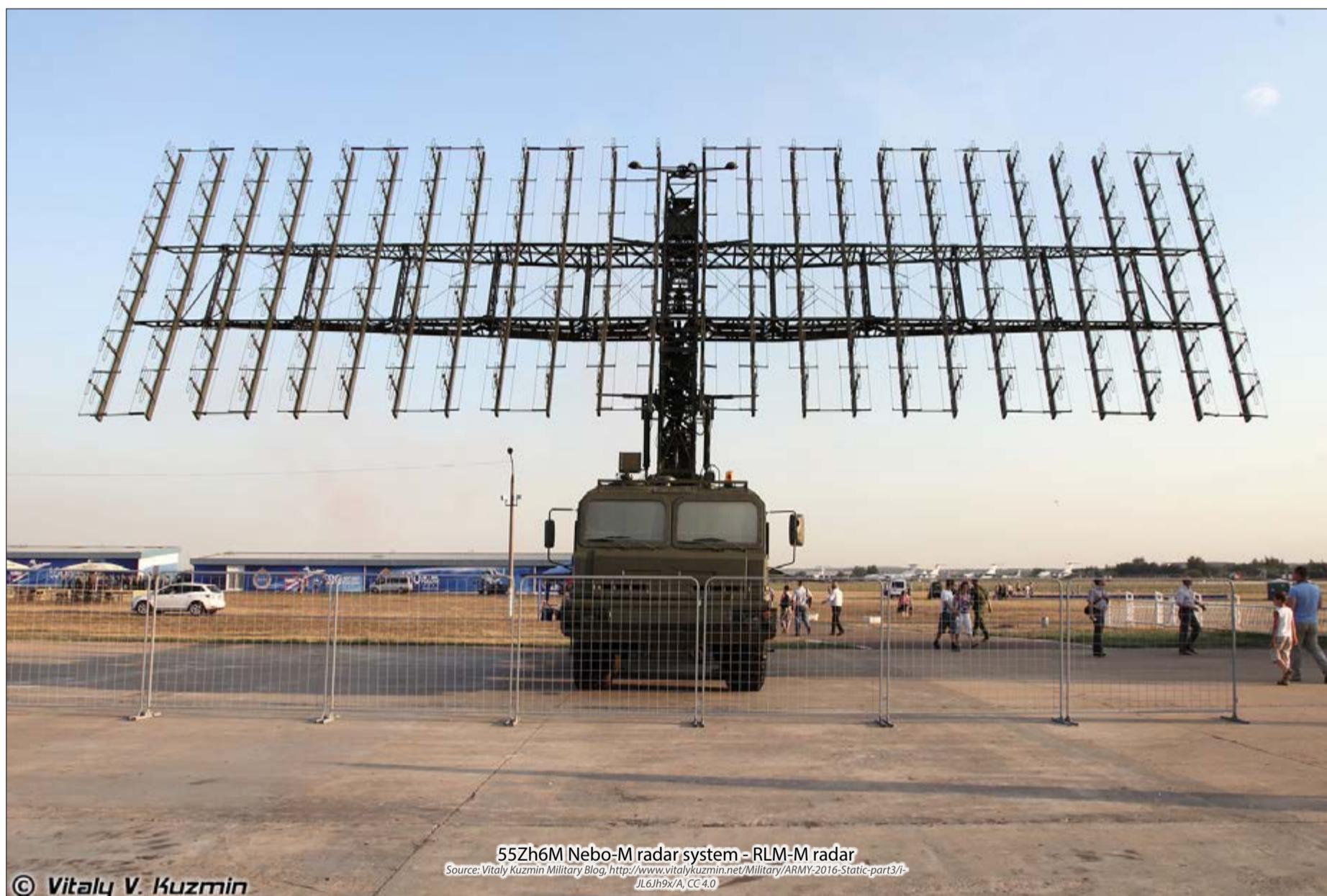
In the VHF and UHF ranges in the surveillance mode, the target detection range with a radar cross-section (RCS) of one square meter reaches 600 kilometers, which is a record-setting indicator among all contemporary early radar detection system radars. In the sector mode, the instrumental range is up to 1,800 kilometers. Targets with an RCS of 0.1 square meters are detected at a range of up to 650 kilometers, and with a RCS of 0.01 square meters – up to 350 kilometers. This is also an absolute record. And it totally negates the main properties of foreign fifth-generation fighter aircraft, which possess a low radar signature. In the process, a powerful computer supports the tracking of targets, which have a speed of up to 5,000 meters per second. The number of tracked routes is 200. And this is also a record for mobile radars.

(continued)



Continued: Nebo-M Radars as a Key Component of Russian Aerospace Defense

“The Nebo-M is capable of accomplishing three missions at the same time: transmitting target designations to air defense missile subunits (in particular, to operate in support of S-300 and S-400 air defense missile systems), playing the role of an early radar detection system, and, finally, to be an echelon in the strategic missile attack warning system (SPRN).”



KREMLIN KONTROL by TIMOTHY L. THOMAS

In 2016 Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov instituted sweeping changes that have reorganized the country's security forces and reestablished the nation's military prowess. This study, Kremlin Kontrol, aims to describe how control over the security services and the military have hastened those changes.

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-books/197266/download>



Russian Anti-Satellite Capability Enhancements

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying articles from Russian sources discuss Russian anti-satellite capability enhancements. These enhancements are critical to Russia’s anti-access and area denial efforts.

The first accompanying article from *Gazeta.Ru* discusses the testing of a missile of Russia’s forthcoming A-235 ‘Nudol’ ballistic missile defense system (BMDS) for the protection of Moscow and surrounding areas. The A-235 (essentially the same as the A-135, but with modernized components and mobile launchers) consists of a command center, targeting radars, launch platforms, and has long and short-range interceptor missiles.

The 51T6 long-range missile interceptor (retired in 2006) has two stages (the first stage has, solid-propellant, the second stage liquid propellant) and was capable of destroying targets at altitudes from 70-670 kilometers, at ranges of 350 to 850 kilometers. (Reports vary about the range capability of the 51T6.) The 53T6 short range missile interceptor has two solid-propellant stages. It reportedly can bear a 210 G longitudinal load factor, and a 90 G lateral load factor, and has the highest power-to weight-ratio in the world. The 53T6 carries a 10-kiloton nuclear warhead, and is capable of destroying targets at an altitude of up to 100 kilometers, at a range of up to 30 kilometers. These performance parameters allow the 53T6 to intercept ICBMs traveling at speeds of up to seven meters-per-second.

The accompanying article from *Svobodnaya Pressa* discusses the capability improvements of the Russian BMDS interceptor missiles. Notably the missiles will be fired from mobile launchers instead of silos; nuclear munitions will not be used in favor of high-explosive or kinetic warheads; and both interceptor missiles will be capable of hitting satellites in low-earth orbit. The successful deployment of these new interceptor missiles will provide the Russian Federation with significantly more anti-satellite capability, especially considering the forthcoming (2019) deployment of the S-500 surface-to-air missile system, which also reportedly has an anti-satellite capability. These capabilities will be enhanced by Russia’s newly launched satellite, the Kosmos-2519, an imagery satellite (of some sort) that reportedly can image other spacecraft, as discussed in the accompanying article from *Interfax*. This space imaging ability will significantly enhance Russian space situational awareness, and more easily facilitate the targeting of spacecraft. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

Source: Mikhail Khodarenok. «Амур» попал в цель (The ‘Amur’ Hit the Target),” *Gazeta.Ru Online*, 16 June 2017. <https://www.gazeta.ru/army/2017/06/16/10724561.shtml>

The Russian Ministry of Defense has tested the missile interceptor for the Moscow Missile Defense System at a range in Kazakhstan. Experts told Gazeta.Ru that they were talking about the test of the Amur-P Multichannel Missile Launch Complex (MKSK). Russia has conducted the successful test of a missile interceptor, which is called upon to improve the Missile Defense System, a Ministry of Defense spokesman reported on 16 June.

“During the course of the conducted tests, the Missile Defense System’s missile interceptor successfully accomplished the mission and destroyed the simulated target,” Aerospace Forces 1st Special Purpose Air Defense/Missile Defense Army Deputy Commander Colonel Andrey Prikhodko stated. The launch was carried out by a combat crew of the RVSN 10th Missile Defense Test Range (permanent deployment location – Sary-Shagan, Kazakhstan) of the VKS Air Defense and Missile Defense Troops 1st Special Purpose PVO/PRO Army 9th Missile Defense Division. The Amur-P Multichannel Missile Launch Complex (MKSK) was deployed to Sary-Shagan Range to test the Moscow Missile Defense System, former Missile-Space Defense Troops Chief of Staff Lieutenant-General Anatoliy Skolotyanyy explained to Gazeta.Ru.

In the Lieutenant-General’s words, the Amur-P is the abbreviated version of the Moscow A-135 Missile Defense System and at the present time is the base system of 10th Missile Defense Test Range to refine current and advanced missile defense missions...

The short-range missile interceptors, which are manufactured based upon a single-stage scheme with a separating guided warhead stage are launched from the Amur MKSK. The short-range missile interceptors are designated for the destruction of the warheads on the atmospheric phase of the targets’ flight and possess high flight-technical characteristics, which correspond to contemporary requirements, and do not have equivalents in domestic missile manufacturing. A short-range interception is normally carried out at an altitude of from 10 to 50 kilometers...

“In other words, the missile will be able to handle not only ICBMs but also objects in near-Earth space. As a result, they call it the ‘satellite killer.’”



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(continued)



Continued: Russian Anti-Satellite Capability Enhancements

Source: Vladimir Tuchkov, “A-235 «Нудоль» — истребитель американских спутников (The A-235 ‘Nudol’ is an American Satellite Killer),” *Svobodnaya Pressa Online*, 19 June 2017. <https://svpressa.ru/war21/article/174898/>

...At the present time, the A-135 “Amur” Missile Defense System defends Moscow and the Central Industrial Rayon from a ballistic missile strike. However, a new modification, which has been obtained as a result of the “Amur’s” thorough modernization – the A-235 “Nudol”, will soon replace it...The missile interceptors, which have been at the test stage since 2014, will replace the silo-based missiles at the combat post. The new missiles are much less vulnerable since they are based on mobile launchers. It is assumed that the Moscow Missile Defense System will acquire a new appearance in two-three years...

The 53T6 high-speed missile interceptors can carry out the destruction of ballistic targets at 2.5 times the range, and three times the altitude currently certified. The system can also destroy low-orbital satellites and other combat missions.” A modification of the 53T6 missile, which one can tentatively call the 53T6M, will be part of the A-235 System. Its parameters are classified, but it is understood that they will be greater than the base variant. We know that the new missile’s warhead will be kinetic – in other words, without explosives. Target destruction must be carried out using a very-high energy mechanical shock. This will substantially differentiate it from the 53T6 that uses a nuclear warhead with a 10-kiloton yield...

It is also the same thing with regard to the modification of the 51T6M long range missile interceptor. The characteristics must also increase for it. Some articles, which are based on the statements of sources in the defense industry and the Ministry of Defense, talk about this missile’s range of up to 1,500 kilometers and the highest point of the trajectory of 750 kilometers. In other words, the missile will be able to handle not only ICBMs but also objects in near-Earth space. As a result, they call it the “satellite killer.” The interception is also kinetic and not nuclear.

Source: “Russian Defense Ministry’s Kosmos-2519 Satellite to Photograph Space Objects,” *Interfax*, 24 June 2017.

The Russian Defense Ministry’s new Kosmos-2519 satellite, launched into the orbit by a Soyuz-2.lv carrier rocket from the Plesetsk Cosmodrome on June 23 will photograph space objects, the ministry’s press service said.

“The satellite is a space platform on which various kinds of payload could be installed. Equipment for remote probing of the Earth and devices for photographing space objects were mounted on the platform as payload,” the Russian Defense Ministry said...

The Volga had delivered the satellite to the targeted orbit on time, and the Russian Aerospace Forces’ ground systems took control of it at 10:27 p.m. Moscow time. The sequence number Kosmos-2519 was assigned to the satellite.

Compendium of Central Asian Military and Security Activity

By Matthew Stein

Since Central Asian states gained independence in 1991, new regional military and security alliances have been created (some of which are Russian-led), new military partnerships with non-NATO countries have been established, a number of joint military exercises have been conducted, over a dozen high-profile incidents of violence and civil unrest have taken place, and military installations have been used by foreign militaries. While this activity gained attention, it has not been collectively compiled. A compilation of this activity can serve as a guide for current and future military and security involvement in Central Asia.



<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fms0/m/fms0-monographs/194880>



Russian Far East Air Defense Training

Source: Yuriy Rossolov, “Камчатка под панцирем (Kamchatka under a Shield),” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 25 June 2017. <http://www.redstar.ru/index.php/zotov/item/33600-kamchatka-pod-pantsirem?tmpl=component&print=1>

OE Watch Commentary: The Pantsir-S1 (SA-22 Greyhound) is a combined short-to-medium-range surface-to-air missile and anti-aircraft artillery weapon using phased array radar for target acquisition and tracking. It is usually assigned to protect operational level air defense systems, airbases and mobile and fixed rocket launcher sites. The accompanying excerpt from *Krasnaya Zvezda* discusses a recent live-fire tactical exercise conducted by an anti-aircraft missile regiment unit located in the Russian Far East on the Kamchatka Peninsula jutting out into the Pacific Ocean north of Japan. According to the article, the missile firing exercises were critical to “mastering the ‘Pantsir-S1’ anti-aircraft missile and gun systems.” After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Eastern Military District was often the last to receive new equipment, but those days are past. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

“...The exercise was conducted in four stages. In the first stage, the subunit was alerted and readied for combat. In the second stage, several crews were deployed with their equipment to the Ashuluk state firing range.”

LTC Afanasenko stated “At that stage we gained much practical experience in deploying our own equipment over great distances by military-transport aircraft, as well as conducting combat on the march while traveling to the exercise-firing area. On the march, we provided protective cover for an S-400 surface-to-air missile system convoy while on the move. Our movement and cross-country capability is only one of the undeniable advantages of our system.”

According to LTC Afanasenko, “the equipment is very advanced to the extent that it can conduct firing in the automatic mode, without involving any personnel, and, when necessary, use its entire arsenal against uninvited guests.... Still, it takes a person, with the ability to think in an unconventional and nonstandard way, and not according to an algorithm, to be able to fully discover the full potential of even this advanced equipment.”

“The ‘Pantsir-S1,’ is an effective system for combating precision weapons -- cruise and antiradar missiles, guided bombs, etc. The system is fully incorporated and is, at the present time, unmatched by foreign systems in many aspects.”

Experience showed that a Pantsir-S1 system under crew control destroyed a similar aerial target half a second faster than an anti-aircraft missile and gun system being controlled exclusively by its electronic brain. In short, the symbiosis of machine and man still produces a better, albeit marginal, result.

In the exercise’s third stage-- the firing stage, Warrant Officer Igor Prostakishin led operator Junior Sergeant Aleksandr Nikolayev, and driver-mechanic Private First Class Vladimir Odintsov in engaging an aerial target. The aerial target, which imitated a cruise missile in terms of its characteristics -- low-flying and maneuvering -- was destroyed in under five seconds.

LTC Afanasenko stated that “The ‘Pantsir-S1,’ is an effective system for combating precision weapons -- cruise and antiradar missiles, guided bombs, etc.... The system is fully incorporated and is, at the present time, unmatched by foreign systems in many aspects.”

The “Pantsir-S1” is the only system in its class that is capable of firing at targets while on the move. Moreover, it works with equal success and accuracy on both aerial and ground targets (light armored enemy vehicles and personnel). What makes it formidable are its two linked 30-mm automatic anti-aircraft guns and 12 guided surface-to-air missiles. The latter’s performance characteristics enable it to destroy the entire gamut of precision weapons in the NATO armories over great distances.

The thermal imager system “sees” any objects that emit heat at a distance of several kilometers. As was verified on the Ashuluk range, even the numerous small fauna of the steppes -- rabbits and jerboas -- did not escape detection by the temperature-distribution monitoring device at a distance of up to one kilometer. So, the “Pantsir-S1” (given competent organization of defense) is a match for saboteurs.

“Our system is very ergonomic, with a high degree of automation,” Warrant Officer Igor Prostakishin stated. “Working with it is sheer pleasure. And retraining for it was not difficult -- everything is clear and accessible. Thanks to the fact that the anti-aircraft missile and gun system is mounted on an all-wheel drive KamAZ platform with an 8x8 wheel arrangement, it is unimportant to the ‘Pantsir,’ whether it travels along highways or off road.”....

The modular design of the Pantsir was a real plus during the tactical exercise’s second and fourth stages -- deployment. The possibility of partially dismantling the system swiftly gives it the advantage of rapid redeployment to a designated area, for example, by military-transport aviation aircraft (as happened in this case). To separate the “Pantsir’s” combat modules from the chassis and to load and secure all the elements inside an Il-76 transport aircraft takes little more than half an hour. The reverse process takes exactly the same amount of time, following which the anti-aircraft missile and gun system is ready for combat use....

“And what of the victors of Ashuluk? Upon their return home, Warrant Officer Igor Prostakishin’s crew was given the honor of showing off their fighting vehicle in the 9 May Victory Day Parade held in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy....”

(continued)

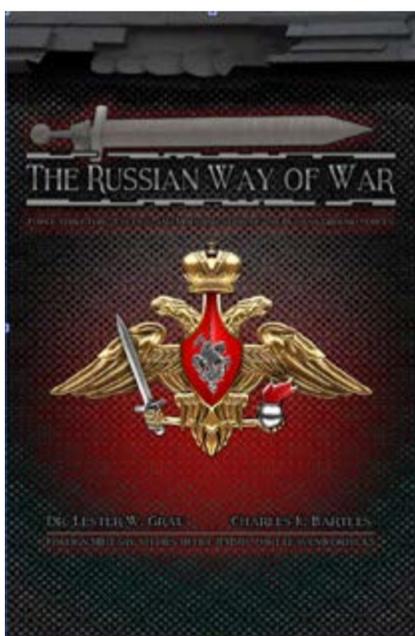
Continued: Russian Far East Air Defense Training

“The ‘Pantsir-S1’ is the only system in its class that is capable of firing at targets while on the move... What makes it formidable are its two linked 30-mm automatic antiaircraft guns and 12 guided surface-to-air missiles. The latter’s performance characteristics enable it to destroy the entire gamut of precision weapons in the NATO armories over great distances.”



Pantsir-S1 air defence system on GM-chassis at Engineering Technologies 2012 in Russia

Source: By Vitaly V. Kuzmin (<http://vitalykuzmin.net/?q=node/459>) via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:3APantsir-S1_\(tracked\)_-_Engineering_Technologies_2012_-1.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:3APantsir-S1_(tracked)_-_Engineering_Technologies_2012_-1.jpg), CC BY SA 4.0



THE RUSSIAN WAY OF WAR by LESTER W. GRAU and CHARLES K. BARTLES

At any given time, assessments of the Russian Armed Forces vary between the idea of an incompetent and corrupt conscript army manning decrepit Soviet equipment and relying solely on brute force, to the idea of an elite military filled with Special Operations Forces (SOF) who were the “polite people” or “little green men” seen on the streets in Crimea. This book will attempt to split the difference between these radically different ideas by shedding some light on what exactly the Russian Ground Forces consist of, how they are structured, how they fight, and how they are modernizing.

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-books/199251/download>



Swedish Concerns over Russian Tactical Nukes

OE Watch Commentary: The brief accompanying excerpt from a Swedish source discusses a recent report by the Swedish Defense Research Agency regarding Russia's activities in modernizing its tactical nuclear weapons. It points out that "while Western Europe was disarming and considered these weapons not to be an important issue, Russia has modernized and is producing new tactical nuclear weapons." The article recounts President Putin's comment that "after the annexation of Crimea... a counterattack would have been met with nuclear weapons."

The article mentions that while Russia has reduced its strategic inventory of nuclear weapons, "since 2012 the number of tactical warheads in active use also seem to have been increased by 30 percent." Alongside the bellicose Russian rhetoric which suggests that they are prepared to use nuclear weapons, the excerpt points out that the Russian Defense Ministry has continued to incorporate the use of these weapons into their exercise scenarios.

The article concludes by examining how Swedish forces are currently deployed and how this concentration of men and material could easily "be knocked out with nuclear weapons." It also addresses the "lack of plans to protect the population against nuclear war," and how these plans were shelved "during the period of optimism in the 1990s." While non-NATO member Sweden shares no direct border with Russia, this article indicates that it has grown increasingly wary of Russia's tactical nuclear delivery systems. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“In Russia they seem to be on the way to convincing themselves that a limited nuclear war can be won...”

Source: Mikael Holmstrom, "New Report Warns of Tactical Nuclear Weapons From Russia," *DN.se*, 13 June 2017. <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/ny-rapport-varnar-for-taktiska-karnvapen-fran-ryssland/>

Russia is modernizing its nuclear weapons and threatening to deploy them on the battlefield. This is a serious threat to Europe, because Sweden and other Western nations have assumed that such tactical nuclear weapons would disappear.

"Nuclear weapons will acquire an increased security role in Europe in the future. The rumor about the imminent dwindling of nuclear weapons has turned out to be exaggerated." This is the conclusion of a new report from the Swedish Defense Research Agency, FOI, which will be published on 13 June. "While Western Europe was disarming and considered these weapons not to be an important issue, Russia has modernized and is producing new tactical nuclear weapons," says one of the editors of the report, research director Niklas Granholm, at FOI.

The report "Nuclear Weapons for Battlefield Use and European Security" focuses on the nuclear weapons that are launched at shorter distances on the battlefield. It involves, for example, torpedoes, bombs, missiles -- so-called tactical nuclear weapons or battlefield nuclear weapons.

These weapons could lower the threshold for nuclear war, which would mean greater risks than during the Cold War. At that time there was nuclear deterrent between the Soviet Union and the United States, in which both knew that if nuclear weapons were used it would lead to total nuclear war. This was called mutual assured destruction with the fitting abbreviation MAD.

But Russian President Putin and other Russian representatives have made statements in which they threatened to use nuclear weapons. After the annexation of Crimea in 2014 Putin said that a counterattack would have been met with nuclear weapons. Denmark as well has been threatened with nuclear weapons. "In Russia they seem to be on the way to convincing themselves that a limited nuclear war can be won," says Granholm....

...Russia as well reduced its nuclear warheads after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. But in parallel with the Russian rearmament nuclear weapons have received an increasingly prominent role. It is a question of weapon systems with short or intermediate range.

"In Europe it is Russia that drives the development by giving these weapons an increasingly prominent role," concludes the report, which states: "The Russian tactical nuclear arsenal has been undergoing modernization for a long time, and several older weapons platforms have been replaced with new systems. Since 2012 the number of tactical warheads in active use also seem to have been increased by 30 percent. The Russian nuclear arms rhetoric has also returned."

During exercises in recent years Russia has concluded combat activities with conventional weapons by deploying simulated nuclear attacks. This is called "de-escalation." Paired with various statements, this shows "that tactical nuclear weapons are assigned a role on the battlefield in the actual Russian nuclear arms doctrine," FOI writes.

This rhetoric signals that the Putin administration may be willing not only to threaten the use of nuclear weapons but also to use them in a conflict.... "The major difference is Russia's politics: the more aggressive behavior, the clear upgrade in military capability, and the increased importance given to nuclear weapons," FOI writes.

On the part of Sweden, it is pointed out that the Armed Forces are concentrated at a few bases and that materiel is stored in central depots. This was rational for peacetime, but it means that these facilities can be knocked out with nuclear weapons, which would make it almost impossible to act....



Russian Coastal Defense Infrastructure Improvements

OE Watch Commentary: The Russian Coastal Defense Troops consist of two separate organizations, the Coastal Defense Artillery Troops and the Naval Infantry. In terms of command and control, the Coastal Defense Troops are part of the Russian Navy. The Navy's command and control of these forces is exercised through the four fleets and one flotilla, where the commander of the Coastal Defense Troops units in each of these commands serves on the fleet (flotilla) staff.

One consequence of Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and subsequent incorporation (reflagging) of Ukrainian military units was the addition of a Ukrainian 'Coastal Defense Brigade,' that is now part of the Russian Coastal Defense Troops, but is neither a Coastal Defense Artillery Troops unit nor Naval Infantry unit. The 126th Coastal Defense Brigade (formerly the 36th Separate Coastal Defense Brigade of the Ukrainian Navy) has approximately 2,000 personnel and consists of seven battalions (including a motorized rifle and mountain warfare battalion), and five separate companies. The brigade is closely associated with the 8th Artillery Regiment that has approximately 800 personnel, and is also part of the Coastal Defense Troops.

In terms of command and control, the 126th Coastal Defense Brigade is part of the 22nd Army Corps. Although not explicitly stated, Army Groups function as intermediate commands between military districts (operational-strategic commands) and maneuver units; just as Army Corps function as intermediate commands between the naval fleets and their associated coastal defense and motorized rifle units. Only three fleets currently have Army Corps, the Baltic Sea Fleet (11th Army Corps, Kaliningrad), the Northern Sea Fleet (14th Army Corps, Severomorsk), and the Black Sea Fleet (22nd Army Corps, Sevastopol). There was an announcement that a new coastal defense division would be formed in Chukotka region. If this unit is assigned to the Pacific Fleet, Russia may form another Army Corps to facilitate command and control. Since motorized rifle units (battalions, regiments, brigades, and divisions) may be assigned to the Coastal Defense Troops, and units appear to be routinely reshuffled between the Coastal Defense Troops and Ground Forces, it is clear that the Russians utilize a very different system of command and control relationships than used by the US military. *(continued)*

Source: "Первый заместитель Министра обороны Руслан Цаликов проверил обустройство 126-й отдельной бригады береговой обороны Черноморского флота (First Deputy Minister of Defense Ruslan Tsalikov Has Inspected the Outfitting of the Black Sea Fleet's 126th Separate Coastal Defense Brigade)," *Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation*, 6 July 2017. http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12132341@egNews

During a working visit to Crimea, the first deputy Russian Minister of Defense, Ruslan Tsalikov, has inspected the outfitting of the Black Sea Fleet's 126th Separate Coastal Defense Brigade.

The Southern Military District commander, Colonel General Aleksandr Dvornikov, reported to the first deputy head of the military department about the readiness of new barracks, the outfitting of a garrison, and the completed construction of a maintenance and repair center for military equipment...

In 2003, the 36th Separate Coastal Defense Brigade of the Ukrainian Navy was formed. On 21 March 2014, it became part of the Russian Armed Forces as the Black Sea Fleet's separate coastal defense brigade.

On 1 December 2014, the 126th Separate Coastal Defense Brigade was formed on the basis of that formation.

Source: Yuriy Gavrilov, "Бригада в новостройках (Brigade in New Buildings)," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online*, 6 July 2017. <https://rg.ru/2017/07/06/reg-ufo/v-sevastopole-i-kerchi-otkroiut-parki-patriot.html>

...We recall that two years ago Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu ordered the provision from scratch of facilities of the base compound of the 126th Separate Coastal Defense Brigade and the 8th Artillery Regiment of the Black Sea Fleet. Meaning the garrison in the Perevalnoye community. Before becoming a part of our Armed Forces, the 126th Brigade was part of the Ukrainian Navy. The garrison presented a dismal picture at that time. Buildings had not been renovated there for decades, there was a catastrophic shortage of military-social facilities in Perevalnoye.

The provision of the garrison with facilities began with the conclusion of government contracts for the construction of five quarters-type facilities for 300 men each, a 1,200-seat mess, rations depots with a vegetable storehouse, a guard training facility, and a parking and service area. The erection of a new department kindergarten for 250 children was envisaged also.

Ruslan Tsalikov evaluated the results of the work thus far on the spot. His first order of business was to open the kindergarten -- a two-story building with a total area of more than 3,000 square meters. There are premises here for the preparation of meals, a medical unit, rooms for sports and musical pursuits, and specialists' rooms. The children's building is even equipped with a garden and pool, the quality of the water in which is controlled in a special laboratory...The Defense Ministry has six departmental therapeutic centers and the Sevastopol' recreation facility in Crimea. They can take in approximately 5,500 persons at any one time...

“In line with previously approved plans, the shore infrastructure of the Black Sea Fleet's Krymskaya and Novorossiysk naval bases and naval aviation airfields, as well as the coastal training ranges, continue to be upgraded to comply with the fleet's current requirements. We plan to carry out repair and reconstruction work on a number of facilities this year...”

(continued)



Continued: Russian Coastal Defense Infrastructure Improvements

In terms of combat power, the 11th and 14th Army Corps have significantly less combat power than most other Army Groups, but the 22nd Army Corps has significantly more, as it controls all coastal defense units in Crimea and the 150th and 42nd Motorized Rifle Divisions on the mainland.

The accompanying articles from the Ministry of Defense and *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* discuss infrastructure improvements for the 126th Coastal Defense Brigade and the 8th Artillery Regiment in the vicinity of Perevalnoye. Not only is Russia improving infrastructure for military activities, but also for recreation and leisure. (In Soviet times, the Crimean Peninsula was a popular vacation and retirement area. The Soviet military sponsored several summer camps for children and vacation resorts in the area, a practice that apparently will continue.) The article from *Krasnaya Zvezda* gives a general overview of the increasing capabilities of the Coastal Defense Troops in Crimea. The establishment of shore defense oriented Army Corps, the addition of the 126th Coastal Defense Brigade, plans for the creation of a coastal defense division in the Far East, and substantial coastal defense infrastructure improvements indicate that Russia is very concerned about protecting her borders in general, and coastal defense issues in particular. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

Source: Pavel Zavolokin, “Полной Самоотдачей (Total Commitment),” *Krasnaya Zvezda Online*, 12 May 2017. <http://redstar.ru/index.php/newspaper/item/33126-s-polnoj-samootdachej>

[Zavolokin] Comrade Commander, on 13 May the Black Sea Fleet marks the 234th anniversary of its creation, and a performance-evaluation inspection for the winter training period ended just recently in the fleet’s units and formations. Are the results conducive to a holiday mood?

[Vitko] To judge by the preliminary results obtained during the performance-evaluation exercises the servicemen of the Black Sea Fleet achieved a good outcome in the execution of their assigned tasks. Around 80 percent of the Black Sea Fleet’s forces and assets were assigned to training measures forming part of the inspection procedure, and a broad range of combat drills was conducted by the fleet’s naval, coastal defense, and air components...It can be stated that for the fleet as a whole the outstanding and good indicators for general and specialized training are up almost 10 percent from last training period...

In the past year units of the coastal defense forces’ missile troops and artillery took part in more than 100 tactical exercises and training drills of differing levels. Bastion and Bal coastal defense antiship missile systems successfully employed cruise missiles against a naval target, and artillery firing against targets at sea was also performed by the Bereg system. Subunits of a Black Sea Fleet artillery regiment, separate naval infantry brigade, and separate coastal defense brigade conducted more than 450 fire missions...In line with previously approved plans, the shore infrastructure of the Black Sea Fleet’s Krymskaya and Novorossiysk naval bases and naval aviation airfields, as well as the coastal training ranges, continue to be upgraded to comply with the fleet’s current requirements. We plan to carry out repair and reconstruction work on a number of facilities this year...



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So Much for Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics

OE Watch Commentary: The GAZ Tigr has been a popular reconnaissance and all-purpose 4x4 ATV since it was introduced to Russian ground forces in 2006. According to the excerpted article from *Izvestiya*, now it may provide accurate “shoot and scoot” fire support to airborne, air assault and spetsnaz reconnaissance troops. A robot mortar mount provides accurate, rapid 120mm mortar fire. The mortar stays in the vehicle and is loaded automatically with conventional or laser-guided munitions. This is not the first time a mortar has been mounted in the back of a vehicle, but this seems to be a first in mortar accuracy due to the electronic suite coupled with the robot mortar mount. This has got to be a very rugged system to survive air drop and on-board 120mm mortar firing. This old “eleven charlie” [mortar man] wonders what kind of hearing protection the crew will have. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**



“The Goretz [Highlander] mortar is mounted in a vehicle’s aft section, where a special robot mortar mount has been installed. It can set the elevation or the direction of the shot with micron accuracy in a matter of seconds. The robot takes into account the weather conditions, the state of the tube, and even the temperature of the mortar round in its calculations.”

Source: Dmitry Litovkin and Aleksey Ramm, “Мобильные войска получают робот-минометы. Система Горец отличается высокой мобильностью и способна уничтожить любую цель в секундах (The Mobile Troops Will Receive Robot-Mortars. The Goretz System Is Distinguished by Its High Mobility and Is Capable of Destroying Any Target in a Matter of Seconds),” *Izvestiya*, 30 May 2017. <http://iz.ru/news/719306>

“The Russian Army’s special subunits and also the airborne and air assault battalions will receive the MZ-204 Goretz mobile, automatic mortar systems. The system has been installed on the chassis of Tigr and Tayfun-K armored motor vehicles and Rakushka armored transport vehicles. The mortar can fire conventional mortar rounds as well as laser-guided precision munitions. The unique combat robot will guide the mortar rounds to the target. This system will substantially expand the lethality of the subunits that are operating on the forward defense or in the enemy rear.”

According to an Airborne Troops Headquarters spokesman, they plan to deploy the Goretz, mounted on the Tigr armored motor vehicle, in reconnaissance and Spetsnaz subunits. The Goretz mounted on the BTR-MDM Rakushka armored transport vehicle will join the air assault and airborne battalions’ mortar batteries. Both vehicles are air-transportable and may be parachuted into the enemy rear. The final decision on the acceptance of the Goretz system into will be made only after extensive testing.”...

“The Goretz [Highlander] mortar is mounted in a vehicle’s aft section, where a special robot mortar mount has been installed. It can set the elevation or the direction of the shot with micron accuracy in a matter of seconds. The robot takes into account the weather conditions, the state of the tube, and even the temperature of the mortar round in its calculations. One can control the mortar in the manual mode from the commander’s seat, which is located alongside the vehicle driver. Controls include a special unit with a liquid crystal display of an electronic terrain map and two joysticks which control the precision mechanism.

The Goretz’ distinctive feature is that the troops remain inside the armored capsule during the conduct of firing. Automatic loading occurs directly inside the vehicle through a special opening, into which the mortar tube automatically drops after each shot. There is a rack of 20 120-millimeter mortar rounds plus several Gran precision-guided laser munitions. Reloading takes just seconds. If the vehicle is destroyed by return fire, the crew will be able to remove the mortar from the gun mount in three minutes and continue firing in the conventional mode.”

Arsenal of the Fatherland Magazine Editor Viktor Murakhovskiy stated that mortars remain one of the most effective weapons against unprotected personnel shelters. “The mortar has a fast reaction time and a very large bursting area. Simplicity, ease of use, and low weight distinguish mortars. If necessary, one can transport it in the cab of a motor vehicle or even using the manpower of the combat crew itself, if you urgently need to change position or withdraw from under return fire. Since these weapons will be integrated into the artillery fire automated control system, their properties for destruction and reaction time will increase even more. We need to also take into account the new types of munitions, which are being developed for mortars. The mortar rounds with laser and optical-electronic guided systems are even more powerful.”...

“Military Expert Sergey Suvorov reported that the airborne troops frequently fired the earlier Goretz MZ-204 mortars through an open hatch of the Tigr armored motor vehicle during the combat in the Caucasus. The present Goretz MZ-204 was developed after taking into account this combat experience, but using new technology.”



Improving Armored Mobility Transport

OE Watch Commentary: While the Russian military's new armored systems (e.g. T-14 Armata tanks, MSTA and Koalitsiya self-propelled artillery) may have gathered the most praise during the recent Victory Day parade, military logisticians understand that effective transport of armored equipment is equally important. Given Russia's relatively poor road system, military planners have usually relied upon rail to transport armored weapons within the country. This reliance upon rail transport appears to be shifting toward the use of multi-axle heavy wheeled tractors (MTKT), possibly due to Russia's improving road network. The brief excerpt from the pro-government source, *Izvestiya*, describes the creation of new MTKT transport units designed to move armor assets on wheeled trailers (which soldiers have nicknamed "heavy bicycles").

The scale of this initiative is impressive. According to the excerpt, these new transport units "will be part of all of the military districts and combined-arms and tank armies," with "the first three tractor battalions already appearing at the beginning of this year in Central and Eastern military districts." Each transport company will be equipped with more than 30 trailers and "there will be more than 600 KamAZ-65225 tractors in the composition of a regiment." To reduce deployment time, as the excerpt points out, "tank and motorized rifle formations are also deployed not far from the newly formed MTKT units." The weight limit for these trailers is 65 tons, easily capable of moving the Russian military's heaviest armored assets.

The article includes a quote from a military expert who points out that moving armor on public roads is not only tough on the equipment, but such transport tends to tear up the roads. He also observes that rail movement of armor makes it "impossible to transport vehicles directly to the location of their combat employment. State-of-the-art heavy transporters can do this." As the excerpt points out, the development of these trailer-transport units will have a significant impact on the mobility of Russia's most lethal armored assets, since "a KamAZ-65225 with a relief crew conducts a march of 1,000 kilometers per day." **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“Russian tanks, armored infantry vehicles, and self-propelled artillery mounts will travel to deployment locations not under their own power but on special multi-axle heavy tractors.”

Source: Aleksey Ramm, Dmitriy Litovkin, "Танки повезут на 'велосипедах'; Минобороны начало формирование уникальных воинских частей — полков, батальонов и рот многоосных тяжелых колесных тягачей (They Will Transport Tanks on 'Bicycles'. The Ministry of Defense Has Begun the Formation of Unique Military Units – Regiments, Battalions, and Companies of Multi-Axle Heavy Wheeled Tractors)," *Izvestiya Online*, 21 June 2017. <http://iz.ru/608113/aleksei-ramm-dmitrii-litovkin/tankisty-peresiadut-na-tiazhelye-velosipedy>

Russian tanks, armored infantry vehicles, and self-propelled artillery mounts will travel to deployment locations not under their own power but on special multi-axle heavy tractors. The Ministry of Defense has begun the formation of unique military units – regiments, battalions, and companies of multi-axle heavy wheeled tractors (MTKT). Their mission – is the prompt delivery of tank and motorized rifle divisions to the locations of combat operations at a distance of thousands of kilometers. In so doing, the armored vehicles will be ready to enter an engagement without preparation – "from the wheels". KamAZ-65225 tractors with semitrailers will enter the inventory of the new military units. It is noteworthy that those vehicles have received the informal designation – "heavy bicycles" – in the troops.

*A Russian military department spokesman told *Izvestiya* that the decision on the formation of the new military units was made at the end of last year. They will be part of all of the military districts and combined-arms and tank armies. And, in the future, they will also augment the ranks of the army corps. They plan that an MTKT regiment will be formed in the military district and a "heavy bicycle" battalion or separate company in an army.*

The first three tractor battalions already appeared at the beginning of this year in Central and Eastern military districts. They are based at Chita, Khabarovsk, and Chebarkul. And these military units will appear in Southern and Western military districts by the beginning of 2018....

It is noteworthy that tank and motorized rifle formations are also deployed not far from the newly formed MTKT units. By way of illustration, the recently formed 90th Guards Tank Vitebsk-Novgorod Twice Red Banner Division is deployed at Chebarkul. There are more than one thousand tanks, armored infantry vehicles, armored transport vehicles, and self-propelled artillery mounts in its inventory.

...The MTKT battalions are equipped with KamAZ-65225 three-axle, 11-tonne tractors. They can transport a cargo weighing up to 65 tons on a special semitrailer. And, therefore, the "heavy bicycle" will easily handle the transportation of T-72 (a weight of 41 tons) and T-14 Armata (48 tons) tanks, MSTA and Koalitsiya self-propelled artillery mounts (42-49 tons), and also BMPs [armored infantry vehicles] and BTRs [armored transport vehicles] of all series. In the process, a KamAZ-65225 with a relief crew conducts a march of 1,000 kilometers per day.

There will be more than 30 tractors in each "heavy bicycle" company when there will be more than 600 KamAZ-65225 tractors in the composition of a regiment....

*...Military Expert Viktor Murakhovskiy, the editor of "Arsenal of the Fatherland" Magazine, told *Izvestiya* that the appearance of the heavy tractor subunits – is an urgent need. "Heavy vehicles have serious limitations based upon the service life of the drive train and engines," the expert pointed out. "While taking into account the cost of this equipment, it is irrational to expend its service life on the conduct of lengthy marches. All the more so to do this on public roads – tanks will simply break them up. Therefore, they have always deployed the vehicles either via rail or motor vehicle transport. The railroad has its own shortcomings – it is impossible to transport vehicles directly to the location of their combat employment. State-of-the-art heavy transporters can do this....*



Russian Military Readiness Reporting

OE Watch Commentary: Russian military reform continues apace and gauging from the frequent glowing reports in their media, the country is well on its way toward creating a modern, combat-ready military. Occasionally, however, evidence appears which suggests that the optimistic rhetoric may not always match the mundane reality. The recent article from the centrist-weekly *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* [Military Industrial Courier] which warns of the dangers of fraudulent military reporting, is a good example.

The article begins by pointing out that “in Russia, reporting itself has become the main form of official activity,” and that the Russian military has a penchant for delivering a positive assessment when reporting to higher headquarters. To illustrate this point, the excerpt describes how a “regimental commander may report that all the available equipment is fully operational, supplied and combat-ready.” Therefore, based on this report, “the senior commander decides that it is not necessary to allocate funds for repairs or resupply.” While the regimental report may look good, if it is not accurate, “combat readiness will be compromised.”

The article claims that while career considerations sometimes prompt false reporting, it is usually “fear of punishment” which induces officials to bend the truth. Aggravating this desire to please the boss, is the concept of “socialist competition” which the Russian military inherited from the USSR. One cannot belong to the “best platoon, company, battalion, regiment, brigade” and still report deficiencies. Moreover, this desire to produce a flawless report tends to infect the entire military unit with a willingness to overlook faults.

The author concludes the article with a handful of suggestions on how to combat the plague of false reporting. Honest reporting must begin at the top, reports should be verifiable and those who report false data ought to “be punished publicly.” Commanders at all levels must do away with a zero-defects mentality and accept that certain problems will exist in any unit. Finally, overall combat readiness should be the main criteria for reporting and not how well the “grass is trimmed,” or as the excerpt suggests, how “well their soldiers can level snowdrifts.” **End**

OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

“...The criteria for evaluation of military members, and especially commanders, must be determined on the basis of their official duties, and not as often practiced: on their ability to march in unison or how well their soldiers can level snowdrifts.”

Source: Evgeniy Glukhov, “Служу квадратному сугробу (I serve the square snowdrift),” *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer Online*, 5 July 2017. <http://vpk-news.ru/articles/37608>

The existing system of informing the authorities is dangerous, even in peacetime....

...The idea of reporting is to inform chiefs of actual performance. However, in Russia reporting itself has become the main form of official activities, in comparison with which all else pales. In the military, fraudulent reporting is even more dangerous than in civilian life, since it directly threatens the lives of soldiers and security of the state....

...For example, a regimental commander may report that all the available equipment is fully operational, supplied and combat-ready. His senior commander decides that it is not necessary to allocate funds for repairs or resupply. However, if the equipment is actually faulty or missing, combat readiness is compromised... Decisions made on the basis of false information, will lead to worse situations....

...There are many reasons for fraudulent reporting: a desire to curry favor and make a career, to match the behavior of a peer group, but the main reason is fear of punishment, which will follow the truthful report. And the author of the report is not necessarily to blame for faulty equipment, non-renovated buildings, poor academic performance. Often, there are objective reasons. But these will hardly release one from punishment. Therefore, officials lie. And the author of the report is not the only one at fault, but also his superiors and the already established practice of false reporting. When joining a team, a person adopts the rules of conduct, which have already been adopted, even if he had earlier promised to abide by his conscience. Life within a bureaucratic system sets a certain standard of behavior....

...But that's only half the problem. The system of socialist competition to determine the best platoon, company, battalion, regiment, brigade which developed in the Armed Forces of the USSR remains operative today. After each period of training, superiors determine the place among the subordinate units based on military discipline, training of troops, injuries and other reportable items....

...To summarize, I consider it necessary to offer my vision to eliminate fraud in the reports of military leaders.

...As the military is firmly built upon the principle of unity of command, to change this situation is only possible from above. This will demand the political will of the senior leadership of the country and the security agencies....we must build a system whereby reports can be verified, and those who submit false reports should be punished publicly.

...The criteria for evaluation of military members, and especially commanders, must be determined on the basis of their official duties, and not as often practiced: on their ability to march in unison or how well their soldiers can level snowdrifts.



Crimean Love Story

OE Watch Commentary: Russia’s annexation of Crimea will likely be regarded by Russians as one of President Putin’s most significant achievements during his current term (2012-2018). Despite Western sanctions and aggravated tensions with its neighbors, Russian media has consistently portrayed the annexation as not only a fully legitimate action, but one which also helped to preserve peace and stability on the Crimean Peninsula. Top Russian media managers are also doing their part to ensure that this positive Kremlin message reaches the largest possible audience.

The brief excerpt from a Saratov news source announces that a new film by Alexei Pimanov, titled “Crimea” which “recreates with historical accuracy the events that took place in Crimea in the spring of 2014,” will appear on Russian screens on 28 September. According to earlier reports and the film trailer (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDVVzsEzPR0>), this movie will combine both fact and fiction, tracing the love story of two young people who get caught up in the dramatic events in Ukraine, Russia, and Crimea in early 2014.

Pimanov is a well-known Russian TV and movie producer, director, and journalist, who also hosts the popular television program “Человек и закон” [Man and Law] on Russia’s most popular TV channel-ORT. As the excerpt points out, Pimanov claimed that Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu was responsible for suggesting that the film be made and that the Defense Ministry also helped with funding for the film and providing personnel and equipment for the movie’s production.

Winning over hearts and minds via cinema is not a new idea. Half a year after seizing and occupying two large regions of Georgia, Russian movie fans were treated to the action, docu-drama “Olympus Inferno” which took the events of the Georgian-Russian conflict of August 2008 and spun them to align with the pro-Kremlin narrative. While the production of the movie “Crimea” has taken considerably longer, there is no doubt that it will reinforce the Kremlin’s narrative as to what occurred in Ukraine and Crimea in early 2014, “in an extremely honest way.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

Source: Саратовцы увидят уникальный художественный фильм о Крыме (Saratov residents see a unique film about Crimea),” *Saratov Novosti.ru*, 28 June 2017. <https://sarnovosti.ru/news.php?ID=71422>

On 28 September, Russian cinemas will release a full-length feature film “Crimea,” created by “Pimanov and Partners” in conjunction with the media holding “Red Star.” The film recreates with historical accuracy the events that took place in Crimea in the spring of 2014.

...“The mission of the film is to examine how the Crimean Spring was understood by both the people of Russian and Ukraine in an extremely honest way, by looking at how two close people ended up separated,” explained the authors.

The initiator of the project was Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu. The idea was approved by the President of Russia Vladimir Putin. The final version of the script was approved in the presidential administration. This ambitious project enjoyed the full cooperation and assistance in organizing from the Office of the Plenipotentiary Representative of the Russian President in the Crimean Federal District, and the Government of the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol.

...The film involved modern military equipment: helicopters, military transport aircraft, ships, artillery systems, reconnaissance vehicle and a large number of personnel. The movie is designed to be a socially significant and cultural event, whose purpose - strengthening patriotism among different generations of Russian citizens.

“The initiator of the project was Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.”





Possible Change to Russian Military Retirement

OE Watch Commentary: Lower budget revenues and improved demographics continue to force the Kremlin to wrestle with its pension system. To reduce pension expenditures, in January 2017 the government raised the retirement age for state workers from the current age (55.5 years-women; 60.5 years-men) to the future (63 years-women; 65 years-men). The change will take place over the next 15 years, whereby the retirement age will be increased 6 months annually until 2032. In what could be a similar move, the excerpt from the weekly journal *Versiya* indicates that the government is considering increasing the minimum length of service for receiving a military pension from 20 to 25 years. Those involved in state security would have to serve 25 years before receiving a pension. As the excerpt points out, such a modification “will be solved gradually and with great caution,” as this proposal would “affect the pensions of military, Interior Ministry, the Emergencies Ministry, the Federal Penitentiary Service and the National Guard.”

The article stresses that this proposed change is merely being discussed, and that no decisions will be made until “after the presidential election in 2018,” given the outcomes of previous proposals, and fears that any drastic change would lead to protest. The rationale for increasing the term to receive pension benefits is predicated both on improved demographics and on the staggering number of military retirees (over 10 million) who currently receive pensions. Moreover, as the excerpt points out, the average military pension is almost twice that of the average civil pension (21,300 rubles versus 12,890 rubles or \$350 versus \$210).

Russian military pensioners are already somewhat aggrieved that they have not been receiving their full pensions. As the excerpt points out, back in 2012, when military salaries were increased to make them more competitive, pensions were only increased by some 50%. The promise to gradually index these pensions by 2% annually has not been kept, and “despite inflation and a significant depreciation of the ruble, military pensions have not changed for three years.”

The article concludes on a problematic note, pointing out that although pursuing a military career has become more popular over the past few years, this trend could be reversed if the government continues to chip away at retiree benefits (e.g. travel subsidies, medical support). Moreover, according to the expert quoted in the article, should retirement benefits continue to be reduced, there is a possibility that disgruntled military retirees “could increase the protest potential of opposition groups.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“There is a tendency to gradually take away all the significant benefits from military retirees.”

Source: Alexander Stepanov, “Дали отставку; На военных пенсионерах хотят сэкономит (They gave retirement; they want to save money on military pensions),” *Versiya*, 26 June 2017. <https://versia.ru/na-voennyx-pensionerax-xotyat-syekonomit>

Last week it became known that the security agencies are developing a bill to raise the lower threshold length of service, which would entitle one to receive a military pension. It is reported that this will save the annual budget hundreds of billions of rubles. The document, on which work started in March this year, will affect the pensions of military, Interior Ministry, the Emergencies Ministry, the Federal Penitentiary Service and the National Guard. ...the amendments proposed to increase the lower limit of the length of service from 20 to 25 years.

...Perhaps the amendments to the law to toughen the terms of military pensions will be made after the presidential election in 2018; a number of sources reported that the presidential administration believe that “the issue is very delicate”... Most likely this issue will be solved gradually and with great caution.

...According to rough estimates, in Russia today about 10 million military retirees. ...The average size of pensions in the Russian military after the increase rose to 21.3 thousand.... which is much higher than the average civil pensions, which in March 2017 was 12.89 thousand rubles....

...In 2012, a federal law was passed which increased the money allowances of servicemen several times, to include those receiving a military pension... However, the military financiers had a trick up their sleeves and introduced a reduction factor in the calculation of pensions. As a result, a military retiree in 2012 began to get a little more than half of the pension owed, and then there were promises that the payment each year will increase by 2%....

...Accordingly, despite inflation and a significant depreciation of the ruble, military pensions have not changed for three years. Moreover, the increase in the lower threshold length of service to 25 years is becoming more tangible. Obviously, the reduction of social security of the military will not add to the attractiveness of military service, but it will save the budget money, even at the expense of the most vulnerable group of servicemen.

Anatoly Tsyganok, head of the Center for Military Forecasting, points out, “Today, young people once again aspire to serve in the army as military pay is higher than the national average. The Defense Ministry understands that and so provides enough benefits to officers so that it becomes not economically feasible to leave for early retirement... There is a tendency to gradually take away all the significant benefits from military retirees. Previously, for example, a pensioner had the right to land, and now there is no such benefit; they are also deprived of their benefits for free travel once a year on long-distance trains. Now the government is looking at reducing medical support for military pensioners.... From all appearances, there is no risk of a social explosion, and that’s no small thing: today, the number of military pensioners from all the power structures is somewhere around 10-12 million. This is not only the possible loss of tens of millions of votes, but such a move could increase the protest potential of opposition groups.”



Stalin and Tukhachevsky Revisited

OE Watch Commentary: This past June marked the 80th Anniversary of the arrest and execution of Marshall Mikhail Tukhachevsky and a number of other high-level Soviet military officers. In 1937, these officers were charged with being involved in a plot to remove Stalin and collaborating with foreign enemies. Not long after Stalin’s death, however, these generals were rehabilitated and their murders characterized as yet another facet of Stalin’s determination to remove any and all opposition. Their untimely deaths also helped to explain the USSR’s initial poor performance during the ‘Great Patriotic War’ (World War II).

The first excerpt from the liberal radio station, *Echo Moscow*, includes commentary from political analyst Stanislav Belkovskiy, who supports the belief that there had indeed been a plot among the military leadership “and that Mikhail Tukhachevsky wanted to remove Stalin.” Over the past several years, there have been a number of Russian documentaries/TV series which support this allegation. (See for instance, “Заговор против Сталина,” [The Conspiracy against Stalin] http://www.ntv.ru/peredacha/Delo_temnoe/m33240/o309092/video/). Belkovsky goes on to claim that while Stalin’s removal of Tukhachevsky and other military officers may have “undermined the fighting capacity of the Soviet armed forces,” it convinced later Russian military leaders to remain outside of politics.



Mikhail Tukhachevsky
Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:3AMikhail_Tukhachevsky.jpg, Public Domain

The second excerpt comes from an interview with a Russian historian (Dr. Yuliya Kantor) given to the popular daily *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. This historian categorically “claims that there was no conspiracy, and the case [against Tukachevsky and the other generals] was fabricated.” While Tukhachevsky had cooperated with German military officers in the 1920s and 30s, this was part of a wider scope of military cooperation between the USSR and Germany. Dr. Kantor points out that Stalin was determined to destroy any domestic opposition—even imaginary enemies, particularly those senior party and military leaders who had played a significant role in the revolution and subsequent civil war.

Despite assessments such as Dr. Kantor’s, over the past decade, Russia’s historical pendulum appears to be drifting back toward a more positive assessment of Josef Stalin and the role he played in Soviet/Russian history. As the third excerpt from *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* points out, in a recent poll Stalin has once again been recognized by the Russians as “the most outstanding person in Russian history.” The poll lists possible reasons for this positive assessment, and Stalin’s role as the “author of the WW II victory” as the most popular response (44%). Since the Soviet Union’s victory in WW II remains at the center of the current Kremlin ideology, it is not all that surprising that Stalin’s role would also be elevated. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

Source: Vladimir Kara-Murza, Grani Nedel'iy, *Echo Moscow* (radio), 10 June 2017. <http://echo.msk.ru/programs/graniweek/1997396-echo/>

Stanislav Belkovskiy “...On the other hand, I believe that the plot was real, and that Mikhail Tukhachevsky wanted to remove Stalin. It was not known, whether this would be good or bad for the country, but there was a conspiracy. Stalin had to take the lead.... even if it undermined the fighting capacity of the Soviet armed forces... And the third most important effect of this incident is that from that moment, the military finally lost any political initiative.... Stalin impressed upon the military, that they had no role in politics...”

Source: David Genkina, “Маршал Тухачевский активно сотрудничал с немецкими офицерами (Tukhachevsky actively cooperated with German officers),” *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 13 June 2017. <https://www.spb.kp.ru/daily/26690.7/3714597/>

Stanislav Belkovskiy “...On the other hand, I believe that the plot was real, and that Mikhail Tukhachevsky wanted to remove Stalin. It was not known, whether this would be good or bad for the country, but there was a conspiracy. Stalin had to take the lead.... even if it undermined the fighting capacity of the Soviet armed forces... And the third most important effect of this incident is that from that moment, the military finally lost any political initiative.... Stalin impressed upon the military, that they had no role in politics...”

Source: “Чем объяснить непреходящую любовь к Сталину? (How to explain the undying love for Stalin?),” *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer*, No. 24 (688), 28 June-4 July 2017. http://vpk-news.ru/sites/default/files/pdf/VPK_24_2017_688.pdf

Stalin remains the most outstanding person in Russian history, according to a recent poll by the Levada Center. Putin and Pushkin came in 2nd and 3rd. How can one explain the unchanging love for Stalin?

- 44% -He was the author of the WW II victory
- 43% -People long for a strong ruler
- 6% -The cult of personality enjoys effective PR
- 5% -This is a syndrome of a deified past
- 2% -Too hard to answer



Russian Retired Colonel on How to Oppose Hybrid War

OE Watch Commentary: The July issue of *Armeyskiy Sbornik*, a Russian specialized monthly analytical periodical covering a wide range of military-related issues and problems, featured an interesting article by Retired Colonel A. Kalistratov on various ways to think about classifying war. However, his focus was clearly on defining and discussing hybrid war. The accompanying excerpts highlight some of the ways Kalistratov envisions thwarting hybrid wars.

As the passage notes, in order to thwart hybrid wars, it is necessary to “maintain the stability of state and social institutions” against attempts by internal or external forces to “cripple and transform the country’s sociopolitical system.” In addition, Kalistratov claims it is important to disseminate “truthful information about the state of affairs in the country.” Some of the other noteworthy measures include taking “timely and decisive measures to isolate leaders of the destructive opposition” and to “shut down mass media organs supporting it.”

Hybrid war is described as a mixed type of war, combining strategies of indirect actions and crushing opponents. Kalistratov writes that 70-80 percent of these type wars use indirect strategies and 20-30 percent use armed violence. The principal method of using them is forcing a crisis using a “fifth column” to create divisions within a state system and thereby deepen the crisis. An armed opposition will then use direct or indirect means to bring a political force to power. He states that the term comes from the United States.

Hybrid wars became especially effective with the powerful development of the mass media and communication technologies. They enable the opposition to influence human consciousness and the subconscious of masses of people to carry out disobedience and sabotage. Of special interest is that in his article, Kalistratov used the new-type warfare methodology of Russian Western Military District Commander Colonel-General Andrey Karapolov to describe hybrid war, thereby equating the two. He also used General Staff Chief Valeriy Gerasimov’s definition of “war” from his speech at the Academy of Military Science in March, in which Gerasimov noted that it was too early to classify war as hybrid. **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

“Just how is the strategy of such hybrid wars to be opposed? The following is necessary for this: maintain the stability of state and social institutions and of public awareness toward any attempts on the part of external and internal forces to cripple and transform the country’s sociopolitical system; counter any attempts to destroy statehood by use of various information technologies. It is important to disseminate truthful information about the state of affairs in the country promptly and in real time; learn to impose one’s own rules of the game and defend one’s own interpretation of events in the global information field...”

Source: A. Kalistratov, “War and Modern Times: Modern Wars: Let’s Explore the Classification,” *Armeyskiy Sbornik*, No. 7, July 2017, pp. 5-16.

Countering Hybrid Wars

Just how is the strategy of such hybrid wars to be opposed? The following is necessary for this:

maintain the stability of state and social institutions and of public awareness toward any attempts on the part of external and internal forces to cripple and transform the country’s sociopolitical system;

counter any attempts to destroy statehood by use of various information technologies. It is important to disseminate truthful information about the state of affairs in the country promptly and in real time;

learn to impose one’s own rules of the game and defend one’s own interpretation of events in the global information field;

maintain the necessary level of the index of social optimism in the population and of the stability of personnel of state staff and power structures based on formation of a national idea, national ideology, and successes in defending statehood and the country’s national interests;

organize the effective activity of external and internal reconnaissance agencies; take timely and decisive measures to isolate leaders of the destructive opposition, shut down mass media organs supporting it, and block financial flows from abroad;

promptly introduce martial law and strictly carry out wartime laws;

decisively suppress mass disorders, instances of a manifestation of anarchy, sabotage, and insubordination; and

maintain combat effectiveness and combat readiness of the armed forces at a level ensuring that substantial damage is inflicted on any potential enemy in case of aggression.



Update on the Turkey-Russia S-400 Deal

OE Watch Commentary: In February 2017, Turkey's Defense Minister had announced that Turkey was searching for systems to protect itself against missile and air attacks and that Russian S-400s were a leading contender, adding that significant progress had been made in talks with Russia. As the first accompanying passage notes, in early July, he said that technical discussions with Russia were complete and that the sides were now discussing financing options. The accompanying passages from Turkish sources discuss this development. In contrast to much of the international reporting on the issue, the Turkish press does not report the deal as final.

The second accompanying passage includes statements by the Turkish Defense Minister who points out that Turkey is aware that the system will not be compatible with NATO systems. However, he highlights that Turkey's "first choice was to buy systems produced by NATO member countries," but notes that the "offers they made were far from competitive, and did not include technology-sharing." He says that this approach was not acceptable to Turkey. The sharing of know-how is an important factor for Turkey, as it works to develop indigenous air defense systems and become self-sufficient in the defense industry. The Minister's comments that Turkey's first choice was to buy systems produced by NATO countries is significant. This is likely in response to much of the international reporting on the issue, which claim that the deal represents Turkey "choosing Russia over NATO."

The third accompanying passage also highlights that the deal is not final, saying that it will come into force once the two countries' defense ministers sign it. It discusses that the \$2.5 billion system, which will have 24 batteries and 96 missiles, will be deployed in two phases. The first phase will be delivered to Turkey in 2019; after which Turkey and Russia will co-produce the next phase. The passage also discusses that Russia places no restrictions on the regions where the system will be used.

Turkey's search for a long-range air and missile defense system is not new. Previously, in late 2013, Turkey had announced its decision to start talks with a Chinese firm to co-produce such a defense system. The contract was awarded to the China Precision Machinery Export-Import Corporation (CPMEIC), a company that was under sanctions for violating the Iran, North Korea and Syria Nonproliferation Act. Furthermore, NATO members had expressed concern and warned of compatibility issues between the Chinese-made system and NATO systems. In November 2015, Turkey cancelled the deal with China and declared its goal to develop its own air defense systems with its own resources. As the first passage notes, the Defense Minister recently said that Turkey is still working on this, and cooperating with France, Italy and possibly the US. (See: "Trends in the Turkish Military Industry," Special Essay in *OE Watch*, June 2017). **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

Source: "Işık: S400'de finansman aşamasına geçildi ([Minister of Defense] Işık: We have moved to the financing stage in the S-400 [process])," *Dunya.com*, 4 July 2017. <https://www.dunya.com/gundem/isik-s400de-finansman-asamasina-gecildi-haberi-370871>

"Regarding the process of Turkey buying S400 air defense missiles from Russia, Minister of Defense Fikri Işık said that [they have] moved into the [discussion of] sources of financing..."

... Işık said that "The technical work is complete, we have come to the final stage, we are working on ways to finance it..."

"Işık, who also noted that Turkey is working on developing an indigenous air and missile defense system said, "We have decided to cooperate with France and Italy on this project. We are now also discussing the issue of cooperating with the United States."

Source: "Işık: S-400'e acil ihtiyacımız var (Işık: We urgently need S-400s)," *Savunma ve Teknoloji.com*, 5 July 2017. <http://savunmaveteknoloji.com/isik-s-400e-acil-ihtiyacimiz-var/>

"The National Defense Minister, who expressed that the acquisition of S-400s are due to an urgent need said, "it is not possible for us to integrate this into NATO. We know this from the onset. As a country, our first choice was to buy the systems produced by NATO member countries. In other words, buying the systems produced by NATO countries and integrating them into NATO. But the USA and European countries were not understanding towards Turkey. The offers they made were far from competitive, and did not include technology-sharing. So basically, I will sell you this system as is and you will buy it and set it up [but] I will not let you touch a pin. It is not possible for us to accept such an approach. The S-400 discussions arose due to a necessity for Turkey."

Source: Türkiye, ABD ile Rusya arasında kaldı: S-400 gerginliği sürüyor (Turkey stuck between the US and Russia: The S-400 tension continues)," *Birgun.net*, 16 July 2017. <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/turkiye-abd-ile-rusya-arasinda-kaldi-s-400-gerginligi-suruyor-170015.html>

...According to the agreement that will come into force after the defense ministers of the two countries ratify it, the reportedly \$2.5 billion system will be deployed in two phases. According to the agreement, the first two systems will be delivered to Turkey in 2019. Once those are deployed, then Turkey and Russia will jointly produce the next two systems.

No restrictions

...the S-400 system will protect Turkish air space against ballistic missiles, planes and UAVs. Since Russia places no restrictions on what areas the system will protect, the S-400s will protect areas that pose the highest risk to Turkey's security, including the Northeast (Armenia), East (Iran), South (Syria), and the Southeast (Iraq) regions.

24 batteries, 96 missiles

While it is not yet known when the agreement between Turkey and Russia for the delivery of S-400 air defense missile systems will be signed, the number of missiles has become clear. According to the deal, \$2.5 billion will be paid not for the two batteries, but for the two part missile system. According to the information given by Russian defense industry officials, one missile part includes 12 batteries. So the S-400 missiles to be purchased will include 24 batteries and a total of 96 long range missiles. Each part has its own radar and command center vehicle.



Egypt Starts Receiving Russian Air Defense Missiles

OE Watch Commentary: Russia continues to expand its influence in the Middle East and North Africa. The accompanying excerpts from Middle Eastern sources report on the recent delivery of a Russian air defense missile system to Egypt.

The first passage notes that the Egyptian Armed Forces have received the first batch of missiles for the S-300VM Antey 2500 missile defense system (NATO code name: ‘SA-23 Gladiator\Giant’), and that this will significantly alter the power balance in the region. In terms of capabilities, it highlights that the system can “engage ballistic missiles at a range of 250 km and aircraft at a range of 200 km. It can reach targets at an altitude of up to 30 km.” Furthermore, it points out that the system “can engage up to 24 aircraft or up to 16 ballistic missiles simultaneously.” The S-300VM “Antey-2500” missiles are known as the export version of the S-300V4, used by the Russian Ground Forces. The missiles are produced by Russian company, Almaz Antey. The second passage notes that the delivery is a culmination of a 2015 deal signed between Russia and Egypt; also reporting that the first batch of missiles have reached the port of Alexandria.

Russia has an interest in assisting Egypt and bolstering its regime (where President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi’s ideological affinity, which opposes the Muslim Brotherhood, makes it attractive to Moscow). Russia’s cooperation with Egypt has been expanding, particularly since Sisi was elected president in June 2014. In March 2015, Russia and Egypt held their first-ever joint naval exercises in the Mediterranean, which included the Black Sea fleet’s flagship Moskva missile cruiser. In October 2016, the two countries held joint military drills involving airborne troops on Egyptian territory for the first time. As the final passage notes, there have also been reports that Egypt may allow Russia use of military bases across the country, including an air base on the Mediterranean coast, close to the border with Libya. In addition, Russia’s natural gas company purchased 30% of one of Egypt’s richest natural gas fields for \$1.5 billion last year. (Also see: “Syria, Egypt, Libya: A New Russia-Dominated Axis?” *OE Watch*, May 2017; and “Perspectives on Russian Motives in Libya,” *OE Watch*, April 2017.) **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**



9A83ME launcher from the S-300VM Antey-2500 missile system
Source: By Vitaly V. Kuzmin (<http://vitalykuzmin.net/?q=node/384>) via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:3A9A83ME_TEL_-_Antey-2500_ISAM102.jpg, CC BY-SA 4.0

Source: Egypt Receives First S-300VM Air Defense Missile System from Russia,” *IsraelDefense.co.il*, 8 June 2017. <http://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/29920>

“The Egyptian Armed Forces have received the first batch of missiles for the S-300VM Antey-2500 missile defense system...

... this advanced system that can intercept and destroy aircraft and missiles (including ballistic ones) in large radius area. Three regiments of S-300VM have been ordered by the Egyptian army, which will significantly modify the power balance in the region.”...

“This system can engage ballistic missiles at a range of 250 km and aircraft at a range of 200 km. It can reach targets at an altitude of up to 30 km. This air defense system can engage up to 24 aircraft or up to 16 ballistic missiles simultaneously.”

Source: Mısır hava sahasına Rus kalkanı (Russian shield for Egyptian air space),” *Savunmaveteknoloji.com*, 11 June 2017. <http://savunmaveteknoloji.com/misir-hava-sahasina-rus-kalkani/>

Egypt has started receiving the Almaz-Antey S-300VM air defense systems from Russia

The S-300 air defense systems that Egypt had ordered following a 2015 deal with Russia, have reached the Port of Alexandria on ships....

It can strike a target at a height of 30 km

The S-300VM “Antey-2500” (NATO code name SA-23 Gladiator\Giant) air defense system was designed by Almaz-Antey company, to protect civilian and military facilities against attacks from mid-range ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and tactical war planes. The S-300VM system has the capability to strike targets at a distance of 250 km and a height of 30 km

Source: Egypt ‘ready to agree’ to new Russian air base on coast,” *Middleeasteye.net*, 10 October 2016, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/egypt-ready-agree-new-russian-air-base-coast-reports-1845388280>

“Egypt is in talks to allow Russia use of military bases across the country, including an air base on the Mediterranean coast close to the border with Libya...”

“The Egyptian Armed Forces have received the first batch of missiles for the S-300VM Antey-2500 missile defense system... Three regiments of S-300VM have been ordered by the Egyptian army, which will significantly modify the power balance in the region.”



Syrians in Raqqa and Deir Ezzor Shift Blame for Mounting Civilian Casualties

OE Watch Commentary: There are few issues on which the Syrian loyalist and opposition camps agree. One of these is opposition to the mounting civilian casualties in the campaign against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the Syrian provinces of Raqqa and Deir Ezzor. The four accompanying passages are an illustrative sample of Syrian reactions to recent casualty figures. The passages indicate that residents of these provinces seem to be shifting the blame for civilian casualties away from the Syrian government and ISIS and toward the United States.

The first passage, from the opposition news website *Ain al-Medina*, claims that “the American acknowledgements of errors after the massacres carried out by coalition warplanes,” are meaningless, citing that they “will not return the dead their lives and will not hold the killer to account.” The article argues that ISIS benefits from civilian casualties, noting that the group may well have double agents in place “to misinform the coalition warplanes.” According to the second article, from the website of the anti-ISIS activist network *Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently*, “the brutal bombings and unjust killings of civilians are not accidents” but rather part of “a sinister plan America has prepared for the city.”

The third article is an opinion piece written by prominent Syrian opposition intellectual Yassin Haj Saleh and published in the pan-Arab daily *al-Hayat*. Saleh, whose family hails from Raqqa, decries how “those fighting terrorism show no interest in the victims of terror.” The war against ISIS, Saleh argues, is dehumanizing Syrians, “[making] their struggle invisible, the blood of victims worthless.”

Not surprisingly, the shift in blame is being reinforced by loyalist media. As an example, the final excerpt cites a statement from the Syrian Sports Federation eulogizing a badminton coach and his family who were killed in Raqqa by “the hateful and aggressive bombing launched by the aircraft of the international coalition led by the United States.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

Source:

في دير الزور حيث يحارب التحالف داعش بقتل الأبرياء

Fawzi Abdul, “Deir Ezzor: Where the Coalition Fights ISIS by Killing Innocents,” *Ain al-Medina*, 6 July 2017. <http://www.ayn-almadina.com/content/images/users/1/contents/4118/2724.pdf> (translation via: http://syrianobserver.com/EN/Features/32982/Coalition_Bombing_Innocents_Strengthens_ISIS_Propaganda_Syria/)

The American acknowledgements of errors after the massacres carried out by coalition warplanes from time to time against civilians do not mean anything to anyone, because they will not return the dead their lives and will not hold the killer to account, and they will not prevent these errors from occurring again... ISIS of course knows who its prisoners are, but it neglected to let the families of the dead learn anything about the fate of their children, but rather used them as propaganda against the coalition, which does not distinguish “between them and us, as we are all Muslims,” as the ISIS members put it in an effort to encourage people to favor them... ISIS commanders have suddenly left their homes before the raids that strike them. “A double agent working for both sides — ISIS and the coalition at the same time,” [an activist in Deir Ezzor] suggests. He notes that ISIS is using these agents to misinform the coalitions warplanes.

Source:

معركة الرقة، تدمير وتهجير

“The Battle for Raqqa: Destruction and Forced Displacement,” *Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently*, 5 July 2017. http://www.raqqa-sl.com/?attachment_id=4731 (translation via: <http://www.raqqa-sl.com/en/2017/07/06/the-battle-for-raqqa-is-one-of-destruction-and-displacement/>)

As the battle against ISIS in Raqqa intensifies, the strategy being used by the International Coalition and their local allies, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), is becoming clearer. Their methods rely mainly upon intensive daily aerial bombardment and artillery shelling. These practices cause dozens of civilians deaths every day, as well as contribute to a massive destruction of infrastructure, properties, residential buildings, and places of worship... Activists from Raqqa believe that the brutal bombings and unjust killings of civilians are not accidents. Rather, satellite images reveal an extent of destruction in the city that seems to fall in line with a sinister plan America has prepared for the city. The US administration may be taking this destructive approach to facilitate SDF’s wishes of establishing a Kurdish State in the city after ISIS’s defeat. This Kurdish establishment would then allow the US to obtain their own control in Raqqa and establish military bases in it.

Source:

الحرب ضد الإرهاب الإبادة والإبادة

Yassin Haj Saleh, “The War on Terror: Legitimization and Extermination,” *al-Hayat*, 7 July 2017. <https://goo.gl/RjHuF8>

...those fighting terrorism show no interest in the victims of terror, with those kidnapped or killed by ISIS having no political or legal value to the agenda of those fighting terrorism... What is frightening is not the imposition of an external agenda on Syrians, but that the “war on terror” makes their struggle invisible, the blood of victims worthless...

(continued)



Continued: Syrians in Raqqa and Deir Ezzor Shift Blame for Mounting Civilian Casualties

Source:

طيران التحالف الأمريكي يقتل مدرب كرة الريشة الطائرة اسماعيل الخليف وعائلته في قصف على منزله بالرقعة

“American Coalition? Aircraft Bomb the Raqqa Home of Badminton Coach Ismail Khalif and his Family, Killing Him and his Family,”

SANA, 16 June 2017. <http://www.sana.sy/?p=573844>

The General Sports Federation, on its website, eulogized “Coach Ismail Mohammed al-Khalif,” the “spiritual father of badminton in Raqqa Province,” along with his family following the hateful and aggressive bombing launched by the aircraft of the international coalition led by the United States against various neighborhoods of Raqqa.”



A U.S. Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle flies over northern Iraq early in the morning of Sept. 23, 2014, after conducting airstrikes in Syria. This F-15 was a part of a large coalition strike package that was the first to strike ISIL targets in Syria

Source: U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Matthew Bruch, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Airstrikes_in_Syria_140923-F-UL677-674.jpg, Public Domain

Image: "Ukraine vs. Pro-Russian"
Image Source: Andrew Butko, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/121483302@N02/14690671827>, Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported | Wikimedia Commons

UKRAINE'S HIDDEN BATTLEFIELD

by Robert Kurz

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/195079>

This paper was previously published as a book chapter:
Kurz, Robert. "Ukraine's Hidden Battlefield." In *Cultural Perspectives, Geopolitics & Energy Security of Eurasia: Is the Next Global Conflict Imminent?* edited by Dr. Mahir J. Ibrahimov, Mr. Gustav Otto, and Colonel Lee G. Gentile, Jr., 93-99. Fort Leavenworth: Army University Press, 2017.



Yemen: The Arab Coalition Teeters

OE Watch Commentary: The Saudi-led Arab Coalition fighting in Yemen is finding it hard to contain rising tensions between its key local partners. Although these tensions have been overshadowed by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) unified stance against Qatar, they are increasing by the day.

The author of the first accompanying passage, from the Lebanese daily *al-Akhbar*, raises the possibility of “the political conflict between Riyadh and Abu Dhabi’s proxies becoming violent and widespread.” The conflict in question, which has thus far played out mostly in Aden, pits the UAE-backed “Security Belt” forces and southern secessionists on the one hand, and the Saudi-backed government of Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi on the other. Recent statements by the leader of the “Security Belt” forces, excerpted in the second accompanying passage, are illustrative of how the UAE-backed groups have largely dropped the language of compromise when referring to the Hadi government. Efforts to avert a fight over Aden include a reported deal to transfer some “Security Belt” forces and the majority of Hadi loyalist units away from Aden. According to the third accompanying excerpt, these forces would be moved to areas in and around Taiz Province.

The effects of Qatar’s expulsion from the Arab Coalition continue to reverberate in Yemen. Saudi/UAE moves to isolate Qatar have produced a change in the editorial line of Qatari media, most notably *al-Jazeera*. As the first accompanying passage notes, Qatari media has gone from unequivocal support for the Arab Coalition’s Yemen campaign to “shedding light on the victims of Saudi bombing and inviting guests who condemn these bombings or doubt the goals of the war and the utility of its continuation.” *Al-Jazeera* has also reported extensively on human rights violations at the hands of “Security Belt” forces. While Saudi Arabia and the UAE pin the blame for their faltering Yemeni campaign on Qatar, their local partners appear more inclined to blame one another. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

“Developments in southern Yemen warn of the political conflict between Riyadh and Abu Dhabi’s proxies becoming violent and widespread.”

Source: صراعات سعودية - إماراتية مستمرة أزمة الخليج لا تُهدئ الجنوب
Luqman Abdullah, “Saudi-Emirati Struggle Ongoing: The Gulf Crisis will not Calm the South,” *al-Akhbar*, 5 June 2017. <http://al-akhbar.com/node/279688>

Developments in southern Yemen warn of the political conflict between Riyadh and Abu Dhabi’s proxies becoming violent and widespread. After weeks of silence regarding the Gulf crisis it has come out in the open. One new development is that Yemeni Prime Minister Ahmed bin Dagher warned about intra-Southern conflict in Aden, in an article published yesterday... Qatari media, particularly al-Jazeera, has recently begun shining light on violations by the UAE, particularly forced imprisonment in secret prisons run by Abu Dhabi in southern Yemen... Qatari media has also changed its editorial policy regarding the war in Yemen, from backing the aggressor viewpoint fully to shedding light on the victims of Saudi bombing and inviting guests who condemn these bombings or doubt the goals of the war and the utility of its continuation.

Source: مجلس انفصال الجنوب يلوح بحسم معركته مع الحكومة الشرعية عسكريا
“Southern Secession Council Hints at Resolving its Battle with the Legitimate Government Militarily,” *Yemen Press*, 2 July 2017. <https://yemen-press.com/news98613.html>

Hani Ben Brik, the so-called deputy head of the Southern Transitional Council who was dismissed from his position as state minister and put under investigation by President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi, hinted at militarily resolving the conflict with the legitimate government... Ben Brik said they are ready to resort to weapons in defense of what he termed protecting their honor.

Source: مصادر حكومية تكشف لعدن الغد تفاصيل خطة إخراج عدد من المعسكرات الى خارج عدن
“Government Sources Provide Aden al-Ghad with Details on the Plan to Relocate Several Bases outside of Aden,” *Aden al-Ghad*, 26 June 2017. <http://adengd.net/news/264801/>

The plan involves transferring the “Transport Brigade” located in the Dar Saad district... to a mountainous area near Hayfan District in Taiz Province on the border between al-Subahiya Balhaj and Taiz. A number of brigades from the Security Belt would also be transferred to the city of Mokha in Taiz Province, where their new headquarters would be located, while other Security Belt forces would remain in Aden.



The Adaptive Transformation of Yemen’s Republican Guard

by Lucas Winter

This paper presents an analytical summary of the Yemeni Republican Guard’s adaptation to changing conditions in Yemen following the 2011 resignation of Ali Abdullah Saleh. The Yemeni Republican Guard has effectively amalgamated with Huthi forces into a hybrid that pairs young, ideologically motivated foot soldiers with trained operators of heavy weaponry and advanced equipment. This is similar in structure to successful fighting groups emerging from the battlefields of Syria and Iraq, and may provide a template for the type of forces that will define the region’s operational environment for years to come.

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fms0/m/fms0-monographs/194879>



The Resistance Axis and Shia Mobilization

OE Watch Commentary: The “Resistance Axis,” the coalition of forces supported by or allied with Iran, continues to expand its projection of power in the Levant. The four accompanying passages, taken from a variety of Arabic-language media sources, show various facets of this expansion.

The first excerpted passage, from the pro-Hezbollah Lebanese newspaper *al-Akhbar*, points to the expansion of Hezbollah’s military capabilities through its cadres’ participation in the Syrian-Russian-Iranian campaign to secure the Syrian Desert. The desert environment differs fundamentally from Hezbollah’s mountainous and semi-urban home environment. Thus its desert operations are described as something that was forced on the group’s fighters by current events and “from which they have gained practice and experience.”

The second accompanying excerpt, from the Lebanese newspaper *al-Modon*, cites Russian-language media sources in noting how “the entire Shia world is mobilized.” In a recent speech given for “International Quds (Jerusalem) Day,” a holiday created by Iran’s government in 1979 and which has grown in popularity over time, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah hinted that Israeli aggression in Lebanon or Syria may prompt hundreds of thousands of fighters from the global Shia community to join the fray. Citing Nasrallah’s speech, the third accompanying passage notes how the fighters would come “from Iraq, Yemen, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and throughout the Arab and Muslim nations.”

Further strengthening the Resistance Axis are recent moves to bring Hamas back into the fold. Hamas fell out of favor after supporting the Syrian revolt, but as the fourth accompanying excerpt notes, “Hezbollah has recently showed signs of its willingness to answer Hamas’ needs, in terms of ... military and security experience among other things.” As the passage’s author notes, Hamas provides the Resistance Axis with a valuable asset that could “help dispel Hezbollah’s sectarian image.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

“...the entire Shia world is mobilized...”

Source: المقاومة في حرب البادية كنز من الخبرة العسكرية
Hussein al-Amin. “The Resistance in the ‘Badia War’: A Trove of Military Experience,” *al-Akhbar*, 24 June 2017. <http://al-akhbar.com/node/279248>

If we were to briefly present the most important skills gained by the resistance fighters and commanders in the Syrian Badia (Desert) operation, the most prominent would be how to deal with large open spaces and establishing the tactics needed to deal in open spaces, as well as how to use engineering equipment, which is important for digging and removing fortifications and berms, as well as the ability to direct a large number of vehicles and equipment... it is clear that [Hizbullah’s] military doctrine was built to fight in the mountains and partially in cities. Fighting in the desert is not part of the fighters’ training and preparation. However, current events have forced them to partake in this type of fighting, from which they have gained practice and experience.

Source: تقاسم النفوذ في سوريا روسيا ترفض حلفاً مع إيران
Bassam Muqdad, “Partition of Influence in Syria: Russia Rejects Alliance with Iran,” *al-Modon*, 22 June 2017. <https://goo.gl/m1gKoG>

... the entire Shia world is mobilized. The Iraqi Army, alongside the international coalition, is mobilized to end the battle of Mosul. The Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces have met up with Syrian regime forces at the Syria-Iraq border. Iran’s “al-Alam” was the only channel to show the first images of this meeting, which once again points to loyalty toward Iran in the Shia groups fighting in Iraq and Syria...

Source: خطاب السيد نصر الله في يوم القدس العالمي كشف عن استراتيجية قتالية جديدة
Abd al-Bari Atwan, “Sayid Nasrallah’s Speech on ‘International Quds Day’ Unveils a New Combat Strategy,” *Rai al-Youm*, 24 June 2017. <http://www.raialyoum.com/?p=698410>

Nasrallah’s speech on International Jerusalem Day... warned that if Israel launched a war against Lebanon, Gaza, or Syria, “It is unknown whether the fighting would remain between Lebanon and Israel or Syria and Israel. Tens or even hundreds of thousands of mujahideen and fighters from throughout the Arab and Muslim Worlds may join in this battle. From Iraq, Yemen, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and throughout the Arab and Muslim nations”

Source: أزمة الخليج تسرع تطبيع علاقات حماس وحزب الله
Adnan Abu Amer, “Regional developments accelerate Hamas-Hezbollah reconciliation,” *Al-Monitor*, 2 July 2017. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/ar/originals/2017/06/palestine-hamas-lebanon-hezbollah-rapprochement.html>

After a five-year estrangement over their dispute on the Syrian crisis, Hamas and Hezbollah have held meetings in Beirut over the past few months to discuss the region’s latest developments... It is no secret that Hamas, despite having different positions regarding the Syrian crisis, needs Hezbollah when it comes to funding, training, securing supply lines for weapons and providing residence for Hamas cadres in Lebanon. For its part, Hezbollah needs a Palestinian movement, such as Hamas, to restore its popularity among Arab public opinion... Hamas, as a Sunni Islamic movement getting closer to the Shiite Hezbollah, may help dispel Hezbollah’s sectarian image... “Hezbollah has recently showed signs of its willingness to answer Hamas’ needs, in terms of the military and security experience among other things. Hamas and Hezbollah are in the same boat.”



Iran: Budget Increases for Missiles, Qods Force

OE Watch Commentary: Many Western diplomats hoped that the lifting of sanctions and new investments that accompanied the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) would bolster the hands of more reform-minded elements within the Iranian political spectrum. If money talks, however, it seems that more hardline elements have the upper hand in where and how to allocate funding. The accompanying remarks by Kazem Jalali, who runs the major research arm for Iran's parliament, suggest budget increases are looming for Iran's ballistic missile program and the Qods Force—the elite unit of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) charged with export of the revolution.

The March 2017 to March 2018 Iranian budget allocated \$7.4 billion to the IRGC. That figure funds not only the IRGC Ground Forces and Navy, but also IRGC universities and a large bureaucracy including the medical department, telecommunications, a personal department, and internal intelligence service. While the proportion of that which the Qods Force receives is not known, the \$307 million increase discussed by Jalali certainly represents a huge budgetary increase, by percentage most likely in the mid-double digits.

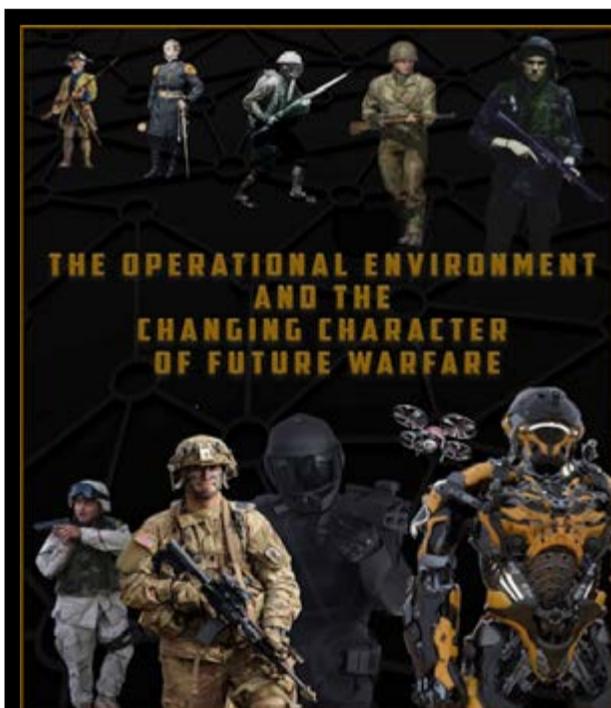
Jalali justifies the budgetary increase by discussing the need “to counter US terrorism.” The Iranian definition of terrorism is more subjective than objective and tends to be colored by an ideological antipathy to the United States. Iranian leaders and the IRGC justify much objectionable behavior by ‘resistance’ or ‘justice.’ When Iranian officials say they seek to counter US-backed terrorism, they may signal an intent to be more aggressive toward states allied with the United States in the region, such as Saudi Arabia, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait.

The increase in ballistic missile work signaled by a similar boost of \$307 million in the budget indicates a growing reliance by Iran on its ballistic missile forces (alongside its drone capabilities) as one of its fields of emphasis is asymmetric military strategy. This budget increase comes against the backdrop of the 19 June 2017 launch of ballistic missiles from Iran to targets in Syria; suggesting that the capability is no longer symbolic or limited to the testing stage. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“*[The Majlis] would allocate \$307 million for expanding missile activities and \$307 million for the Qods force....*”

Source: “Takhsis 2,000 milyar toman baraye Gosteresh-e fa’aliyatha-ye moshaki va sepah Qods” (Allocation of two trillion toman [\$615 million] to expand the activities of the missile [program] and Qods Force),” *Islamic Student News Agency*, 28 June 2017. <https://goo.gl/kgamry>

The head of the research center at the Majlis said that in the plan to counter the terrorism of America, it is forecasted that Iran would allocate one trillion tomans [\$307 million] for expanding missile activities and another trillion tomans [\$307 million] for the Qods force to fight terrorism. Kazem Jalali, in an interview with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, with reference to 17 draft articles before the Majlis to counter U.S. terrorism, said part of the plan is to support the armed forces with one trillion tomans for missile activities and one trillion tomans for the Qods Force to fight terrorism. In this regard, the Ministry of Defense is also obligated within a month to come up with an operational plan for submission to the Supreme National Security Council for increased defense capability and the deterrence of the country in the missile field...According to Jalali, the 10 sections of the plan include an introduction, definitions, strategy formulation, [discussion of] U.S. support for terrorism, [discussion of] U.S. human rights abuses, support for the Islamic Republic of Iran’s armed forces, countering U.S. economic sanctions, protecting Iranian citizens, and coordination.



The U.S. military, and therefore, the U.S. Army, finds itself at a historical inflection point, where disparate, yet related elements of the Operational Environment (OE) are converging, creating a situation where fast moving trends across the Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic (DIME) spheres are rapidly transforming the nature of all aspects of society and human life - including the character of warfare.

In **The Operational Environment and the Changing Character of Future Warfare**, the first part of this paper describes how technology will impact how we live, create, think and prosper. The authors then use this description to make an assessment on the OE and its implication on the future of warfare through 2050.

This paper can be found under Deep Futures Assessment on the TRADOC Mad Scientist web page at <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/watch/>



Iran: Rouhani Commends Iranian Missile Developers

OE Watch Commentary:

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani is often described by Western press, academics, and even some diplomats as a ‘reformer’ or ‘moderate.’ However, there is nothing in his record to justify such labels. First, for the late Supreme Leader Ruhollah Khomeini and now for his successor Ali Khamenei, Rouhani has often acted as the regime’s “Mr. Fix-it,” appointed or maneuvered into key positions in order to solve major problems potentially impacting regime stability. Hence, in 1988, Khomeini appointed him to a deputy position in Iran’s Joint Chiefs of Staff in order to oversee decommissioning after the Iran-Iraq War, and subsequently elevated him to chairman of the Supreme National Security Council.



President Rouhani commends Iranian missile developers before an audience of diplomats from Islamic countries on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr, 26 June 2017

Source Tasnim News, goo.gl/YHfTJS, CC BY 4.0

Rouhani also oversaw nuclear negotiations both between 2003-2005; and 2013-2015. His stewardship during the first period came against the backdrop of the exposure of Iran’s covert nuclear enrichment facility and in the latter part came as Iran’s economy suffered under international sanctions. While Rouhani succeeded in his mission in both cases to alleviate international and economic pressure on Iran, the idea that he sought to end Iran’s aggressiveness or even all aspects of its military nuclear program is not supported by any evidence.

Source: “Doktor Rouhani dar Didar Musulan-e Nizam va Safrayi Kashvarhayi Islami bah Moqam Ma’azem Rahbari (Doctor Rouhani in a Meeting with the Authorities and Ambassadors of Islamic Countries with the Supreme Leader),” *President.ir*, 26 June 2017. <http://president.ir/fa/99586>

“The administration and other pillars of the Islamic Republic will display their power, unity and integrity to the world anytime we feel it is necessary... Terrorists and the enemies of the Iranian nation must know that they cannot interrupt our empathy and national unity and that this nation, including Sunnis and Shi’a, are bravely standing against the enemies and will keep [our] national unity... Today, we must all work together to build Iran, heeding what the Supreme Leaders said in the beginning of the year... I also thank those who create strategic weapons for the country and those who use these strategic weapons well.”

Indeed, Rouhani appears as committed to Iran’s indigenous military programs and its ballistic missile work as are the so-called hardline factions in Iran’s political spectrum. His address, excerpted here, to a gathering of senior Iranian officials and ambassadors resident in Tehran from Islamic countries specifically signaled Iran’s gratitude and blessings to all of those involved in Iran’s missile programs and his endorsement of the 19 June 2017 launching of missiles from Iran to targets in Syria.

Furthermore, Rouhani delivered his remarks on the podium alongside the Supreme Leader, underscoring the unity of position of senior Iranian officials. Even if Rouhani privately dissents from Khamenei’s viewpoint—and there is no evidence to suggest that is true—his remarks are geared to end any speculation about ideological divergence at the top of the Islamic Republic’s hierarchy. The entirety of Rouhani’s speech—both in terms of substance and symbolism—is geared to show that the Supreme Leader, President, and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps all speak from the same page. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“I... thank those who create strategic weapons for the country and those who use these strategic weapons well.”



Iran Suspends Flights to Najaf, Iraq

OE Watch Commentary: Iran and Iraq are, respectively, the two largest Shi'ite-led, Shi'ite majority countries. Their mutual border is the longest for both countries and Iraq remains a major export market for Iranian manufacturing. Many Iraqi political groups and militias receive overt or covert Iranian support. However, the friendship and cooperation between the two neighbors is often exaggerated.

Iraqi politicians and civil society leaders resent the tendency of outside analysts to depict Iraq as an Iranian puppet. Beyond the ethnic differences between the two republics, there are also religious differences. The concept of clerical rule inaugurated by the late Iranian revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini is widely dismissed by the clerical leadership based in the Iraqi shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala, where senior ayatollahs advocate a greater separation between mosque and state. Economic interests also distinguish the two countries. Iraqi businessmen resent the Iranian dominance in some markets and accuse Iranian leaders of purposely dumping manufactured goods into the Iraqi market in order to undercut Iraqi factories.

It is against this backdrop that the excerpted report in the *Islamic Students' News Agency* is interesting: It suggests that Iranian authorities have suspended flights into Najaf International Airport, Iraq's main gateway for Shi'ite pilgrims. The bulk of the airport's traffic originates with Iran and so the cessation of Iranian flights is a major deal. That it impacts Shi'ite religious pilgrimage also highlights that religious homogeneity does not always correlate to political unity. Iran's decision to play hardball with Iraq over airport fees, highlights a long-simmering dispute over customs duties and fees imposed by Iraq.

The episode may also reflect Iraqi corruption. Maqsd Asadi-Samani, the secretary of the umbrella group representing multiple Iranian airlines, complained elsewhere in his interview that Najaf airport authorities want to charge Iranian airlines retrospectively for customs duties and seats—regardless of whether occupied—going back to 2010. Such a revenue grab seems to indicate that either Najaf airport authorities see an opportunity to raise a considerable amount of money or that they had hitherto lacked the capacity to collect what was owed. Whatever the ultimate resolution of the dispute, it may very well leave lasting resentments between the two neighbors. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“...Flights [from Iran to Najaf] are generally stopped.”

Source: “Pervazha-ye Iran beh Najaf Mostawqaf Shod (Iranian Flights to Najaf have been Stopped),” *Islamic Students' News Agency*, 1 July 2017. <https://goo.gl/CKP1gs>

The Secretary of Iran's Aviation Companies Association said: As previously stated, Iranian airlines stopped their flights to Najaf as of today [1 July 2017]. Maqsd Asadi-Samani, in a conversation with the Islamic Students' News Agency, said, “The Iranian airline companies, a few weeks ago had officially announced that if the Najaf airport did not change its position on the imposed conditions, they would stop their flights to that airport from today [1 July].” He continued, “Though it's likely that a limited number of flights continued to carry passengers from Najaf, but these flights are generally stopped.”

The Secretary of Iran's Aviation Companies Association also explained how to follow up and resolve it [the impasse]. Meetings have been scheduled today at the Najaf Airport with representatives of the civil aviation organization of the country and Iran's Aviation Companies Association, and they will have a dialogue, and we hope that the problems will be solved at this session...

A few weeks ago, Najaf Airport took an extraordinary step toward increasing the rates and fees of Iranian airlines, and Iranian companies said they would not be able to continue flights to Najaf at the current expense.



An airport departure board at Najaf International Airport showing the predominance of Iranian flights, 20 November 2015

Source: photograph by author



Israel and India Build Strategic Partnership

OE Watch Commentary: Israel has had close defense ties with India for many years. However, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel on 5 July -- the first by a sitting Indian prime minister-- elevated the relationship to the status of "strategic partnership." The accompanying passages from Indian and Israeli sources discuss the outcome of this visit and the agreements signed between the two countries, which include defense and space cooperation.

As the first accompanying passage from *The Hindu* points out, in addition to announcing a "strategic partnership," the two sides agreed to collaborate in the fields of water, agriculture, space, and establish a joint fund for research and innovation. Furthermore, the sides signed three Memorandums of Understanding on space cooperation, including "one for Electric Propulsion for Small Satellites, and for the development of an optical link as well as cooperation on atomic clocks." The development and research fund will be called the "I4F" which stands for "India Israel Industrial Innovation." Both governments will contribute \$20 million over the next five years to help scholars manufacture their inventions. The passage also notes that Mr. Modi had earlier coined the term "I4I" or "India for Israel," while Mr. Netanyahu had used the term "Indian talent and Israeli technology equals India-Israel ties for tomorrow."

The second accompanying passage from the Israeli daily *Haaretz* notes that Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) will broaden its cooperation with India, and that it has signed cooperation agreements with a number of Indian defense contractor companies. This includes a maintenance plant for the Barak 8 aerial defense system. The piece notes that this plant will also produce "precision munitions systems in cooperation with India's Kalyani Strategic Systems." It also points out that "IAI will transfer know-how regarding materials used in aviation for a new plant to be built in India," in conjunction with an Indian firm.

As the passage from *The Hindu* points out, the two sides also agreed on counter-terrorism cooperation, noting that strong measures should be taken against terrorists and terror organizations, particularly highlighting the need to "ensure that terrorist organizations do not get access to any weapons of mass destruction or technologies." The two sides are also discussing ways to expand economic ties, boost the number of flights between India and Israel, and ease visa requirements for workers. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

Source: Suhasini Haidar, "India, Israel to set up \$40 mn research fund," *The Hindu*, 6 July 2017. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-israel-to-set-up-40-mn-research-fund/article19217107.ece>

"India and Israel announced a strategic partnership between the two countries after a meeting between [Indian] Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu, and signed seven agreements in the fields of water, agriculture, space, including a \$40 million joint fund for research and development in innovation..."

"Without mentioning specifics of the counter-terrorism cooperation envisaged, they agreed that "strong measures should be taken against terrorists, terror organisations, their networks and all those who encourage, support and finance terrorism, or provide sanctuary to terrorists and terror groups." They also underscored the need to "ensure that terrorist organisations do not get access to any WMD [weapon of mass destruction] or technologies"..."

"...officials... discussed the possibility of "joint development of defense products, including the transfer of technology from Israel"..."

"This historical first-ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Israel solidified the enduring friendship between their peoples and raised the bilateral relationship to that of a strategic partnership," the joint statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs said.

"Three MOUs on space cooperation included one for Electric Propulsion for Small Satellites, and for the development of an optical link as well as cooperation on atomic clocks. The fund of development and research, called the "I4F" or India Israel Industrial Innovation Fund, will see both governments contribute \$20 million to help research scholars manufacture their inventions easily"..."

"At a meeting earlier with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, Mr. Modi had also coined the term, "I4I" or "India for Israel" as a response to Mr. Netanyahu's formula of "Indian talent and Israeli technology equals India-Israel ties for tomorrow."

Source: Gili Cohen, Hagai Amit, Ora Coren and Eliran Rubin, "India and Israel's Largest Aerospace Company to Broaden Cooperation," *Haaretz.com*, 6 July 2017. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/1.799788>

"Israel Aerospace Industries will broaden its cooperation with India, making the announcement Wednesday during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel"..."

"... IAI did announce Wednesday that it has signed cooperation agreements with a number of Indian defense contractor companies.

These include a maintenance plant for the Barak 8 aerial defense system, which was developed jointly in India and Israel and which has generated more than \$2.5 billion in sales to India.

The plant itself will also produce precision munitions systems in cooperation with India's Kalyani Strategic Systems. In addition, IAI will transfer know-how regarding materials used in aviation for a new plant to be built in India in conjunction with Indian firm Wipro."

"This historical first-ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Israel solidified the enduring friendship between their peoples and raised the bilateral relationship to that of a strategic partnership..."



How China is Shaping Africa's Next Generation of Leaders

OE Watch Commentary: One might think that African Anglophone students would gravitate towards two of the world's biggest English speaking countries, the US and UK, when choosing to study abroad. However, as the accompanying article relates, these students are instead choosing to go to China to further their education. The numbers doing so are quite impressive, jumping from just under 2,000 in 2003 to nearly 50,000 in 2015, a 25 fold increase. Especially notable is the year 2014, which is when African student enrollment in Chinese schools exceeded the approximately 40,000 who enroll in US and UK schools. China is now the second most popular choice for African students who study abroad; with France, which draws heavily from African Francophone countries, first at 95,000.

Why is China attracting so many African students? A major reason is financial aid, and as the article describes, "the Chinese government's targeted focus on African human resource and education development." For example, at a 2015 summit, the country pledged to provide 30,000 scholarships to African students by 2018. As a result, the proportion of African international students in Chinese schools has risen from 2% in 2013 to 13% in



Increasingly African high school students, such as these, are choosing to attend college in China

Source: Mahyar Sheykhi, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:African_high_school_students_1.jpg, CCA-SA 4.0.

2015, with further increases expected in future years. Most African students enroll in engineering schools, which the article surmises might be because these have English as their language of instruction. Interestingly, because Chinese schools are so inexpensive, many African students are choosing to attend them even if they do not receive considerable financial aid.

Having African students go to Chinese universities is beneficial for both the students and China. For the students it is an affordable education and a large pool of contacts. In addition, they are likely to learn Chinese, "the language of a country presumed to be a rising power." For China, providing these scholarships is part of its soft power approach towards Africa. As the article points out, these students will likely be more willing to work with China and view its policies favorably.

Nearly all African students who study in China return to Africa after they complete their schooling, as China requires them to do so. Besides helping to ensure the aforementioned African goodwill towards China, it also benefits Africa as these individuals bring the new skills they learned back to their home continent. This contrasts markedly with the US, UK, and France where many African students remain after their studies, contributing mightily to a problem described as the "African brain drain." Thus, China is making significant progress in shaping Africa's next generation of leaders, even English speaking ones, at the expense of western nations. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

“This dramatic increase in students from Africa can be explained in part by the Chinese government's targeted focus on African human resource and education development.”

Source: "China tops US and UK as destination for anglophone African students," *The Conversation (South Africa)*, 27 June 2017.

<https://theconversation.com/china-tops-us-and-uk-as-destination-for-anglophone-african-students-78967>

This dramatic increase in students from Africa can be explained in part by the Chinese government's targeted focus on African human resource and education development. Starting in 2000, China's Forum on China-Africa Cooperation summits have promised financial and political support for African education at home and abroad in China.

Since 2006, China has set scholarship targets to aid African students coming to China for study.

It's difficult to know exactly which African countries are sending the most students to China. These details are not kept by the Chinese Ministry of Education. But the statistics from Tsinghua University provide an insight. In the 2015-2016 academic year, the majority of the university's 111 African students came from Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Morocco, Eritrea, and Cameroon – slightly favoring East Africa.

Some simply go to pursue an education that is affordable, even without a scholarship, while others go for the chance to develop business connections or learn the language of a country presumed to be a rising power.



China's Growing Trade and Influence in Africa

OE Watch Commentary: A recent report from global consulting firm McKinsey and Company demonstrates the astonishing growth in economic ties between China and Africa. As the accompanying article relates, since 2000, trade between the two has increased by about 20% per year. Chinese foreign direct investment into Africa has grown even faster, averaging a breakneck speed of 40% per year over the past decade. Chinese trade with sub-Saharan Africa alone was \$170 billion in 2013, an amount that almost surely has increased since then.

With growing trade comes growing influence, and China's influence is certainly growing in Africa, especially East Africa. Among the eight countries surveyed in the report, three countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania – stood out as having the most advanced and growing trade and economic relationships with China. In fact, China provided partial or full funding for three of East Africa's largest infrastructure projects: Ethiopia's 6,000MW Grand Renaissance Dam which will cost \$4.1 billion, Kenya's \$3.8 billion Mombasa-Nairobi standard gauge railway, and Uganda's \$2.2 billion 600MW Karuma Hydropower Plant. The report also notes extensive railroad projects financed by China.

Ethiopian government statistics reveal that Chinese investments have resulted in 1,300 miles of paved road in that country since 2010 and a 15% increase in power supply between 2010 and 2014. The \$3.4 billion, 480 mile Ethiopia-Djibouti railroad that opened in 2016 was built by Chinese firms and is now co-managed by them.

Since nearly a quarter of the 1,000 firms surveyed in the McKinsey and Company study said they recovered their initial investments in a year or less, and a third said they recorded profits of more than 20%, it is not surprising that the report forecasts increased growth and dominance of China in Africa. It is estimated that by 2025, Chinese firms could see annual revenues of \$400 billion generated from China's African investments.

As high as these numbers are, it is worth noting that according to the World Bank, some Chinese investments in sub-Saharan Africa may be underestimated. As an example, foreign direct investment by the Chinese, using alternative estimates, was placed at \$61 billion in 2013, more than double the official figure. In other words, the already large estimate for Chinese investment in Africa could be substantially larger, as could Chinese influence. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

“China is now Africa's most important partner in trade, investment, infrastructure financing and aid.”



The Mombasa-Nairobi standard gauge railway is just one of several African megaprojects receiving Chinese financing

Source: Mwangi Kirubi, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mwangee/34181402040/>, CC BY-NC 2.0.

Source: “China most important African trade partner,” *The East African*, 4 July 2017. <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/business/China-most-important-African-trade-partner--/2560-3998956-a07dq1z/index.html>

China is now Africa's most important partner in trade, investment, infrastructure financing and aid.

According to the World Bank, official data on Chinese financial flows may be underestimating the extent of China's investment in sub-Saharan Africa.

“China is absolutely key to Africa. It is an investor, it is the contractor of choice, and China injected much needed competition in African companies' negotiations with other trading partners,” said Aly Khan Satchu, the chief executive officer of investment advisory firm Rich Management.

The report also forecasts more growth and dominance of China in Africa, boosted by high returns on investment and the large potential for growth and expansion.

“We are on the cusp of a big ticket transfer of low-cost manufacturing jobs from China to Africa and we cannot afford to miss this opportunity,” Mr. Satchu said.



Al-Shabaab Launches Deadly Attacks in Kenya

OE Watch Commentary: Al-Shabaab, a terrorist group with ties to al-Qaeda, continues to launch deadly attacks beyond Somalia, where it originated. As the accompanying articles note, Kenya was the recent recipient of al-Shabaab's attention, with two separate attacks killing 12 people. By launching attacks on Kenyan territory, al-Shabaab puts pressure on Kenya to reconsider the costs of supporting the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).

The first attack was in the town of Lamu where, following a fierce gun battle, the toll on the police was initially two reported killed but later revised to three, several seriously wounded, and seven missing. Three days later an attack in the same region, which is near the Somali border, resulted in nine fatalities, including several who were reportedly hacked to death. These attacks occurred barely two weeks after eight people died – four police officers and four students – when their vehicle ran over a landmine reportedly planted by the terrorist organization.

The border between Somalia and Kenya is quite long, making Kenyan efforts to prevent al-Shabaab from launching cross border attacks extremely difficult. Additionally, it is believed that some attacks, including possibly the ones discussed in the articles, originate from al-Shabaab terrorists already living on the Kenyan side of the border in the Boni National Reserve, a large forested area affording them an excellent hideout.

Though al-Shabaab has suffered a string of setbacks in Somalia, most noticeably being forced out of the capital, Mogadishu, the jihadist fundamentalist group has still been able to launch devastating terrorist attacks within that country. Still the territory it controls has been shrinking, in large part due to efforts by the Somali military and AMISOM, of which Kenyan troops are one of the contingents.

About a year ago, articles on attacks by al-Shabaab would include the assumed reason why they occurred, usually given as reprisals for Kenya sending troops into Somalia to battle the terrorist organization. Interestingly these two accompanying articles as well as several other recent ones in the Kenyan press noticeably did not include any explanation for the attacks. The absence of this information is likely due to al-Shabaab attacks in Kenya becoming so common that the media feels it is no longer necessary to explain why they are happening. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**



Al-Shabaab is launching deadly attacks in Kenya to force that country to withdraw its soldiers, such as the ones shown here serving in AMISOM, from Somalia

Source: AMISOM Public Information, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AMISOM_and_allied_forces_enter_Kismayo_18_\(8049935771\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AMISOM_and_allied_forces_enter_Kismayo_18_(8049935771).jpg), Public Domain.

“Nine people were killed, some were shot dead and others hacked,” a police officer from the region told Capital FM News.”

Source: Kalume Kazungu and Mohamed Ahmed, “Kenya: 2 Police Dead, 7 Missing After ‘Shabaab’ Attack in Lamu,” *Daily Nation/AllAfrica*, 5 July 2017. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201707050744.html>

“Two police officers have been killed and seven others are missing in their battle against suspected Al-Shabaab fighters in Lamu.

Two of the suspected militants, who attempted to raze the Pandanguo Police Post, were also felled in the gun fight on Wednesday morning.”

“...[A senior administrator] said the over 200 fighters struck at the crack of dawn after holding prayers in a mosque.”

Source: Bernard Momanyi, “Nine People Killed in Lamu ‘Al-Shabaab’ Attack,” *CapitalFM (Kenya)*, 8 July 2017. <http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2017/07/nine-people-killed-lamu-al-shabaab-attack/>

“Nine people were killed, some were shot dead and others hacked,” a police officer from the region told Capital FM News.

Police sources said the attack occurred at Jima and Pandanguo villages near the border with Somalia which has been prone to attacks in recent weeks, mainly targeting security forces.



The Threat al-Shabaab Poses to Kenya's Election

by Sunguta West

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OE Watch Commentary: With Kenyans heading to the polls on 8 August, voting once again against the backdrop of the security threat posed by al-Shabaab, the recent supposed theft by militants of an electronic voting kit has raised fears that the group could seek to directly target the election process. Kenya goes into its 2017 election using a biometric voter registration system, candidate registration system and electronic voter identification. These could all be targeted, according to some government officials. The group could also seek to disrupt the polls in a more traditional manner.

In February 2017, suspected al-Shabaab fighters reportedly stole biometric voter registration kits belonging to Kenya's elections manager, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission. The militants attacked a local police station in Mandera, over-powering the 21 police officers manning the station before making off with the kits, three guns, ammunition, a police vehicle and a motorcycle.

Analysts say that by targeting the electronic process, the militants would be attempting to turn public opinion against the government by showing its inability to secure the election process. The second accompanying passage, written by the chief executive of the Africa Policy Institute and a former Kenya government advisor from 2008-2013 specifically says that "violent extremism and cyber-terrorism have immense potential to undermine public confidence and trust in the electoral process."

However, the chances of a cyber-attack are slim. There is no direct evidence to suggest that the group has acquired the technology to deploy a cyber or electronic attack. They are not known to have executed one in the past, although they have targeted telecommunication installations, as the first passage indicates. More likely, the threat that al-Shabaab poses to the polls on 8 August is of a more traditional nature, coming from grenades, guns and explosives than in the form of an electronic attack. The group recently stepped up attacks in the border areas of Garissa, Mandera and Wajir, carrying out attacks in regions that are poorly policed.

Queuing voters at polling stations are a potential soft target for the militants. In the past, they have used grenades and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) to attack public places, the police, churches and other institutions. Polling centers, which are usually poorly policed or set up without considering the possibility of a strike by militants, could be relatively easy targets.

Furthermore, the kidnapping of election officials cannot be ruled out. The militant group is known to kidnap aid workers, tourists and other officials for ransom. Five years ago such abductions prompted Kenya to send its troops into Somalia.

In a country that has seen significant electoral violence in the past, that could ignite tempers and even drive calls for the withdrawal of Kenyan Defense Forces in Somalia in order to bolster security at home. An effective attack of this nature could disrupt and destabilize the country. **End OE Watch Commentary (West)**

“The twin challenges of violent extremism and cyber-terrorism have immense potential to undermine public confidence and trust in the electoral process...”

Source: Al shabaab can interfere with electronic voting system, CS [Cabinet Secretary] Mucheru says,” *The Star (Kenya)*, 29 December 2016. http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2016/12/29/al-shabaab-can-interfere-with-electronic-voting-system-cs-mucheru_c1479566

“We are at war with al-Shabaab who are known to interfere with communication systems,” he [Joe Mucheru, the Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Cabinet Secretary] said.

Source: Peter Kagwanja, “Insulating the 2017 election against violent extremism,” *Daily Nation (Kenya)*, 10 June 2017. <http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/Opinion/Insulating-the-2017-election-against-violent-extremism/440808-3965154-m7ajse/index.html>

“The twin challenges of violent extremism and cyber-terrorism have immense potential to undermine public confidence and trust in the electoral process...”



Voters queue to vote at the General elections that were held on March 4th 2013

Source: By User:Stephenwanjau (Own work), https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/45/Queue_at_a_voting_centre_in_Kenya.jpeg, [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons.



Five African Countries Launch Joint Force to Combat Terrorism in Sahel

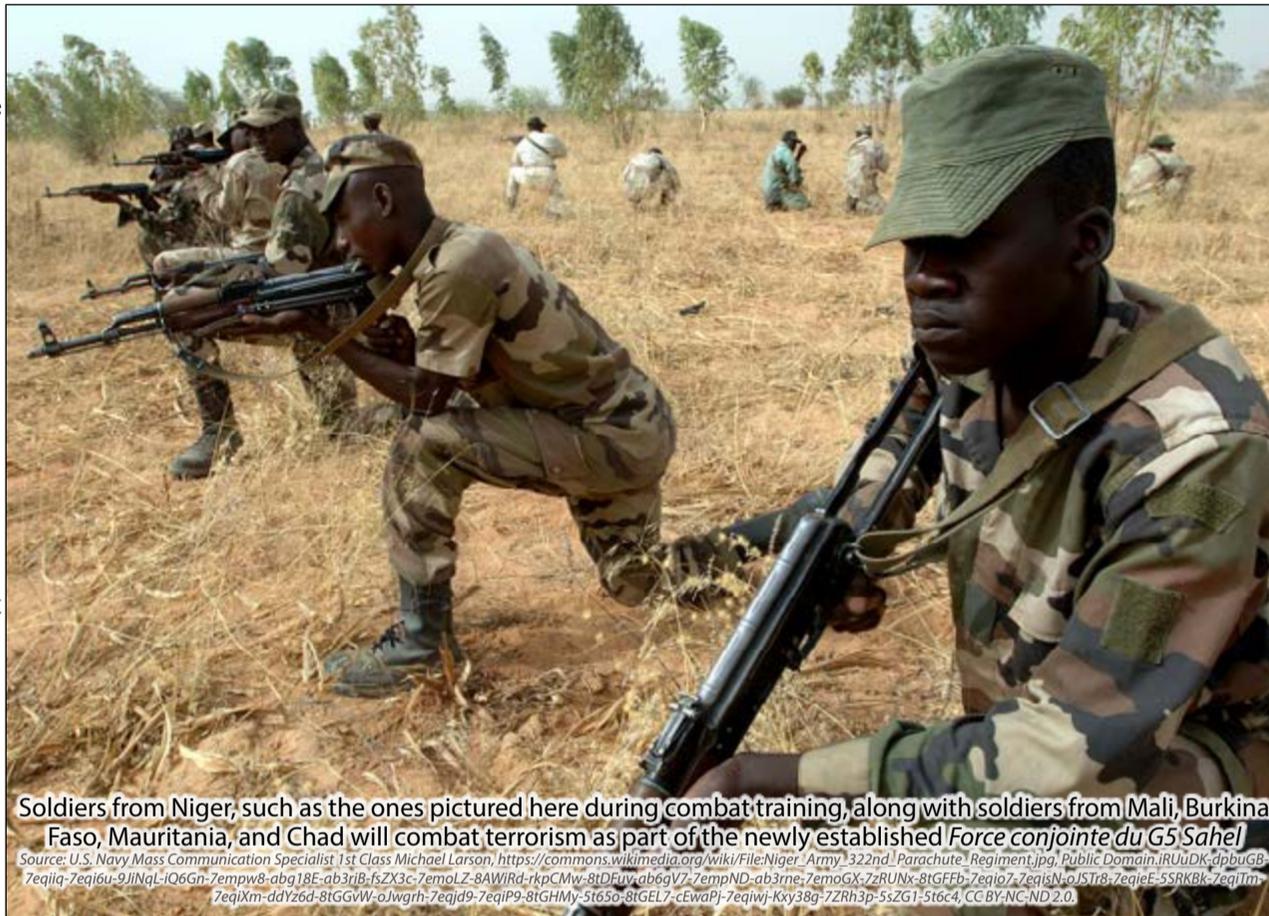
OE Watch Commentary: With the African Union's long awaited African Standby Force (ASF) - a force intended to be capable of functioning continent wide - still not functional, Chad, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mali, and Niger launched the "Force conjointe du G5 Sahel" (G5 Sahel Joint Force, or the FC-G5S) to combat terrorism in their sub-region. According to the accompanying article, this joint force will be comprised of 5,000 troops deployed along the Mali-Mauritania border; the Niger-Chad border; and the cross-border region between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger known as the Liptako Gourma.

The African Union's Peace and Security Council (PSC), roughly the equivalent of the UN's Security Council (UNSC), has endorsed the FC-G5S's concept of operations. However, when the PSC asked the UNSC to approve the force's deployment and essentially identify means to support it - which would have meant passing a resolution under Chapter VII of the UN Charter - the UN declined to do so, opting to welcome its deployment without explicitly approving it. The article relates that this might have been because the FC-G5S would include troops intervening in their own territories, an activity that does not fit the UN's legal framework of peacekeeping operations. Thus, the UNSC stated it is the five countries of the Sahel which created the FC-G5S that need to provide the force with adequate resources. Though the European Union has pledged 50 million euros to the force, with a projected first year budget of 423 million euros, funding is falling far short of what is deemed necessary.

Besides a significant lack of funding, the other major concern is what structure the FC-G5S will take. Though its name includes the word "joint," it is uncertain whether it will truly be an integrated force or one that is just a coalition of battalions with national commands. The latter model has caused recurrent problems with command and control where it is used by the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM). Additionally, a poorly designed force structure could create issues regarding the FC-G5S's right of pursuit across borders.

The creation of the FC-G5S is an ambitious undertaking by the five nations to combat the extremist groups operating in the area. These include Ansar Dine and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara along the Niger-Mali border; and Katiba Macina and Ansaru Islam along the Mali-Burkina Faso border. There are other factors that contribute to instability in the region, such as the often violent confrontations between pastoralists and farmers; the void created by corrupt and inefficient governance; and blunders by security forces. The article points out that this instability cannot be addressed solely by a military approach, such as sending in the FC-G5S unaccompanied by development and institution building resources. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

"...the G5 Sahel heads of state announced that a new force would be set up to fight terrorism in the sub-region."



Soldiers from Niger, such as the ones pictured here during combat training, along with soldiers from Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Chad will combat terrorism as part of the newly established Force conjointe du G5 Sahel

Source: U.S. Navy Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Michael Larson, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Niger_Army_322nd_Parachute_Regiment.jpg, Public Domain, IRUUDK-dpbuGB-7eqliq-7eqi6u-9JiNqL-iQ6Gn-7empw8-abg18E-ab3rjB-fsZX3c-7emoLZ-8AWiRd-rkpCMw-8tDFuv-abg9V7-7empND-ab3rne-7emoGX-7zRUNX-8tGFFb-7eqi07-7eqisN-oJST8-7eqieE-5SRKbK-7eqiIm-7eqiXm-ddYz6d-8tGGWw-oJwgrh-7eqjd9-7eqiP9-8tGHMY-5t65b-8tGEL7-cEwdPJ-7eqiwj-kxy38g-7ZRh3p-5zZG1-5t6c4, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Source: "Challenges and opportunities for the G5 Sahel force," *Institute for Security Studies (South Africa)*, 7 July 2017. <https://issafrica.org/pscreport/situation-analysis/challenges-and-opportunities-for-the-g5-sahel-force>

On 2 July 2017 leaders of the G5 Sahel, which consists of Chad, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mali and Niger, officially launched the new G5 Sahel force, in the presence of French President Emmanuel Macron. This followed a meeting in February 2017 in which the G5 Sahel heads of state announced that a new force would be set up to fight terrorism in the sub-region.

Moreover, the [UN Security] council also recalled that it was the responsibility of the G5 Sahel states 'to provide [the force with] the adequate resources', while encouraging 'further support from bilateral and multilateral partners'.

The FC-G5S illustrates the collective ambition of its members to address the growing insecurity in the Sahel despite the presence of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and France's Operation Barkhane, which is deployed across the G5 states. These forces have been hampered by an inadequate mandate to fight terrorism and limited capabilities in an extensive area with little state control, respectively. The new force, by focusing on terrorism and transnational crime in the border regions, is supposed to fill these gaps.

Apart from the financial challenges, the main endogenous challenge is the structure of the force. Will it be just a coalition of battalions with national commands, or an integrated one?



The Return of Somali Pirates

OE Watch Commentary: It was 2008 when piracy in the Gulf of Aden started to escalate. Somalia's Transitional Federal Government paid little attention to the activity as it was busy fighting the Islamic extremist group al-Shabaab and others for control of the country. As the piracy worsened, merchant ships began to carry armed guards which, combined with a multinational naval task force patrolling the waters, eventually resulted in a significant decrease in vessels being seized. However, piracy has recently returned, even with these measures still in place. The accompanying excerpt suggests a possible explanation for the return of Somali pirates.

To understand this new burst of piracy, it is necessary to review the roots of its cause. Before the outbreak of piracy in 2008, many of the soon-to-be pirates were actually fishermen from Puntland. However, illegal fishing by foreign vessels in their territorial waters led them to take up arms. When foreign ship owners started paying large ransoms for the release of their vessels, Somalia's organized crime network took note and soon became heavily involved. Though international naval intervention and armed guards on ships helped, they were not enough to completely eradicate piracy, as young men from Puntland still needing income were willing to take the risk.

To reduce piracy, the United Nations helped open a prison in Garowe, Puntland's "capital" in 2014, which provided training for pirates so that they could have alternatives for making a living. With these actions, piracy in the region seemed to be eliminated or at least greatly curtailed. However, all this began to change recently when al-Shabaab launched several attacks in Puntland, and Puntland forces also became embroiled with Somaliland over a border dispute. According to the article, pirates took advantage of these distractions to the armed forces and government to once again seize or attempt to seize vessels.

March saw the first successful hijacking by the pirates in five years. The ship was released two days later. In May a South Korean vessel fell prey and is still missing. Fortunately an attempt on a Greek oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman was foiled by onboard security. However, as the article relates, Puntland and greater Somalia need to become stronger in order to finally end this scourge of piracy, a scourge that abated but returned when Puntland's already overstretched government and armed forces were stretched even further and distracted from their antipiracy efforts. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

“In this kind of volatile climate, it is clear that despite renewed support from the international community... the government in Puntland is nowhere near strong enough to exert control over its inhabitants to override the desire for profit through piracy.”



Military efforts, such as the US Navy and Coast Guard capturing suspected pirates, have greatly helped to reduce piracy, but addressing the problem's root causes such as poverty have proven difficult

Source: U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Eric L. Beauregard, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pirates_capture-May_2009.jpg, Public Domain.

Source: “Somali pirates are back. Only a strong state can put an end to their activities,” *The Conversation (South Africa)*, 3 July 2017. <https://theconversation.com/somali-pirates-are-back-only-a-strong-state-can-put-an-end-to-their-activities-80157>

And in its last push to defeat the extremist group before the mission's planned total withdrawal from Somalia by 2020, AMISOM continues to seek financial and logistical support.

The mission is unique in that it is entirely dependent on unreliable funding from partners and donors; its main troop contributors are Somalia's neighbors – Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda – who all have security interests in the country; and it is engaged in an all-out war with al-Shabaab.

Based on these challenges, AMISOM has seen both major success and outright failure over the past decade, compounded by severe losses in manpower.

While the mission has been praised, it has also received criticism for not having done enough in terms of building the capacity of Somalia's institutions, especially regarding governance, security and justice. The challenge to secure areas recovered from al-Shabaab and hand over primary responsibilities to Somali security actors continues to vex the mission because of the gap in institution-building.

In this sense, it could be argued that AMISOM doesn't have the proper mandate or capacity to support the establishment and enhancement of Somalia's institutions, which are vital for state rebuilding.

Given the failed state of Somalia, AMISOM should have been given a comprehensive mandate that goes beyond just providing security. It should include helping to build state institutions, strengthening rule of law and justice, supporting peacebuilding, facilitating reconciliation of conflicts among the divided clans and sub-clans, monitoring human rights, and coordinating humanitarian support.



'Eco-Militaries' for Wildlife Protection?

OE Watch Commentary: Foreign armies, private military contractors and UN peacekeepers are moving into wildlife protection, often by assisting and/or training local park rangers; and in some instances, taking up arms against the poachers themselves. This is driven by concerns about ties between terrorists and poachers who sport increasingly heavy armament. The double benefit of these operations - for example protecting elephants and fighting Boko Haram at the same time – certainly sounds like a good idea. However, the accompanying article argues that such militarization of conservation may not address the problem, and may even have potential counterproductive effects.

Perhaps the biggest criticism is that these seemingly benign “eco-militaries” distract attention from important issues, such as the underlying causes of poaching, the role poverty plays in it, and whether or not the local populace welcomes these conservation armies. Further complicating matters is that the indigenous population itself might be involved in poaching for subsistence reasons. Additionally, it can be easy to forget that a great deal of poaching is driven by wealthier countries, and that these eco-militaries are not punishing those who are driving the demand for ivory, exotic animals, and such but instead punishing sometimes marginalized people who might just be trying to survive. As a result, at least two international organizations have campaigned against abuses of African forest-dependent communities by militarized conservation forces.

There are also questions regarding how much poaching is actually done by terrorists. As the article discusses, because of misinformation, miscommunications, and sometimes just poor journalism, some poaching is falsely attributed to terrorists. Unfortunately these stories gain traction and are difficult to stop even after they have been debunked, especially when private security forces, governments worried about terrorism, and others see an opportunity to expand their operations. This is not to say that no terrorist organizations are involved in poaching, but rather the extent is unknown and may have been exaggerated.

The Game Rangers Association of Africa, an organization whose people have often benefited from training and equipment by foreign militaries, provides some of the most cogent reasons to rethink the way militarization of conservation is being handled. These include a lack of coordination among role-players, foreign forces lacking an understanding of the operating environment such as the bush, and a failure to appreciate the political, cultural and social environment, with that last one warning that heavy-handed approaches with the indigenous people can be counterproductive. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

“Not everyone is happy to see them: the Game Rangers Association of Africa recently issued a statement raising concerns about the growth of military personnel from beyond Africa involved in ranger training and anti-poaching operations across the continent.”



While many agree that poaching must be stopped in order to prevent the loss of wildlife, such as this mother rhinoceros and her child killed for their horns, the increasing militarization of conservation efforts is being called into question
Source: Hein Waschefort, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rhino_poaching.jpg, CCA-SA 3.0.

Source: “Foreign ‘conservation armies’ in Africa may be doing more harm than good,” *The Conversation (South Africa)*, 12 July 2017. <https://theconversation.com/foreign-conservation-armies-in-africa-may-be-doing-more-harm-than-good-80719>

Not everyone is happy to see them: the Game Rangers Association of Africa recently issued a statement raising concerns about the growth of military personnel from beyond Africa involved in ranger training and anti-poaching operations across the continent.

Often, terrorism is used to justify a military presence in national parks and game reserves. But, though linking ivory with terrorism makes for attention grabbing headlines, there is no credible evidence to support such claims.

In one well-documented case, Baka people in Cameroon were allegedly abused by eco-guards who had been trained by a private company and funded by the WWF. Though such stories document the use of violence against some of the most marginalized peoples in the world, they don't grab headlines as easily as a friendly “eco-army.”

In the longer-term, “conservation armies” can't fix any of the above. At worst, they will be counterproductive and alienate the very communities needed to make conservation work.



In Colombia, Another Terrorist Organization?

OE Watch Commentary: A new terrorist group might have made a clumsy, violent error in Colombia. According to regional reports, it appears that militants of the Revolutionary Peoples Movement (*Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo*, MRP), were responsible for the 17 June bombing attack at a prominent up-scale shopping mall in Bogotá that killed three and injured nine. The reports describe the organization as Marxist, leftist, and FARC-friendly.

The explosion seems to have been premature, as one of the fatalities was perhaps one of the intending perpetrators, but this latter idea is yet to be resolved. From eight to a dozen MRP militants have already been apprehended and charged in connection with the attack, so it may result that this particular attempt at revolutionary expression did not further their cause.

According to reports, the group has been responsible for some past actions that caused property damage due to the detonation of pamphlet bombs. The goal of this recent action may have been more extreme, but the fatalities might also have been a mistake caused by carelessness with the explosives. Regardless, the future of the organization appears at risk if the prosecutions proceed successfully. The event has caused a widespread intercontinental media drama, due in part to the French nationality of one of the fatalities, and in part because the crime, according to local sources, was at first curiously and incompetently investigated.

Highly regarded Colombian analyst and commentator, Eduardo Mackenzie (working out of Paris) reports that the German journal *Die Linke* (*The Left*) quickly came to the defense of the MRP personnel who were arrested, as did a far left German legislator, Heike Hänsel. One of the sources' inferences is that the poor government effort at investigation is somehow related to the FARC connection, that the government of Manuel Santos has followed a policy of doing and saying little that might further taint its unfolding power-sharing agreement with the FARC. In any case, we might ask if the firmament of radical leftist organizations in Colombia now has more space available as the FARC retires units from the field; if movement leaders are diversifying and orienting FARC remnants and novitiates; or if a new generation is just experimenting in revolutionary behavior. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

“...Specified in these documents are surrounding addresses, possible escape routes...”

Source: Editors, “En Andino hallaron restos de panfletos, Jueza señaló las evidencias respaldan las sospechas contra el MRP (Remains of Pamphlets Found in Andino, Judge indicates that the evidence supports the suspicions against the MRP),” *El Espectador*, 30 June 2017. <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/bogota/en-andino-hallaron-restos-de-panfletos-articulo-700927>

Considerable evidence ...“For the judge, the evidence presented by the accusing entity are sufficient to infer that they would be the ones responsible for the attack...”

There was one detail that proved noteworthy: the Judge mentioned that in the Andino it seems they found the remains of pamphlets that were similar to those left by that organization in other attacks....

Detectives [also] found a calendar notebook in the residence of who they indicate is the leader of the organization, in which, apparently, activities prior to the execution of the attack are referenced in red ink. ‘Specified in these documents are surrounding addresses, possible escape routes (“this way and not that, because there is a CTV”), the radio frequencies of security patrols, the number of patrols and ways to move without calling attention to themselves’...”

“...those detained in the framework of the investigation for Andino Center killing are not ordinary people...”

Source: Eduardo Mackenzie, “¿Por qué Die Linke gesticula contra el Fiscal por investigar el atentado en el centro Andino? (Why is The Left gesturing against the DA for investigating the attack at the Andino Mall?),” *Periódico Debate*, 3 July 2017. <http://www.periodicodebate.com/index.php/opinion/columnistas-nacionales/item/15741-por-que-die-linke-gesticula-contra-el-fiscal-por-investigar-el-atentado-en-el-centro-andino>

German leftists interested “...Four days ago [30 June] an extreme left German legislator, Heike Hänsel, sent a furious letter to the Colombian Attorney General, Néstor Humberto Martínez. In it she criticized the efforts the Office of the Attorney General is making to capture and prosecute those responsible for the bloody attack at the Andino Center shopping mall in Bogotá, this past June 17th, where three young women died (including the Frenchwoman Julie Huynh) and another nine were gravely wounded....

Heike Hänsel’s coarse intervention confirms that those detained in the framework of the investigation for Andino Center killing are not ordinary people, as they claim, but that they have, at least, international support and sophisticated juridical support that is coming from afar. Die Linke is the continuation, under new clothing, of the communist party of the DRG,...Die Linke is an ardent partisan of the dictator Nicolás Maduro... Heike Hänsel’s web page embraces and publishes FARC’s Twitter pages.”



FARC Census

OE Watch Commentary: An interesting set of data recently came out of the Colombian FARC-government power sharing agreement in Colombia. A census was recently taken of the demobilizing FARC force. The sources reveal little about its category definitions or methodology other than that the survey was taken electronically using tablets to interview FARC members in the 26 demobilization localities, plus several prisons and welcoming points. The survey was designed at the National University, and the results presented in the company of the director of the Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization; a university rector, and a member of the FARC Secretariat.

This is quite a gem for those analysts who have suffered within the obscure art of counting insurgents and gangsters. The takeaways are, of course, subject to a wide range of interpretation and contextualizing, as the titles of the two source articles attest. The reports state that 10,015 FARC members were surveyed. The sources did not indicate what percentage of total strength that is, but it may be close to the total FARC membership. The data given show 77% were men and 33% women. Only 55% of the respondents were categorized as guerrillas, however. About 29% were categorized as militia and another 16% as prisoners.

The data show a mostly rural force with a more-or-less representative proportion of black foot soldiers and a percentage of members identifying as indigenous that is much higher than in the country as a whole. Such numbers might be expected given the geographic range of the FARC over time. “Pastor” Alape [Felix Muñoz], a member of the FARC secretariat, suggested that the survey reflects the reality of Colombia. That may very well be. Of the fewer than one hundred foreigners revealed as such in the survey, 54 responded that they were Venezuelan and 16 as Ecuadoran. If nothing else, this would reflect the spatial reality of rural smuggling and escape routes to those countries. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

“...The census reflects the reality of Colombia...”



Source: Censo socio-económico a las farc revela que más de 100 son extranjeros (Socio-economic census of the FARC reveals that more than 100 are foreigners),” RCN Radio, 6 July 2017. <http://www.rcnradio.com/nacional/censo-socio-económico-a-las-farc-revela-que-mas-de-100-son-extranjeros/>

Few surprises ...“Of the total of 10,015 members of the FARC who were surveyed for the socio-economic census, it was found that 99% are Colombian and the rest foreigners. On presenting the report, the National University and DANE [national statistics agency] explained that of the total 66% were of rural origin and 19% urban.... Of the foreigners in the FARC, 54 are Venezuelans, 16 Ecuadorans, 8 Brazilians, and the rest, between 1 and 2, from France, Holland, Chile, Argentina, Panama, and the Dominican Republic. ...Fifty-four percent of the ex-combatants have children...At the time the data was gathered 168 women were pregnant, 7.2% of the female membership of the FARC...The surveys were made with tablets that had an IT model developed by engineers [who] graduated from the National University and with an average of 32 minutes per person.”

“...Of the foreigners in the FARC, 54 are Venezuelans, 16 Ecuadorans...”

Source: Paola Fernández, “Censo socio-económico de las FARC-EP revela esfuerzo educativo hecho por la guerrilla (Socio-economic census of the FARC-EP reveals educational effort made by the guerrilla),” *Pazífico Noticias* and YouTube, 7 July 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDxWj4mVXtw>

Data as messaging? “...looking to obtain data for the strategy for reincorporation into civilian life. ‘... these results [will] define ... the direction for a public policy that is responsible to this community, to the communities that receive them and that can truly transform the dynamic of this country, broadening and deepening democracy....”

[from background slides] 66% rural, 19 % urban, 15% urban-rural, 77% men, 23% women...18% indigenous, 12% black...
2,267 women, 168 pregnant...

One of the facts that we can take away from the study is the good academic level of the insurgents. Ninety percent know how to read and write...

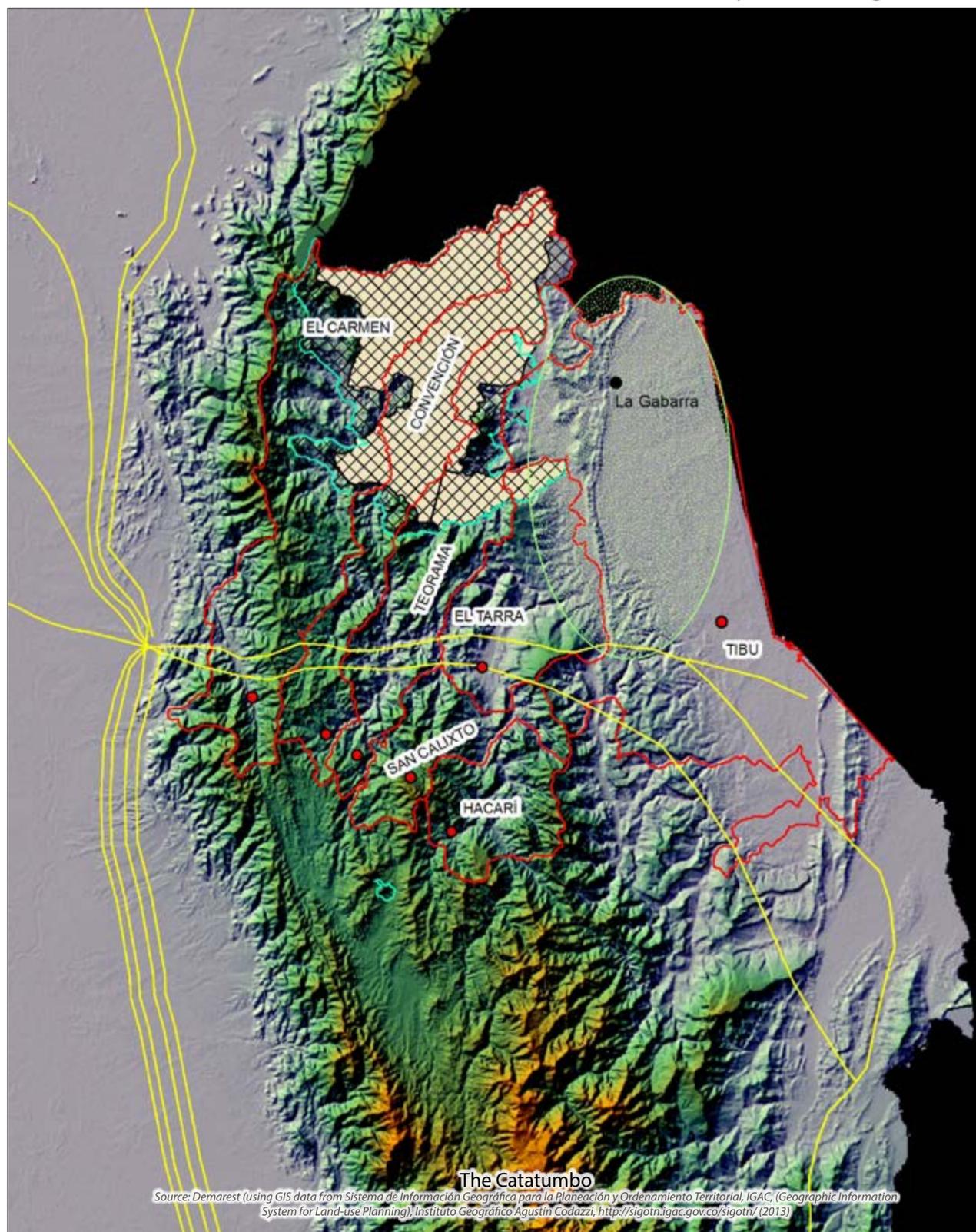
‘The census reflects the reality of Colombia’.”

Cocaine Supply Secure

OE Watch Commentary: Analysts and editorialists in the region are reporting and lamenting a new reality -- that the amount of coca being grown in Colombia is rising dramatically. The accompanying source blames it on the policies of the Colombian government and its power-sharing agreement with the FARC. The two regions noted in the editorial are homes to major smuggling corridors and are places where leadership structures of the now legalized FARC will enjoy impunity. While the panorama does not look good to the author, cocaine dealers should see a plentiful and less expensive supply. Cocaine being a central column of FARC's fiscal health, the organization should benefit, whether or not it decides to continue its revolutionary initiatives by violent means. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



“It is not that we are inundated in coca, we are already drowning in it!”



Source: José Manuel Acevedo, “Gasolina para el incendio (Gasoline for the fire),” *Semana*, 9 July 2017. http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:jO-B23_FUEJ:www.semana.com/opinion/articulo/juan-manuel-santos-es-reponsable-del-aumento-de-coca-en-colombia/531819&num=1&safe=active&hl=en&gl=us&strip=1&vwsrc=0

Bogota. “The Santos Administration is responsible for the increase in coca: it received the Cataumbo [a region along the Venezuelan border] with 2 thousand hectares and it will hand it over with more than 25 thousand....

The numbers revealed by RCN News and that will surely be made official next week are alarming. Colombia went from having 96 thousand hectares of coca in 2015 to 146,000 in 2016, which implies a growth of 52% in the last year. In Tumaco county alone there are as many illicit cultivations as in all of Bolivia and the situation in Nariño in general terms is calamitous....

The Catatumbo is another of the places in the country where the State appears to have lost the war against coca....

[Furthermore] the official numbers don't take productivity per hectare into consideration, and in that sense there may be hundreds of tons of coca more than registered....

As for voluntary crop substitution, derivative of the peace accords, things aren't going much better...

It is not that we are inundated in coca, we are already drowning in it!”



Venezuelans Celebrate Independence

OE Watch Commentary: July 5th is Venezuela's Independence Day. This year, President Nicolás Maduro celebrated with an impressive civil-military parade. Meanwhile, supporters of his regime broke into the national legislative chambers to hold opposition legislators hostage and to beat some of them up. The accompanying references are a pair of *Youtube* videos from enlighteningly diametric perspectives on the events.

The first is a report from *TeleSur*, a pro-Bolivarian news agency established by the Hugo Chavez regime. The footage is mostly of a Soviet-style military parade of marching units and a variety of military vehicles including many of those used to repress recent riots. There is also a rousing harangue from a tank commander. The other video is from a news agency out of Panama and includes coverage of the events in Venezuela from 5 July (starting at about the 2:15 minute mark). The Panamanian anchor re-reports a Spanish *El Pais* article that in turn cites *Reuters*, asserting that 123 Venezuelan military personnel had been arrested since the beginning of the recent wave of protests (about four months), including 30 desertions and 40 arrests for rebellion. The anchor then talks about the contrast between the military parade in downtown Caracas and the assault on opposition legislators inside the legislative chambers.

The two reports have something in common. It seems everyone is convinced that as goes the military so go the fortunes of Nicolás Maduro and his entourage. Beyond Maduro, Bolivarian party power is at stake. If command integrity of the armed institutions falters, those leaders invested in Castro-Chavista (Bolivarian) power might lose control of the country. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

Source: Ejército venezolano ratifica su compromiso con el gobierno de Maduro (Venezuelan Army ratifies its commitment to the Maduro government),” *TeleSur* and *YouTube*, July 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFHi2L1ivvQ>

The Republic? ...“In the civil-military parade, General Bernal Martínez asserted that ‘if the Armed Forces are lost, the Republic is lost.’”

Source: Variedades Del Mundo, “Urgente Profunda Crisis Militar en Venezuela, Noticias Hoy Última Hora (Urgent Deep Military Crisis in Venezuela, Today's News Last Minute),” *Variedades Del Mundo* and *YouTube*, 7 July 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bnr7zxB5iYs>

Odd messaging. “What was happening just a short distance from this place [the parade viewing stand] was something that goes against whatever democratic principle, was the taking of the Venezuelan Congress by Chavista hordes. In the middle of this ... spectacle by what is still called the Bolivarian Armed Forces of Venezuela, President Nicolás Maduro said that he was in complete disagreement with what happened [at the Congress] and that he was going to conduct an investigation. What I ask myself is how is that going to be carried out if the personnel of the same military who were at the Congress did absolutely nothing to protect those representatives and reporters...

It is more than that, what finally happened here is that many who participated in this farcical event that you are watching, where they were supposedly celebrating the independence of Venezuela, what they made, certainly, is a country that has no independence now because it depends completely on the orders of Castro-Chavism....”



A Military Parade in Caracas in 2014 to Commemorate the Death of Hugo Chávez

Source: By Cancillería del Ecuador via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Venezuelan_armed_forces.jpg, CC BY SA 2.0



ISIS's Use of Social Media in Latin America

OE Watch Commentary: Cyberspace is a principal source of recruitment for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and, as the first accompanying excerpt notes, Latin America and the Caribbean are not exempt from this activity. When looking at the region as a whole, cyberspace recruitment appears particularly prevalent in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, where the tri-border area has been the focus of domestic and international attention for many years. More specifically, Foz do Iguacu and its surroundings in Brazil is a hot-spot for cyber recruitment as it has the largest concentration of Muslims in the country. This area is currently a concern for Brazilian authorities.

Portuguese is a strategic language, as it is the fifth most spoken language in the world, and one of the few with the potential to expand, together with English, Spanish, Mandarin and Arabic. In fact, as the second passage discusses, just months before the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, ISIS created a Portuguese language account in the Telegram app named *Nashir Português*. This same app is used to promote ISIS discussions in French, English and German and is supported by Android, iOS, and Windows Phone mobile technology, as well as by computer and web-based versions which allow the exchange of messages either privately or in groups.

Another concern with the use of social media networks for recruitment purposes is that they have become a lot more effective due to the growth of mobile communications in Brazil and other countries in the region. As the third passage indicates, enhanced mobile communication also allows militants to spread their propaganda more easily, and send messages all over the world, in different languages. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

“Jihadists depend more and more frequently on conventional social media outlets for recruitment purposes in Central and South America and the Caribbean.”

Source: “Estado Islâmico desenvolve própria rede social (Islamic State Develops its Own Social Network),” *Correio do Brasil*, 22 May 2017.

<http://www.correiodobrasil.com.br/estado-islamico-desenvolve-propria-rede-social/>

Jihadists depend more and more frequently on conventional social media outlets for recruitment purposes in Central and South America and the Caribbean. Some of these social media outlets include Telegram, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Specifically, these outlets are used to exchange messages online and spread the group's propaganda.



Flag of the Islamic State (IS), also known as "Islamic State of Iraq and Syria" (ISIS) or "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL)

Source: By Yo (Own work) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AAQML_Flag.svg, Public Domain

Source: “Estado Islâmico usa de WhatsApp a Twitter para promover ‘terrorismo viral’ (Islamic State uses WhatsApp and Twitter to Promote ‘Viral Terrorism’),” *Globo*, 26 November 2015. <http://g1.globo.com/tecnologia/noticia/2015/11/estado-islamico-usa-de-whatsapp-twitter-para-promover-terrorismo-viral.html>

Exchange of messages encrypted by WhatsApp and Telegram. Hashtags scattered on Twitter. Selfies on Instagram. Videos on YouTube. Virtual currency exchange bitcoin. They seem to be innocent actions of those who are tech-savvy, but they are the way ISIS uses the Internet in a way that some are referring to as “viral terrorism.” In fact, the group has even created its own app known as Telegram which is supported on Android, iOS, and Windows Phone mobile technology, as well as by computer and Web-based versions which allow the exchange of messages either privately or in groups. In Portuguese, it can be found within the app under Nashir Português.



Flag of Brazil

Source: By Governo do Brasil [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AFlag_of_Brazil.svg, Public Domain

Source: “Por dentro da estratégia do Estado Islâmico em redes sociais no Brasil (The Islamic State's Social Media Strategy in Brazil),” *BBC Brasil*, 26 May 2017. <http://www.bbc.com/portuguese/brasil-36839598>

Social media aims to spread ISIS propaganda and messages all around the world, in different languages, including Portuguese. Social media outlets are also used to co-opt individuals vulnerable to radicalization. Because of the clever way jihadists utilize the Internet, it is extremely difficult to identify concrete proof of recruitment through ... social media and cell phone apps such as Twitter and WhatsApp.



Gangs Expand Extortion Practices in El Salvador

OE Watch Commentary: For years, El Salvador has been struggling to contain ferocious gang violence imposed by the MS-13 and Barrio 18 gangs. One of the biggest issues is extortion rackets that are pushing more and more citizens to flee the country, forcing their businesses to close. These gangs prey on both rich and poor, with extortion demands backed by death threats to those who do not pay. As the first excerpt indicates, many business owners, from hawkers to tycoons, must hand over a slice of their revenues to gangs, pushing them to the brink.

The second excerpt details how these powerful gangs utilize their proceeds. It indicates that extortion money is used to pay for everything from the purchase of ammunition to dialysis of sick gang members. It is also used by jailed gang members who use the cash from behind bars to run their organizations. This information became available to the public after authorities seized documents from a female MS-13 gang member in April.

There are an estimated 70,000 gang members in El Salvador and extortion alone is a powerful income generator for gangs. It is said to bring in hundreds of millions of dollars a year and affects virtually everyone in the country; even children. As the third excerpt discusses, children working for gangs within schools collect a daily “rent” (the term used by gangs in El Salvador to describe extortion fees) of 10 to 25 cents from each of their classmates. The end effects of widespread extortion in El Salvador are mass emigration, and in some cases, outright defiance by those fed-up with the impunity granted to gangs which nearly always ends in more violence and death. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

“In El Salvador alone, the MS-13 and Barrio 18 gangs collect an estimated \$380 million a year in extortion fees from small and large businesses alike.”

Source: “Imperios de la extorsión” están en Honduras y El Salvador (Extortion Empires in Honduras and El Salvador),” *La Prensa*, 15 March 2017. <http://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/854572-410/imperios-de-la-extorsi%C3%B3n-est%C3%A1n-en-honduras-y-el-salvador>

In El Salvador alone, the MS-13 and Barrio 18 gangs collect an estimated \$380 million a year in extortion fees from small and large businesses alike. In fact, extortion has become so rampant that many businesses; especially small ones, have chosen to close as they are not able to turn a profit. Others have chosen to close as they have tired of the death threats associated with possible non-payment.

Source: “Así maneja la contabilidad la Mara Salvatrucha con el dinero de las extorsiones (How the Mara Salvatrucha Gangs Utilize their Extortion Proceeds),” *El Salvador.com*, 31 May 2017. <http://www.elsalvador.com/noticias/nacional/356580/asi-maneja-la-contabilidad-la-mara-salvatrucha-con-el-dinero-de-las-extorsiones/>

Several letters seized from a female member of the MS-13 gang that operates in the municipality of San Rafael Cedros, and its surroundings in the state of Cuscatlán, reveal how the organization makes use of extortion money collected from citizens, transportation companies, and small and large businesses. These letters claim that the money is used to pay for everything from ammunition to dialysis of sick gang members.

Source: “Maras amenazan a niños de escuelas capitalinas (Maras Threaten Children at Schools Located in the Capital),” *La Tribuna*, 17 February 2017. <http://www.latribuna.hn/2017/02/18/maras-amenazan-ninos-escuelas-capitalinas/>

Extortion is forcing children to leave school because gangs run extortion rackets inside them, charging both teachers and pupils a protection tax, known locally as the rent, “la renta”. Gang members, using children associated with the gangs as their collection agents, are known to charge children inside schools a daily ‘renta’ of 10 to 25 cents. In some cases, parents have taken their children out of school or simply left neighborhoods where gangs were extorting because they couldn’t pay the daily charge.



San Rafael Cedros, Cuscatlan, El Salvador

Source: By L11324 (Own work) [CC0], via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:63ASan_Rafael_Cedros_2011.jpg, CC0.



Drug Transit and the Dominican Republic

OE Watch Commentary: In the world of drug trafficking, there are producer, transit, and consumer nations. Producer and consumer nations are relatively static pieces in this puzzle; and rarely change with the exception of occasional spikes and dips depending on production constraints and consumer demand. Transit nations however, are a variable trend in the drug trafficking world. As the first excerpt indicates, they vary based on factors such as political instability and corruption. The accompanying excerpts focus on the Dominican Republic as a drug transit nation due to its geographic location and rampant corruption.

Trafficking through the Dominican Republic is generally cyclical, but recent years have seen sharp increases in both seizures and suspected transit activity. As the first passage discusses, one factor may be the political instability and corruption in nearby Venezuela, causing many shipments from Venezuela to traverse through the Dominican Republic. According to the second passage, this increase in activity may also be related to the fact that military and police are supposedly involved in an estimated 90 percent of organized crime cases according to a top-level prosecutor in the island nation. This involvement alone plays a significant role in aiding Dominican groups in international drug trade while simultaneously providing huge pay-backs to officers who earn as little as \$153/month.

To mitigate widespread corruption, the Dominican government purged the police force in both 2013 and 2014 during which time more than 3,000 officers were dismissed from duty. But corruption continues to plague the island. This is likely because no matter how much is done to decrease corruption, there will always be sufficient money to buy off underpaid officers; particularly in areas that serve as key routes to drug trafficking organizations such as the Dominican Republic. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

“In addition to corruption, the Dominican Republic’s strategic geographic location is a major attraction to traffickers.”



A U.S. Coast Guard small boat crew, left, attached to the seagoing buoy tender USCGC Oak (WLB 211), acts as drug smugglers on the run as the Dominican Republic patrol boat GC 109 Orion pursues them May 23, 2013

Source: By SSgt Ernest J. Barnes (Public domain), via Wikimedia Commons, via Wikimedia Commons, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/38/A_U.S._Coast_Guard_small_boat_crew%2C_left%2C_attached_to_the_seagoing_buoy_tender_USCGC_Oak_%28WLB_211%29%2C_acts_as_drug_smugglers_on_the_run_as_the_Dominican_Republic_patrol_boat_GC_109_Orion_pursues_them_May_23%2C_2013_130523-M-RE261-216.jpg, Public Domain

Source: “Geopolítica del crimen: RD en ruta de la cocaína (Geopolitics of Crime: Dominican Republic as a Cocaine Route),” *Acento*, 18 December 2016. <http://acento.com.do/2016/opinion/editorial/8394860-geopolitica-del-crimen-rd-ruta-la-cocaina/>

Recently released figures on the Dominican Republic’s annual cocaine seizures show the country’s importance as a transit country continues to grow, worrying news for the island nation on the back of a huge corruption scandal involving the disappearance of police-held cocaine. As for corruption, it plays a role in aiding Dominican groups in the international drug trade and provides huge pay-backs to officers (who make approximately \$153 per month) willing to work with drug trafficking organizations. In addition to corruption, the Dominican Republic’s strategic geographic location is a major attraction to traffickers. Political instability and corruption in nearby Venezuela is another factor that has likely contributed to increasing cocaine flows through the Dominican Republic in recent years as many shipments from Venezuela traverse through the island nation

Source: “Yeni Bernice dice policías y militares están involucrados en 90% casos crimen organizado (Yeni Bernice Claims that Police and Military are Involved in 90% of Organized Crime Cases),” *Hoy.com*, 15 May 2017. <http://hoy.com.do/yeni-bernice-dice-policias-y-militares-estan-involucrados-en-90-casos-crimen-organizado/>

A top-level prosecutor in the Dominican Republic reported that the military and police are involved in 90 percent of organized crime cases, putting a hard number to official involvement in criminal activity after years of high-level corruption scandals. Yeni Bernice Reynoso, the chief prosecutor for the district where capital city Santo Domingo is located, claims the military and police are usually involved in high-level drug trafficking, contract killings, and organized crime although it is uncertain as to how she calculated this number...

According to Yeni Bernice, more than 3,000 police officers were released from duty for their alleged involvement in criminal activity from February 2013 to March 2014.



Organized Crime and Illegal Gold Mining in Peru

OE Watch Commentary: As one of the accompanying passages points out, “Illegal gold is the new cocaine.” Not only does this new business feed drug trafficking organizations, it is also a major cause of deforestation in Peru’s Amazon. This is not surprising given that Peru is Latin America’s biggest gold producer. Gold mining activity is controlled by organized crime groups and has historically been the most prevalent in the Madre de Dios and Puno regions. The accompanying passages from Peruvian sources discuss some trends in this activity.

As the first accompanying excerpt notes, gold-mining activity appears to be moving north to the Santiago Basin, which represents a new trend. Generally, illegal mining in the north has been less significant than in the Madre de Dios and Puno regions where open source channels are reporting the deforestation of 460 hectares of rainforest since September 2016, due to miners’ attempts to uncover gold reserves. As the second passage indicates, illegal gold mining is prevalent because pure monetary gain from this activity far exceeds the gain generated by cocaine trade, as “a kilogram of cocaine originating in Peru sells for \$2,000 while a kilogram of gold sells for \$35,000.” And while that may be a great incentive for criminal organizations, it is detrimental to the environment in Peru.

The most appalling effects of illegal gold mining are the destruction of forests and river-banks, contamination of rivers by mercury and cyanide in addition to human and animal poisoning by the chemicals used in the mining process. In addition to these problems, the first excerpt also highlights the impacts that this activity has on indigenous people and children, including “forced labor, 10,000s of child workers, prostitution, sexual exploitation of minors, human trafficking, appalling health and safety factors, ... violence and alcoholism.” As the third passage discusses, the Peruvian government has been unsuccessful in thwarting this illegal activity. Criminal organizations are apt at bribing authorities and re-directing their shipments to neighboring countries to facilitate movement to international markets. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

“...illegal gold is the new cocaine. This new business feeds drug trafficking organizations as well as external demand.”



Minería

Source: By Amazonía Puno -Madre de Dios, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/amazoniapunomdd/6299888926/in/album-72157627896378823/>, CC BY 2.0

Source: “Oro ilegal ahoga la selva de Madre de Dios (Illegal Mining Inundates Rainforests in Madre de Dios),” *El Comercio*, 24 May 2017. <http://elcomercio.pe/peru/oro-ilegal-ahoga-selva-madre-dios-425574>

In the Amazon, gold extraction is only known about in the Madre de Dios and Puno regions in the south of the country. The shift to the north in the Santiago basin is believed to have started more recently...

Numerous reports by NGOs, academics and open-source news media over the last few years have highlighted the environmental and human impacts of illegal gold mining in Peru. These include the destruction of forests and river-banks, contamination of rivers by mercury and cyanide, contamination of people, fish and other foods by mercury, indications of forced labor, 10,000s of child workers, prostitution, sexual exploitation of minors, human trafficking, appalling health and safety factors, numerous fatalities, money laundering, the razing of indigenous peoples’ land, violence and alcoholism.

Source: “Sudamérica: un corredor del tráfico de oro ilegal (South America: A Corridor for Illegal Gold Trafficking),” *El Comercio*, 13 May 2017. <http://elcomercio.pe/mundo/latinoamerica/sudamerica-corredor-traffic-oro-ilegal-420189>

Experts are concluding that illegal gold is the new cocaine. This new business feeds drug trafficking organizations as well as external demand. When comparing the two, illegal gold is much more profitable as a kilogram of cocaine originating in Peru sells for \$2,000 while a kilogram of gold sells for \$35,000.

Source: “El circuito del oro ilegal que se abre paso en el Perú (The Illegal Gold Circuit Evolving in Peru),” *El Comercio*, 01 June 2017. <http://elcomercio.pe/peru/circuito-oro-ilegal-abre-paso-peru-157497>

Efforts by the Peruvian government to prevent illegal mining to include restricting the importation of chemicals used to extract it has done little to stop this activity. Instead, criminal organizations have resorted to bribing port authorities to obtain chemicals. They then traffic the illegally mined gold to Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Ecuador. From these countries, gold is sent to international markets with high demand for the product.



Fighting over Japan's Peace Constitution

OE Watch Commentary: On 3 May, the 70th anniversary of Japan's so-called Peace Constitution going into effect, Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzō announced that he wanted to amend the constitution, adding a third clause to Article 9, War Renunciation, that would explicitly acknowledge the constitutionality of Japan's Self-Defense Force (SDF). The accompanying passages from Japanese sources discuss reactions to this announcement.

The timing of the announcement – in the middle of Japan's Golden Week, a seven-day period with four national holidays on non-consecutive days, which has resulted in a tradition of many businesses and individuals in Japan taking the whole week off – is typical for a topic that the politician knows will be controversial. The choice of venue was also significant for Abe, who has long wanted to amend Article 9: He made the announcement via video at a meeting of a group that is strongly in favor of revising the constitution, a document that has not been amended since its inception.

The announcement has been greeted as controversial within Abe's own Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The LDP has had amending Article 9 as a plank in its party platform since it was formed in 1955. The controversy has to do with the fact that Abe's suggestion, to simply add a third clause specifying the SDF is constitutional, while leaving the current two clauses untouched, is counter to the draft of a revised Article 9 the LDP itself put forward in 2012, which envisioned changing the SDF into the National Defense Force (*Kokubō Guntai*. Both *Kokubō*, or national defense, and *Guntai*, military force, are controversial terms among many Japanese as well). Though the Prime Minister's suggestion sidesteps the loaded terms in the LDP's proposal, his relatively simpler suggested change has still been divisive not only within the LDP, but among members of the SDF and the general population as well.

As the accompanying passages demonstrate, media coverage of the announcement tended to follow the ideological leanings of the source in question. Left-leaning organizations, like the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper (Japan's second-largest-circulation overall, left-of-center newspaper) urged caution and extolled Article 9 in its present form; while right-leaning organizations, like the *Sankei Shimbun* newspaper applauded the initiative, at least as a first step.

The suggestion has also met with mixed reactions from SDF personnel and their family members. Admiral Kawano, the highest-ranking SDF member, is quoted in the accompanying *Okinawa Times* article as favoring Abe's idea, in order to finally settle the question of the SDF's constitutionality. However, in the same article a senior Maritime Self-Defense Force officer is quoted as saying that since this suggestion leaves in place the second clause of Article 9, which forbids Japan from maintaining "land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential," the additional third clause does not solve the underlying problem. The final quote in the same article is from the father of an SDF member who says that the SDF "is not a military force." The quote demonstrates the widespread narrative, cherished by many, that the SDF is not, in fact, an armed force, despite the fact that by any objective measure Japan's Self-Defense Force is equipped as the most modern armed force in the region.

In the same *Okinawa Times* article, the author notes Admiral Kawano also expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Abe for raising the topic. Japan's Communist Party feels that this expression of gratitude goes beyond Kawano's oath to support the constitution and has demanded the admiral resign. The fact that this demand is not more widespread demonstrates how far the debate over Article 9 has progressed. In the past, even suggesting that Article 9 should be amended has resulted in government officials resigning. On the other hand, the still-wide-apart convictions dividing Japanese society, either that Article 9 is sacrosanct and should never be changed, or that Article 9 should, at least, be adjusted to reflect reality, demonstrate that the debate over Japan's War Renunciation article is far from over. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hunter-Chester)**

“Article 9 is ‘an asset of Japan... revising it is not necessary’.”

Source: “(社説) 憲法70年 9条の理想を使いこなす (Editorial: 70 Years of the Constitution – [Let Us] Acquire the Ideals of Article 9),” *Asahi Shimbun*, 4 May 2017. www.asahi.com/articles/DA3S12922579.html?ref=editorial_backnumber

Article 9 is “an asset of Japan . . . revising it is not necessary.”

Source: “主張首相の9条発言 最大の政治課題に邁進を (The Prime Minister's Statement on Article 9 – Pushing a Top Political Issue Forward),” *Sankei Shimbun*, 3 May 2017. <http://www.sankei.com/column/news/170504/clm1705040002-n1.html>

The Self-Defense Force must possess “the personality of an army that protects the nation and the people . . . [while] adhering to pacifism.”

Source: “9条明記 戸惑う 隊員 (Article 9 Specification [That the SDF is Constitutional] – Servicemembers Perplexed),” *Okinawa Times*, 3 June 2017. <http://webun.jp/item/7372998>

[Admiral Kawano Katsutoshi, Chief of the Joint Staff:] “Many scholars . . . and political parties have found the SDF unconstitutional. During our generation's lifetime the margin for saying [the SDF] is perhaps unconstitutional, should be closed”...

[Maritime Self-Defense Force officer:] “Since this suggestion leaves in place the second clause of Article 9, which forbids Japan from maintaining land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, the additional third clause does not solve the underlying problem”...

[The 66-year-old father of a son in the SDF:] “Since the Self-Defense Force is not a military force, whether or not [its status] is made clear in the constitution has no meaning.”

“The Self-Defense Force must possess ‘the personality of an army that protects the nation and the people . . . [while] adhering to pacifism’.”



Japanese-Indian Cooperative Response to Chinese Expansion

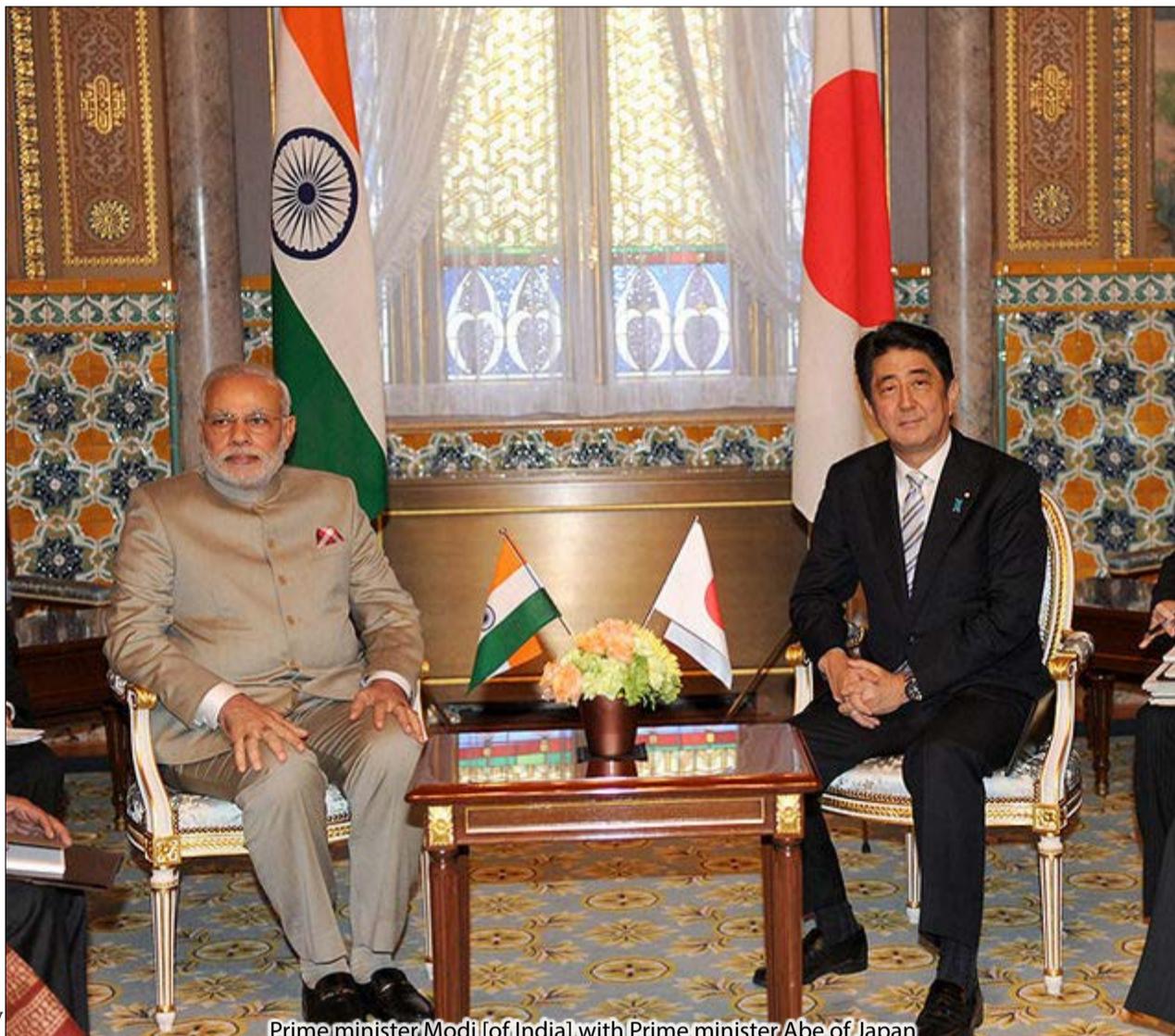
OE Watch Commentary: Japan and India are eyeing ways to counter China's military and political assertiveness in East Asia. The accompanying passage from one of India's most popular daily newspapers discusses the two countries' joint response to China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative. Japanese-Indian cooperation involves infrastructure projects across Africa, Iran, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, while staying away from participating in China's OBOR initiatives.

As the article discusses, Japan and India each have security-related reasons to be concerned about China's OBOR initiative. It points out that "the continental and maritime routes of OBOR are of strategic concern for India..." while Japan is concerned because of "China's increasing military and political assertiveness in Japan's immediate security environment..."

The most important infrastructure project where Japan is expected to join India is building Iran's Chabahar port and the adjoining special economic zone. Japan may also join India in infrastructure projects at Sri Lanka's Trincomalee port and the Dawei port along the Thai-Myanmar border. Nonetheless, the article makes clear that Africa is the most important geopolitical target for Japanese and Indian infrastructure initiatives because it is going to be a key new area of Africa-Asia connectivity, with India's ports in Kochi and Mumbai playing key roles due to their relative proximity to Africa.

The article points out that the Japanese and Indian infrastructure projects will be formally known as the Freedom Corridor, as announced by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during his meeting with Indian counterpart Narendra Modi in Tokyo in November 2016. The article refers to the infrastructure projects instead as a strategic Great Wall, a play of words on China's own Great Wall. It notes that Japan's economic strength combined with India's geopolitical strength can have greater reach throughout the broader Indian-Pacific Ocean region. Although the article does not specify what India's geopolitical strength entails, it appears to be based on India's military and diplomatic power and geopolitical position relatively close to East Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The article also contrasts the approaches of Japan and India with that of China, which it considers mercantilist and therefore lacking the depth that can be forged by countries with close ties to Japan and India. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

“There are security-related reasons for New Delhi to pursue closer cooperation with Tokyo in response to Beijing's expansionary moves.”



Prime minister Modi [of India] with Prime minister Abe of Japan

Source: By Narendra Modi's official Flickr stream [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons, via Wikimedia Commons, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a1/Narendra_Modi_and_Shinzo_Abe%2C_2014.jpg, CC BY 2.0.

Source: "Pushing back against China's One Belt One Road, India, Japan build strategic 'Great Wall'," *Economic Times*, 16 May 2017. <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/pushing-back-against-chinas-one-belt-one-road-india-japan-build-strategic-great-wall/articleshow/58689033.cms>

India and Japan are together embarking upon multiple infrastructure projects across Africa, Iran, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia in what could be viewed as pushback against China's massive, unilateral infrastructure initiatives under the One Belt One Road (OBOR) project connecting it with Europe and Africa.

While in East Africa, Delhi and Tokyo are planning to fund infrastructure and capacity-building projects, Japan is expected to join the Indian foray in the expansion of Iran's Chabahar port and the adjoining special economic zone.

The India-Japanese initiatives are part of the Freedom Corridor that stretches from the Asia-Pacific to Africa. The continental and maritime routes of OBOR are of strategic concern for India and therefore there are security-related reasons for New Delhi to pursue closer cooperation with Tokyo in response to Beijing's expansionary moves. China's increasing military and political assertiveness in Japan's immediate security environment is a key driver of this change.



China Developing Sea Launches to Boost Space Commerce

OE Watch Commentary: China has announced that it is developing sea launch capability to boost space commerce. The accompanying passages from Chinese sources discuss the announcement, which comes amid two recent developments-- one or both of which likely led to the decision to pursue this capability.

First, China might be seeking to compete with Sea Launch, a multinational spacecraft launch service that used a massive mobile sea-based platform to launch commercial payloads. Sea Launch, established in 1995, was a consortium of four companies from the United States, Russia, Norway, and Ukraine. The group often launched payloads near the equator, which, due to the earth's increased rotation speed at the equator, allowed them to gain an additional 200 kilometer per hour boost over launches made from within the United States. Following a series of financial and legal hardships and the 2014 Russian military intervention in Ukraine, however, Sea Launch stopped its operations and mothballed its ships. Currently, Russian company Energia owns 95 percent of Sea Launch, but has been seeking to sell it. In September 2016, Russia's S7 Group announced it was planning to buy Sea Launch. The purchase, according to several reports published in various news sources, space and aviation journals in June 2017, is reportedly expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Second, since 1970, China has reportedly launched over 225 Long March carrier rockets. Throughout nearly the past five decades of the program, the country has enjoyed many successes and a handful of defeats. Most recently, however, the program was dealt a major blow with two failed launches within a two-week timeframe in June and July. During the first week of July this year, the Long March 5 Y2 (CZ-5), which is the newest and largest member of China's rocket fleet, experienced its second launch failure. The rocket had been launched from Wenchang Space Launch Center in southern China's Hainan province.

The two accompanying articles come within days of the second failed launch and announcements that Russia's S7 Group would likely finalize its purchase of Sea Launch by the end of the year. Whether there is a correlation between the two failed launches and the announcement to develop sea launches is not clear. However, it is worth noting. Indeed, it could be that China sees an opportunity to compete for space commerce, or it could be that the country intends to try to increase its own success rate while lowering costs and increasing payloads. Or perhaps it is a combination of both. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**



Sea Launch at Sea. All three stages fired successfully, putting a nuke-hardened Italian SIRCAL satellite into geostationary orbit.

Source: By jurvetson (Flickr.com - image description page) [CC BY 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ASea_Launch_01.jpg, CC BY 2.0.

“...the technology is comparatively simple and a sea launch platform can be built by modifying freighters.”

Source: “China Develops Sea Launches to Boost Space Commerce,” *Xinhua*, 7 July 2017. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-07/07/c_136425261.htm

Tang Yagang, vice head of the aerospace division of the No.1 institute of the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASTC), said that the technology is not difficult and a sea launch platform can be built based on modifying 10,000-tonne freighters.

China will use solid carrier rockets which rely less on launch facilities and feature mature technology, Tang said, adding that key technology for the carrier rockets will be tested at sea this year and the service is expected to be available for international users in 2018.

Currently, Long March carrier rockets have provided 60 commercial launches for domestic and international users, Fu said.

Source: China Plans Sea Launches to Give Boost to Space Commerce,” *China Global Television Network*, 10 July 2017. <https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d45544e3059444e/share.html>

Tang Yagang, vice head of the aerospace division of the No.1 institute of the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASTC), said that the technology is comparatively simple and a sea launch platform can be built by modifying freighters.

Countries in the equator region have growing needs for launching near-equatorial and low-inclination satellites, said Fu Zhiheng, deputy general manager of China Great Wall Industry Corporation, affiliated to CASTC.



Recent Developments in the Chinese Army's Helicopter Force

by Dennis J. Blasko

Republished in collaboration with the Jamestown Foundation, China Brief, Vol. 17, Issue 8, dated 9 June 2017, Edited for OE Watch. For the full article, see: <https://jamestown.org/program/recent-developments-chinese-armys-helicopter-force/>

OE Watch Commentary: In November 2016, Chinese internet sources showed photos of a ceremony in the (former) 13th Group Army of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Army accepting the 1,000th helicopter into the force. This nice round number demonstrates the growth of the Army Aviation Corps over the past decade. Along with Special Operations Forces (SOF), Army Aviation is one of the “new-type combat forces” given priority for development. The increase in the number of Army helicopters accompanies the expansion of the force in the latest round of reforms. In roughly a month's time, half of all Army Aviation units have experienced some sort of organizational change. However, even as the numbers of helicopters rise, the size of the Army Aviation force is still small for a ground force that will probably number around a million personnel by 2020. The recent changes are an attempt to improve and expand a force that underpins a number of important capabilities from tactical mobility and special operations to logistics support.

In the month since the April 2017 announcement of changes to the PLA's “84 corps-level units,” Army Aviation units have undergone some of the most visible observed changes. Of the 18 former group armies that were reduced to 13, none of the five disbanded group armies were assigned either an Army Aviation or SOF unit. In the few weeks since the reduction of group armies was announced, multiple changes in Army Aviation units have been publicized.

All four of the former Army Aviation regiments in group armies have been reported as expanded to brigades and it appears that the former General Staff Department (GSD) Army Aviation brigade and the brigade assigned to the Xinjiang Military District have been transferred to group armies. Specifically, as the first passage notes, in mid-May 2017, the former regiment in the 26th Group Army was described as an “army aviation brigade under the PLA 80th Group Army” and a week later the former regiment in the 54th Group Army was described as an “army aviation brigade under the PLA 83rd Group Army.” As the second passage notes, the former GSD Army Aviation brigade now appears to be “an army aviation brigade of the PLA 81st Group Army in Beijing.” At the same time, the Army Aviation regiment in the former 31st Group Army/ current 73rd Group Army was reported to be an “army aviation brigade under the PLA Eastern Theater Command.”

Additionally, Chinese television reported the former regiment in the old 42nd Group Army (the regiment most recently created) is now a brigade in the 74th Group Army. The same news broadcast reported on an Army Aviation brigade of the 76th Group Army in the Western Theater Command. The 76th is the former 21st Group Army, which previously did not have an Army Aviation unit. This change could be the result of either the transfer of the complete Army Aviation brigade in the Xinjiang Military District to 76th Group Army command or elements of that brigade have been transferred to the 76th to become a seed organization eventually to grow into a full brigade.

The PLA's Army Aviation Corps was established in 1986 by inheriting helicopters from the Air Force. It began with a single regiment and by the middle of the following decade had expanded to seven operational regiments (and a few training units), composed of about 135 helicopters and some Y-5 biplanes. By early 2017 (prior to changes in the structure of PLA operational units), operational helicopter units had grown to 12 operational units, including five regiments and seven brigades, and a few training units. Despite the growth in the number and size of units and in the total number of helicopters, the lack of sufficient aircraft to perform all the tasks necessary to conduct modern campaigns is a known shortcoming. As a result, continued growth in the Army Aviation Corps is necessary and expected. **End OE Watch Commentary (Blasko)**



Source: “Z-9 helicopters receive phase maintenance,” *Chinamil.com*, 18 May 2017. http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2017-05/18/content_7607783.htm

Soldiers assigned to an army aviation brigade under the PLA 80th Group Army perform[ed] phase maintenance on Z-9 multi-purpose helicopters at a military training base on May 15, 2017.

Source: “China's first helicopter peacekeeping detachment prepares to leave for Sudan,” *Chinamil.com*, 19 May 2017. http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2017-05/19/content_7609950.htm

China's first helicopter peacekeeping detachment held a departure ceremony at an army aviation brigade of the PLA 81st Group Army in Beijing on May 19, 2017.

The detachment, consisting of 140 troops and 4 Mi-171 medium multi-purpose helicopters, will soon be sent to and deployed in the Darfur region of Sudan for carrying out such UN peacekeeping missions as air patrol, transportation of personnel and materials and so forth.



Xi Jinping's New Military Strategic Guideline

OE Watch Commentary: Senior Colonel Luo Derong, an associate professor at the Nanjing Political Science Academy, discussed the military strategic guidelines of President Xi Jinping in the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) new period of development in a recent issue of *China Military Science*.

He notes that the new strategic guidelines expand on strategic thought, strategic objectives, and strategic tasks of the past for the PLA. The guidelines direct the building, reform, and preparations of the Armed Forces. While many tasks are similar, such as the focus on active defense, some have changed slightly, such as from "winning local wars under informatized conditions" to "fighting to win informatized local wars." As the excerpt below notes, joint operations and system sabotage operations are stressed, among other actions. Information dominance is another area where emphasis is placed, as the author claims that "seizing information dominance has become the core of seizing comprehensive battlefield control." **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

“Seizing information dominance has become the core of seizing comprehensive battlefield control.”

“The New Guideline consistently takes integrated joint operations as a basic form of our military's military operations in an informatized local war, with system-of-systems operations based on information systems being a basic combat method, with systems sabotage warfare being the core combat method for achieving the objective of battle. In terms of operational effects, systems sabotage warfare is a kind of structural destruction warfare or strategic paralyzing warfare.”

Source: Luo Derong, "Guidelines for the Armed Forces Building and Preparation for Military Struggle—Understanding of the Military Strategic Guideline in the New Situation," *China Military Science*, No. 1 2017, pp.88-96.

Active Defense, Strategic Advantage, Marxist Thought

“Chairman Xi's important expositions on national defense and armed forces building, adheres to the Marxist war outlook and methodology, applies materialist dialectics, comprehensively coordinates and scientifically handles the dialectical relationships between war preparedness and war checking...thus becoming the core of our party's military strategic guidance under the new situation. Defense refers to holding a defensive status strategically...Activeness refers to attaching importance to military struggle preparations and taking offensive actions at the campaign and tactical levels, so as to achieve the purpose of strategic defense through military strengthening-based deterrence and through attacks and counterattacks at the campaign and tactical levels in local wars.” ...

...strive to change an unfavorable situation into a favorable situation; set store by controlling the intensity of struggle to an appropriate degree and employing appropriate stratagems, effectively bring the situation under control while holding fast to the bottom line, win over the most majority while concentrating strikes on the main adversary, prevent a situation of being faced with multiple enemies and using force in multiple directions at the same time...

Seizing information dominance has become the core of seizing comprehensive battlefield control. Integrated joint operations have become the basic form of military operations. Platforms-based operations, system-of-systems support, tactical actions, strategic support have become the prominent features of contemporary warfare...greater importance must be attached to the creation of a favorable strategic posture....

“The New Guideline consistently takes integrated joint operations as a basic form of our military's military operations in an informatized local war, with system-of-systems operations based on information systems being a basic combat method, with systems sabotage warfare being the core combat method for achieving the objective of battle. In terms of operation effects, systems sabotage warfare is a kind of structural destruction warfare or strategic paralyzing warfare.”



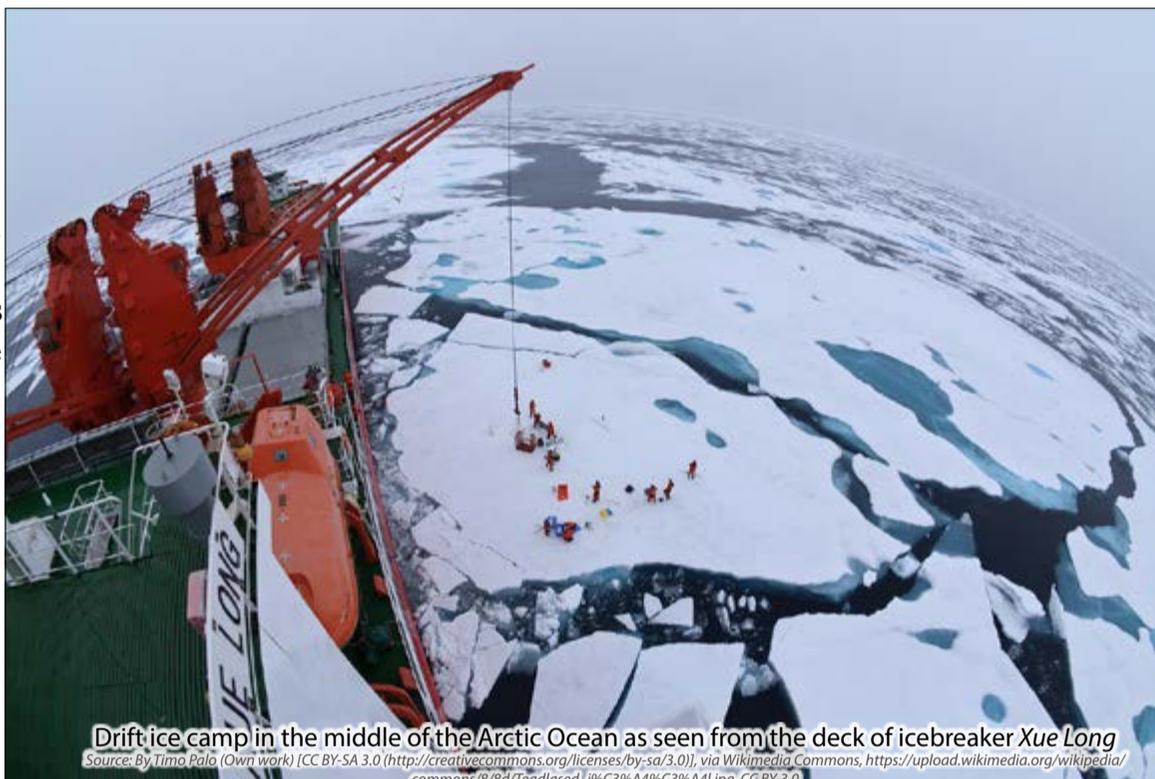
China's cyber policy has become partly visible to foreign nations through observation, tracking, and inference. The policy appears to have three vectors. These three aspects—peace activist, espionage activist, and attack planner—dominate China's cyber policy. Some are always hidden from view while others are demonstrated daily. Three Faces of the Cyber Dragon is divided into sections that coincide with these vectors.

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-books/195610/download>



China's Interest in Becoming a Major Player in the Arctic Continues

OE Watch Commentary: China has long been trying to increase its influence in the Arctic. It has sought membership in the Arctic Council and is now an observer member in the Council whose full members have territory in the Arctic (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and United States). It has further stated that the Arctic belongs to the whole world, and that China has the largest portion of the world's population. Chinese tourism to the Arctic has risen. China has an icebreaker stationed in the Arctic and is constructing a second larger icebreaker. It has purchased coal mines with a seaport on Norwegian islands and built the Arctic "Yellow River Station" on the Norwegian/Russian island of Svalbard. Now China is interested in buying seaports and mineral rights in Greenland.



Drift ice camp in the middle of the Arctic Ocean as seen from the deck of icebreaker Xue Long
Source: By Timo Palo (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8d/Teadlased_l%C3%A4%C3%A4i.jpg, CC BY 3.0

Denmark has been carefully tracking China's activities in the region because Greenland is an Arctic autonomous constituent country within the

Kingdom of Denmark. The accompanying article, derived from a Danish source, discusses how China's bid to buy Greenland's Gronnedal Naval Base was thwarted. It also discusses China's ongoing interest in obtaining mineral rights to Greenland's Kvanefjeld project. Kvanefjeld is the site of a major mineral deposit, thought to be the world's second-largest deposit of rare earth oxides, and the sixth-largest deposit of uranium. China now owns 12.5% of Greenland Minerals and Energy Limited (GME) and appears to be trying for a controlling interest over GME which owns 100% of these mineral rights. This appears to be part of China's active campaign to control rare earth deposits. (For a discussion on rare earth elements, see Cindy Hurst, "China's Rare Earth Elements Industry: What Can the West Learn?" <http://www.iags.org/rareearth0310hurst.pdf>) **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

“China's primary interests in the region are commercial in character and are associated mainly with the possibilities of shorter shipping routes and access to natural resources. FE [Danish Defense Intelligence Service] is closely following this development and is focusing on the way China is trying to position itself as an influential player in the Arctic...”

Source: Kenneth Elkjaer, "Efterretningstjeneste: Vi holder øje med kinesiske interesser i Grønland (Intelligence Agency: We are Watching Chinese Interests in Greenland)," *Kalaallit Nunaata Radioa Greenlandic Broadcasting Corporation*, 10 July 2017. <http://knr.gl/da/nyheder/vi-holder-%C3%B8je-med-kinesiske-interesser-i-gr%C3%B8nland>

Chinese companies have already attracted attention several times due to investments or attempts to buy up property in this country.

Last December the Danish website Defencewatch reported that the Danish Government had intervened against the Chinese company General Nice Group's attempt to buy the Gronnedal naval station. A short time later, the Reuters news agency reported that fears that both the United States and China wanted to be represented in this country led the Danish Government to intervene against a potential sale of Gronnedal. The Danish Government has said it rejected the Chinese interest in buying the facility because it needs Gronnedal, since it has decided to reopen the base.

Last year, another Chinese company also made headlines. In the autumn, Shenghe bought a 12.5 percent share in the Australian company Greenland Minerals and Energy Limited (GME), which is behind the Kvanefjeld project. The share purchase created major confusion about whether the Chinese company had also been given an option to buy up to 60 percent of GME. GME has denied that on several occasions.

In its report, the Danish Defense Intelligence Service wrote that it was highly unlikely that Chinese investment of this kind in Greenland was part of a larger, state-directed plan. But the agency nevertheless intends to remain vigilant: "Due to the close connections between Chinese undertakings and the political system in China, there are however particular risks involved in extensive Chinese investment in Greenland."

[The report notes:] "China's primary interests in the region are commercial in character and are associated mainly with the possibilities of shorter shipping routes and access to natural resources. FE [Danish Defense Intelligence Service] is closely following this development and is focusing on the way China is trying to position itself as an influential player in the Arctic."



Chinese Perspectives on the Qatar Crisis

OE Watch Commentary: On 26 June 2017, the Chinese-language website *sohu.com* featured a series of analyses by Chinese scholars discussing the Qatar crisis and its implications for China. The accompanying passages provide insight into Chinese perspectives on the crisis. China's main concern centers around energy security and potential delays in its construction projects in Qatar.

One scholar claimed that the crisis was caused by Qatar's oversized media influence with its *al-Jazeera* programming and the emir's pro-Iranian statements in the media. This angered the Saudis because of their rivalry with Iran and, in turn, forced Saudi Arabia's allies to also follow its lead. The scholar noted that Turkey's support of Qatar in this crisis also contradicted ties between Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

Another scholar noted that even though Turkey and Egypt have similar style regimes, Egypt's alignment with Saudi Arabia against the Muslim Brotherhood led it to side with Saudi Arabia. Finally, the scholar suggested that Russia suffers least from the crisis because it can play the role of a mediator and maintain good relations with both the Saudi and Qatar sides.

According to the scholars, the concern for China is not the potential outbreak of fighting but the lack of unity among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, as this will make it more difficult for China to engage in free trade negotiations with the GCC. There is also concern that in a time of crisis, China's energy security could be threatened considering Saudi Arabia is a major source of Chinese oil imports. Moreover, China has projects for the construction of a new port, medical facilities and a subway line in Qatar but these may be delayed as a result of the crisis, especially because Saudi Arabia has closed the land border to Qatar, which slows down the transfer of, and raises the prices of important materials such as cement, which are needed for construction.

None of the scholars expects fighting to take place. The consensus is that the crisis can be solved through mediation. One scholar, however, notes that China is not a primary stakeholder in this conflict, while another says that China should take a proactive role in mediation to show that it is indispensable and can protect its interests. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



Al Khor Beach [Qatar]

Source: Martin Belam, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Al_Khor_Beach.jpg, CC BY SA 2.0

“... we [should] develop our strategy in the Middle East as soon as possible and take the initiative to participate in mediation, showing China's existence and indispensable influence.”

Source: “卡塔尔变局、中东走势与中国的对策(Qatar's Turning Point, Middle East Trends and China's Countermeasures),” *Sohu.com*, 26 June 2017. http://www.sohu.com/a/152180209_729263

The recent outbreak of eight countries against Qatar is the focus of global attention. It is necessary to explore the impact of this on the Middle East, China-Middle East relations, and how China should respond. I invited the representatives of the domestic Middle East research institutions and personnel to discuss the issue. Zhou Rong (Senior Research Fellow, Renmin University of China) [said], “The relationship between the countries in the Middle East has not reached the level of imminent crisis... Luo Lin (Dean and Professor, Beijing Language and Culture University) [said] the Qatari emir's pro-Iranian remarks touched on Saudi Arabia's core security interests, so this hastened the intensity of issue beyond the past forms of diplomacy in the Middle East... Wang Cheng (Head of Business Affairs, West Asia and Africa, Ministry of Commerce) [said] the impact of this storm for China and the establishment of free trade between the GCC is that the GCC will face great resistance in coordinating a common position for the GCC... Wu Yihong (Xinhua News Agency World Research Center researcher, Middle East branch) [said] China's energy imports will face a huge threat and challenge. [The conflict] will affect China's energy strategic reserves. Saudi Arabia is China's major source of oil imports [and] projects under construction that are contracted by China will be affected. It is recommended that as soon as possible we develop our strategy in the Middle East and take the initiative to participate in mediation, showing China's existence and indispensable influence.



A Chinese View on Russian Operations in Syria

OE Watch Commentary: Wang Jichang is a Colonel and research fellow with the Chinese Academy of Military Science's European Military Studies Division of the Foreign Military Studies Department. His excerpted article from *China Military Science* analyzes Russia's operation in Syria from three perspectives: political planning; situational planning and control; and tactical application. He describes Russian military activities as a modernized information warfare operation. The accompanying excerpts offer Chinese observations regarding Russia's planning for its Syrian operation, the first large-scale military operation by Russia since the Soviet Union disintegrated.

As the passages claim, the Russian military developed a strategic approach of "limited use of forces" in order to solve the Syrian crisis politically in a way that would be favorable to Russia. To achieve this, the Russian military crafted the war through careful planning and "precision control" of the situation. The author discusses four stages of Russia's operation. The first was to "mobilize 10 reconnaissance satellites to conduct regular radio reconnaissance and imagery reconnaissance of Syria." The second was to "dispatch two IL-20M electronic reconnaissance aircraft, and UAVs to Syria in order to conduct a large swath of airborne reconnaissance over the Syrian battlefield." Third, he notes that Russia formed a "Middle East-specific strong technical reconnaissance network using its technical reconnaissance forces stationed in Armenian and Tajikistan military bases." Fourth, Russia actively used measures such as cyber reconnaissance and spy intelligence reconnaissance.

Finally, the author notes that Russia consistently controlled Bashar al-Assad via "carrot and stick means" while "spurring the United States to cooperate via the combinational means of discussing while fighting." The author claims that as a result of these calculated actions, the situation on the ground kept unfolding in accordance with Russia's own rhythm and headed in the direction that had been pre-established by Russia from the start. **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

“For the operation, the Russian Army always adhered to the policy of limited use of forces, and controlled Bashar via carrot and stick means while spurring the United States to cooperate via the combinational means of discussing while fighting. As a result, the situation on the battlefield consistently unfolded in accordance with its own rhythm, and headed in its pre-established direction.”

Source: Wang Jichang, "Main Experience of Russia's Military Operations in Syria," *China Military Science*, No. 3 2016, pp. 119-126.

Conducting Strategic and Tactical Planning in Advance

"The Russian military has developed a military strategic approach of "limited use of forces" in accordance with its strategic guidance "to solve the Syrian crisis politically in a situation favorable to Russia." On the basis of this, the Russian military has then carefully crafted the course of war through "careful strategic and tactics planning in advance," "deft opening," "precision control of the situation," and "perfect closing." ...

Before the war, Russia had long been in careful preparation, disposition, and ensuring that "everything had been made ready." The first was to carefully implement prewar dispositions. Russia conducted in-depth cooperation with Syria. Before the war, Russia had communicated with multiple parties of Iran, including Iran's foreign affairs, military, intelligence departments, etc., in an attempt to initiate the formation of an alliance prototype via the excuse of mediating the Iranian nuclear crisis. The second was to ensure goods and material readiness. The port of Tartus was to be expanded. In less than a month of time, Russian engineering units had completed a comprehensive renovation of the Latakia Airport, and built several dozen battlefield infrastructural facilities... The third was to actively carry out intelligence preparedness. Russia's Military had mobilized 10 reconnaissance satellites to conduct regular radio reconnaissance and imagery reconnaissance of Syria. It dispatched two IL-20M electronic reconnaissance aircraft, UAVs including 11 "Bee-1," Seahawk-10," etc., to Syria in order to conduct a large swath of airborne reconnaissance over the Syrian battlefield. Russia had also formed a Middle East-specific strong technical reconnaissance network using its technical reconnaissance forces stationed in Armenian and Tajikistan military bases. Russia had actively used measures such as cyber reconnaissance, spy intelligence reconnaissance, and so forth. ...

Russia had also formed a Middle East-specific strong technical reconnaissance network using its technical reconnaissance forces stationing in the Armenian and Tajikistan Military bases. Russia had actively used measures such as cyber reconnaissance, spy intelligence reconnaissance, and so forth. As a result, it had acquired a great deal of terrorist target information, thus providing intelligence information [to] support to its subsequent attacks. During its "Central 2015" strategic exercise in September 2015, Russia's military had conducted sufficient pre-war training for the Syrian operation....

The Russian Army accurately determined the situation, grasped the timing, decisively made decisions and then implemented the operation. Russia unfolded its actions covertly. First, Russia transported a great deal of main combat equipment and a large number of combatants with the excuse of providing normal military assistance. Second, Russia also sent an ocean fleet led by the "Moscow" guided missile cruiser to the sea area near Syria with the excuse of training. Third, it completed airport transition for its fighter aircraft under cover of training. For the operation, the Russian Army always adhered to the policy of limited use of forces, and controlled Bashar via carrot and stick means while spurring the United States to cooperate via the combinational means of discussing while fighting. As a result, the situation on the battlefield consistently unfolded in accordance with its own rhythm, and headed in its pre-established direction.



Thailand Views Cyber-Security as a Growing Concern

OE Watch Commentary: The Thai Armed Forces are carefully re-evaluating the country’s cyber-security procedures after reports that North Korea used Thailand as a base to carry out a cyber-attack against the United States. The two highlighted articles discuss some of the issues surrounding cyber-security and Thailand’s concerns. Both articles point to an increased concern over, and emphasis on cyber-security by the Thai Armed Forces. Colonel Amorn Chomchoey, a cyber expert of the Royal Thai Air Force, is quoted as urging the Thai Armed Forces to be “prepared for all kinds of attacks.” He goes on to explain that “In a ground battle, we can identify the attacks, but in cyber warfare, we don’t know who is attacking us.”

According to the *Global Security Index 2017*, published by the United Nations International Telecommunication Union, Thailand ranks 20th in a group of 77 countries that were classified in the “maturing” stage, which means they “have developed complex commitments and engaged in cyber-security programs and initiatives.” The ranking is based on legal, technical, and organizational institutions and their cooperation in information-sharing networks within each country. The “leading” stage, classified as having demonstrated a high commitment to cyber-security included 21 countries. The top 11 were: Singapore, United States, Malaysia, Oman, Estonia, Mauritius, Australia, Georgia, France, Canada, and Russia. China was 34th (which puts it in the maturing stage). **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

“We need to be prepared for all kinds of attacks.”

Source: Wassana Nanuam, “Defence Girds for Cyber War,” *Bangkok Post*, 5 July 2017. <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/security/1281163/defence-girds-for-cyber-war>

Defence Girds for Cyber War

The Thai Armed Forces have discussed ways to prepare for a cyber war after learning that North Korea allegedly once used Thailand as a base to carry out a cyber attack against the US, according to Thai military officers.

[Col Amorn Chomchoey, a cyber expert of the Royal Thai Air Force] said cyber war could be more challenging than traditional warfare. “In a ground battle, we can identify the attackers. But in cyber warfare, we don’t know who is attacking us.”

An unnamed source said North Korea has and is using robot networks to take control of a computer network of a local organisation and using it to attack other countries.

Source: Thailand Ranks 20th in Global Cybersecurity Ranking,” *Bangkok Post*,” 5 July 2017. <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/asean/1281590/thailand-ranks-20th-in-global-cybersecurity-ranking>

Thailand Ranks 20th in Global Cybersecurity Ranking

Thailand was grouped in the “maturing” stage in the Global Security Index 2017 report by the UN International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The group refers to 77 countries that have developed complex commitments and engage in cybersecurity programs and initiatives.

The ranking was based on countries’ legal, technical and organizational institutions, their educational and research capabilities, and their cooperation in information-sharing networks.





Thailand's Controversial 20-Year National Strategy

OE Watch Commentary: In late June, Thailand's junta-appointed parliament passed a controversial bill that some critics fear will extend military rule over the country for the next 20 years. The bill requires the heads of Thailand's government departments to annually report their operations to Parliament, the Cabinet, and a new Special Committee. If a department is found not to comply with the country's reform strategy, which was put out by the National Council for Peace and Orders, the department head could face an investigation by the National Anti-Corruption Commission and ultimately face impeachment and imprisonment.

A number of media reports have described some of the concerns about the new bill. For example, the first article explains that the committee "will be stacked with members who are sympathetic to the military." The second and third articles describe concerns that the new bill could go against Thailand's new constitution, which was implemented earlier this year, because it had been open to limited participation, which was not in line with the intent of the Constitution.

The third article also explains that the new national strategy "will be legally binding, effectively giving the military oversight of elected governments for the next 20 years." According to the second article, however, while this "legally binding, long-term plan" shows the military installed regime's intention to cling to power, political critic Sukhum Nualsakul argued that he was confident the strategy would collapse when the public was strong enough to reject them. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

“This 20-year plan is designed to embed the military's role and supervision over Thai politics and economy for the long term.”

Source: Junta installs Committee to 'Take Care of' Elected Governments for 20 Years," *Prachatai*, 27 June 2017. <http://www.prachatai.org/english/node/7239>

Under the new bill, heads of government departments will be required to report annually on their operations to the new special committee, the cabinet and parliament. If either the lower house or senate finds that a department is not following the NCPO's [National Council for Peace and Orders] reform strategy, the department head may be reported for investigation by the National Anti-Corruption Commission.

Unsurprisingly, the bill ensures that the committee will be stacked with members sympathetic to the military. The committee's chair will be the Prime Minister, with one vice-chair being the speaker of the lower house, and the other [being] the speaker of the appointed senate.

Positions in the committee are also reserved for the Permanent Secretary of the Defence Ministry, the Chief of the Defence forces, the Army Commander in Chief, the Air Force Commander in Chief, the Navy Commander in Chief and the Police Commander in Chief. Other positions have been reserved for leaders of previous junta-appointed bodies such as the Secretary of the National Security Council. A final 17 positions will be appointed to various individuals with relevant expertise.

Source: Kasamakorn Chanwanpen, "Skepticism Over National Strategy," *The Nation Online*, 22 June 2017. <https://www.thaivisa.com/forum/topic/989117-skepticism-over-national-strategy/>

Plan shows regime intends to cling to power, says critic of 20-year strategy.

Political critic Sukhum Nualsakul said the legally binding, long-term plan clearly showed the political ambitions of the military-installed regime to cling to power but he did not express concerns because he said he believed society would find a way around it.

Former prime minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said he was disappointed over limited public participation and concerned the strategy would become a burden for future governments.

The critic said he was confident that the strategy would collapse when the public will was strong enough to reject them. "In two years, five years or whatever, if people say no, they [the bills] cannot persist," Sukhum said.

The process was not in line with the intent of the Constitution, which intended that people participate more in legislation, he said. The writing and passing of the draft bill relied mainly on the NLA, he said.

Source: China Plans Sea Launches to Give Boost to Space Commerce," *China Global Television Network*, 10 July 2017. <https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d45544e3059444e/share.html>

Tang Yagang, vice head of the aerospace division of the No.1 institute of the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASTC), said that the technology is comparatively simple and a sea launch platform can be built by modifying freighters.

Countries in the equator region have growing needs for launching near-equatorial and low-inclination satellites, said Fu Zhiheng, deputy general manager of China Great Wall Industry Corporation, affiliated to CASTC.

Source: Liam Cochrane, "Thailand's Military-Installed Legislative Assembly to Impose 20-Year National Strategy on Future Governments," *ABC Australia*, 23 June 2017. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-06-23/thailand-to-impose-20-year-blueprint-on-future-governments/8647174>

The generals have given themselves sweeping powers to push through reforms — ranging from major rail infrastructure projects to crackdowns on street food vendors and flower sellers.

This national strategy will be legally binding, effectively giving the military oversight of elected governments for the next 20 years.

"It is a pity that the national strategy law sets out principles which give the people little chance to participate, not in line with the spirit of the constitution," said former prime minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, according to the Bangkok Post newspaper.



Indonesia to Boost Island Defenses with the Philippines

OE Watch Commentary: After witnessing the Philippines face a more than one month-long battle with militants from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the city of Marawi, Indonesia has decided to boost its island defenses. This is motivated by geographical necessity since Indonesia and the Philippines share the same island waters, in addition to a reported 40 Indonesians among the ISIS fighters in Marawi. The accompanying passage from Indonesian-language *Kompas* discusses a trilateral meeting between the Ministers of Defense of Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia (which also shares the island waters). The ministers agreed to conduct joint patrols and establish a Joint Intelligence Forum, which will meet monthly to exchange information. While the short-term focus will be on Marawi, the longer-term plan is to coordinate armed forces and special forces trainings.

The concern from the Indonesian side is that fighters in Marawi can find their way to the Indonesian islands of Bitung, Morotai, Tarakan, Marore and Sangihe after they are done fighting the battle in Marawi. These islands are in Indonesian territory but border on waters of the Philippines. The Indonesian armed forces have considered deploying troops to the Philippines but this is awaiting the decision of the Philippine Congress. In the meantime, they will more closely patrol the maritime border areas.

The article suggests that any Indonesian troops on Philippine land would only deploy to the southern Philippine islands. This, according to the article, would likely facilitate reciprocal agreements allowing the Philippines to also chase ISIS fighters on Indonesian islands located in joint waters. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

Source: “Ini yang Akan Dilakukan TNI Terkait Teror ISIS di Marawi (This is What TNI [Indonesian National Armed Forces] Will do Regarding the ISIS Territory in Marawi),” *Kompas.com*, 23 June 2017. <http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2017/06/23/17223161/ini.yang.akan.dilakukan.tni.terkait.teror.isis.di.marawi>

The Indonesian government is concerned about the development of the situation of armed conflict between the Philippine military and terrorist groups affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Marawi, Southern Philippines. Indonesia agreed to cooperate on marine patrols with the Philippines and Malaysia in a trilateral meeting of the Ministers of Defense in Tarakan, North Kalimantan. TNI [Indonesian National Armed Forces] Commander General Gatot Nurmantyo said the operational procedures of the Indonesian-Filipino-Malaysian Joint Sea Patrol could create a strong foundation for joint efforts to tackle terrorism in the border regions of the three countries. In addition, said Gatot, the armed forces of the three countries also formed the Joint Intelligence Forum.

In addition, Gatot said that until now the TNI has not planned to engage in military operations to target the ISIS base in Marawi. The Indonesian police along with the TNI have dispersed to the connecting islands from the Marawi region to Bitung, Morotai and Tarakan, along with the Navy and Air Force Patrols and the Police. Nevertheless, TNI operations in the territory of the Philippines are still awaiting the decision of the Philippine Congress.

“The Indonesian government is concerned about the development of the situation of armed conflict between the Philippine military and terrorist groups affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Marawi, Southern Philippines.”





Armenia's Security Cooperation Dilemma

OE Watch Commentary: The appearance of the Iskander ballistic missile system at Armenia's Independence Day parade in September 2016 demonstrated the high level of security cooperation between Armenia and Russia, though the partnership has not been without issues. The accompanying excerpted articles report on how Russian sales of weapons and equipment to Azerbaijan is causing concern for the Armenian government. Both articles provide insight into how this could impact security cooperation in the Caucasus.

The article from the independent news website *News Armenia* discusses how the Armenian Ministry of Defense views the Russian arms sales to Azerbaijan as a concern, citing Azerbaijan's "unpredictable government." He adds that Armenians "are receiving arms from Russia" and that they "acquire them at the domestic prices of the Russian Federation." In the past year the Armenian government has looked for additional partners to provide security assistance, including Armenian Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan's visit to Iran in January. No significant agreements have been made, but the Armenian government made it well-known that it is looking for alternatives.

The article from *Rosbalt*, a Russian government news agency, also looks at the Russian delivery of weapons to Azerbaijan and how this has affected Armenian-Russian relations. The article includes a report from Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defense that the recent "large shipment of modern arms will soon be sent to the front lines," referring to Karabakh and the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict. The article also notes that the shipment included the Chrysanthemum-S anti-tank missile. This is in addition to Azerbaijan "acquiring the Israeli multifunctional anti-tank missile 'Spike'." These acquisitions are taking place amid increased tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan following the April 2016 clashes, which some reports labeled the worst since the 1994 cease-fire agreement.

While the *Rosbalt* article comes from a Russian perspective, it captures Armenia's dilemma in this situation, specifically that "there should be a search for an ally which would not supply Azerbaijan with weapons and take Armenia under its protection." The article notes that "some political circles in Armenia believe that the "West will help" and in particular, "the signing of a partnership agreement with the European Union should be sped up." Armenia has worked with NATO through the Partnership for Peace program and its own Individual Partnership Action Plan, but the main focus has been the development of a peacekeeping battalion, rather than joining the organization.

Lastly, while the article states that "No one will fight for Armenia," on 28 June, Russian President Vladimir Putin submitted the Joint Group Forces agreement to the Duma for ratification (see: "The Reaction to the Russian-Armenian Joint Force, *OE Watch*, January-February 2017). The agreement creates a joint Russian-Armenian force to respond to an attack on Armenia. Ultimately, Russia remains one of the most important security cooperation partners for Armenia, even if Azerbaijan continues to acquire Russian weapons. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

"We are receiving arms from Russia. We acquire them at the domestic prices of the Russian Federation. This is an important market for us."

Source: "Министр обороны Армении негативно относится к поставкам вооружения в Азербайджан (The Ministry of Defense of Armenia is seriously concerned with arms deliveries to Azerbaijan)," *News Armenia*, 28 June 2017. <https://news.am/rus/news/397518.html>

...Armenian Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan is concerned with the supply of arms to Azerbaijan. He spoke about this at a press conference on 28 June in response to a statement from Baku about the deliveries of Russian arms... "I view the delivery of weapons negatively," said the minister, adding that Azerbaijan is such an unpredictable government that arms deliveries are fraught with serious danger, whether its Russian, Israeli or others' weapons... Concerning Armenia's cooperation with Russia, the minister noted that Armenian officials are satisfied... "We are receiving arms from Russia. We acquire them at the domestic prices of the Russian Federation. This is an important market for us..."

Source: Zhorbenadze, Irina. "«Хризантемы» для Азербайджана пахнут войной (The "Chrysanthemums" for Azerbaijan smell like war)," *Rosbalt*, 3 July 2017. <http://www.rosbalt.ru/world/2017/07/03/1627563.html>

Armenia is seething with indignation: a new shipment of Russian arms was recently delivered to the port of Baku. According to the Azerbaijani Ministry of Defense, "the shipment is the latest military equipment from Russia...and the "large shipment of modern arms will soon be sent to the front lines." The front line is that of Karabakh and the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict. The defense ministry reports that the new weapons will strengthen the combat and maneuver capabilities of advanced units to defeat armored vehicles, fortified structures, air targets and other enemy facilities... "How is this possible?" – they are asking in Yerevan, but everyone here has long known about the \$5 billion agreement of Russian arms sales to Azerbaijan...

...the Azerbaijani media gave an almost complete and illustrated report on exactly what was added to the country's military inventory... Of particular note, there are a dozen of the "Chrysanthemum-S" anti-tank guided missiles... Armenian experts say that Azerbaijan is counting on receiving 100 T-90 tanks from Russia and is acquiring the Israeli multifunctional anti-tank missile "Spike"... There are now few people in Yerevan who have the right to say that Russia, with its deliveries of weapons to Azerbaijan, is doing a good job of trying to maintain a balance of power in the region. One conclusion – there should be a search for an ally which would not supply Azerbaijan with weapons and take Armenia under its protection. A question then comes up: who, except Russia, will sell Armenia something like the "Iskander" and "Smerch"??...

Some political circles in Armenia believe that the "West will help" and in particular, the signing of a partnership agreement with the European Union should be sped up. However, the reality of an anticipated "partnership" is a complete desecration from the point of view of solving Armenia's problems of Nagorno-Karabakh with Azerbaijan. No one will fight for Armenia, even the CSTO, which is supposed to in the event the country is attacked...



Central Asian Peacekeepers in Syria?

OE Watch Commentary: The governments of Central Asia have been watching the conflict in Syria for a number of years, particularly since their citizens have joined and fought with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and other affiliated groups. However, other than Kazakhstan's efforts to host peace talks in Astana, they have not become directly involved. The accompanying excerpted articles report on the possibility of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan sending a peacekeeping force to Syria. Despite some confusion about the potential mission, the articles shed light on the likelihood of a peacekeeping deployment taking place.

On 23 June, the Russian government reportedly requested members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to make a contribution for a peacekeeping force in Syria, though a few reports made the request appear to be a demand. The article from *Kazinform*, a Kazakh government news agency, includes a quote from Alexander Lavrentiev, Russia's special envoy to Syria, that "We do not impose the situation on anyone." It also notes that "the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan stated that the country is not negotiating with anyone on the issue of sending its soldiers to Syria." The Kazakh government has generally preferred to put effort toward resolving the conflict in Syria through hosting negotiations in its capital Astana, which have taken place several times over the past couple of years.

The article from the Russian daily newspaper *Kommersant* also discusses the possible peacekeeping force and it includes one of the most important indicators of the likelihood of Kyrgyz units deploying. It states that "Kyrgyz law allows the republic to send peacekeeping forces as part of a UN mission when granted a mandate." Kyrgyzstan actually sent several experts on mission to the UN Supervision Mission in Syria from May-July 2012. Nothing is mentioned about Kazakhstan's laws regarding sending peacekeepers, but if the development of the Kazakhstan Peacekeeping Battalion (KAZBAT) is any indication, the Kazakh government also sees a UN mandate as the only viable path to a peacekeeping mission. The development of KAZBAT, with assistance from NATO, has been focused on preparing the unit for a UN mission, not with the CSTO. Ultimately, both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan could send peacekeepers to Syria, however small a contribution it might be, but it is unlikely to happen without UN backing.

End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan stated that the country is not negotiating with anyone on the issue of sending its soldiers to Syria."



UNSMIS deployment map as of July 2012

Source: United Nations Cartographic Section, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:UNSMIS_map_2012.png, Public Domain

Source: Baymanov, Damir. "Возможность направления военных РК в Сирию прокомментировал спецпредставитель Президента РФ (The special representative of the President of the Russian Federation commented on the possibility to deploy the Republic of Kazakhstan's military to Syria)," *Kazinform*, 5 July 2017. http://www.inform.kz/ru/vozmozhnost-napravleniya-voennyh-rk-v-siryu-prokommentiroval-specpredstavitel-prezidenta-rf_a3042982

"...The question now is which country will engage military observers for a peacekeeping mission to Syria. No one questions the participation of the Russian contingent. That is why we requested all CIS states to consider, within reasonable limits, sending a contingent for joint participation in monitoring the situation. We do not impose the situation on anyone..." Alexander Lavrentiev stated at a press briefing of the results of the international conference on Syria in Astana...the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan stated that the country is not negotiating with anyone on the issue of sending its soldiers to Syria. "The question of how security and the effectiveness of the four zones of de-escalation in Syria is ensured is currently in the hands of the guarantor states of the Astana process..." Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement...

Source: Ivan Safronov, Aleksandra Dzhordzhevich, and Mikhail Korostikov. "Наблюдатели порядка (The Observers of Order)," *Kommersant*, 23 June 2017. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3332229>

"...The Russian proposal to deploy forces from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to Syria to the zones of de-escalation was discussed by Ibrahim Kalin, Press Secretary of the Turkish President Recep Erdogan..." "We expect this issue to be discussed in more detail during the meetings in Astana in July," said Kalin...

...Kyrgyz law allows the republic to send peacekeeping forces as part of a UN mission when granted a mandate...(it is) believed that only a symbolic number of soldiers from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan can be sent to Syria. In this case, "one observer and a dozen soldiers will be enough to maintain the designated zones of de-escalation..."



Pakistan Continues to Search for Missing Officer

OE Watch Commentary: When Lt Colonel Mohammad Habib Zahir, a retired Pakistani Army officer, went missing in Nepal in early April, it was believed that he had been abducted by agents of India's foreign intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), in order to arrange an exchange for Kulbhushan Jadhav, who had been on trial in Pakistan for espionage. The accompanying excerpted articles provide an update on the case and show that Pakistan's investigation into the whereabouts of Zahir continues.

The article from *Pakistan Observer*, an English language daily newspaper, initially reports on two Pakistani diplomats who went missing in Afghanistan and then brings up the case of Zahir. The article mentions Zahir's disappearance after Jadhav received a death sentence, but it states that Zahir "was in the team that nabbed Kulbhushan Yadav in March 2016" and that "Indian agencies had been on Zahir's trail for long." No other sources have mentioned that Zahir had been involved in Jadhav's arrest.

The article from the Indian news website *First Post* reports on statements by Pakistani officials about the case, including what steps they are taking to find Zahir. The article discusses that Abdul Qadir Baloch, the Minister for States and Frontier Regions, gave a report to Pakistan's Senate that there is "no evidence that the Indian intelligence is behind the reported abduction" and that the case "could not be taken to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) or the UN." He also stated that "We are hundred per cent sure that Indian intelligence agency R&AW is behind the kidnapping but the evidence to this effect is not final."

Not long after a Pakistani military court sentenced Kulbhushan Jadhav to death, India filed a petition to the ICJ in May on grounds that the trial violated international law. The ICJ issued a stay of execution for Jadhav in May and the case will continue later this year. The *First Post* article also notes that "Senator Rehman Malik of the Pakistan People's Party urged the government to take the issue to the ICJ," though it is not stated if he meant taking it to the ICJ as part of the Jadhav case or separately. While Pakistani officials may not have enough evidence of Indian involvement in the disappearance, the articles show that they continue to investigate and search for Zahir. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

"Habib disappeared from Lumbini near Nepal's border with India and [is] now suspected to be in Indian custody, [he] was in the team that nabbed Kulbhushan Yadav in March 2016."

Source: "Missing Pak diplomats," *Pakistan Observer*, 19 June 2017.
<http://pakobserver.net/missing-pak-diplomats/>

... Pakistan has expressed serious concern over disappearance of its two diplomats based in Jalalabad, Afghanistan... the incident comes in the wake of death penalty for Indian RAW agent Kulbhushan Yadav and subsequent disappearance of Muhammad Habib Zahir, retired Lt Col of the Pakistan Army. Col. Habib disappeared from Lumbini near Nepal's border with India and [is] now suspected to be in Indian custody, [he] was in the team that nabbed Kulbhushan Yadav in March 2016...The Indian Express, quoting sources in Security Establishment, reported on April 12 that 'Indian agencies had been on Zahir's trail for long'

Source: "Lt-Col Habib Zahir's disappearance in Kathmandu: No proof India abducted him, says Pakistan minister," *First Post*, 8 June 2017.

<http://www.firstpost.com/india/lt-col-habib-zahirs-disappearance-in-kathmandu-no-proof-india-abducted-him-says-pakistan-minister-3530883.html>

There is no evidence that the Indian intelligence is behind the reported abduction of a retired Pakistani colonel in Nepal...the Minister for States and Frontier Regions Abdul Qadir Baloch informed the Senate on Wednesday that the purported kidnapping of retired Lt Colonel Mohammad Habib could not be taken to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) or the UN on the basis of assumptions... Baloch added: "We are hundred per cent sure that Indian intelligence agency R&AW is behind the kidnapping but the evidence to this effect is not final."

But he said the Habib issue appeared to be linked with the conviction of alleged Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav in Pakistan... He said the Foreign Office was trying to obtain "solid evidence" and Nepal had been asked to get in touch with three Indian nationals who had received Habib at the airport when he flew into Kathmandu. He said it was unclear if the three were Indian government employees or civilians or working for a private firm...Senator Rehman Malik of the Pakistan Peoples Party urged the government to take the issue to the ICJ and the UN...

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

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

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/194884>



Does ISIS Pose a Threat to India?

by Animesh Roul

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OE Watch Commentary: The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) does not, on the face of it, have a physical presence in India. However, security services have arrested over 90 ISIS sympathizers, and uncovered at least six recruitment and indoctrination networks. In addition, at least two attacks can be attributed to Indian affiliates of the group. Although there is no official data to show how many Indians have joined ISIS in Syria, Afghanistan or elsewhere, there are reports of ISIS militants of Indian origin who have either been killed or injured while fighting abroad. Should India be more worried about an ISIS threat?

Investigations show ISIS is appealing to Indian youth through social media channels, messaging platforms and online jihadist discussion forums. The group encourages those it engages to travel to Iraq and Syria or places where ISIS affiliates have a presence, such as Afghanistan. The southern Indian state of Kerala tops the list for the most residents arrested over ISIS links, with 21 arrests of this nature. The October 2016 arrest of at least six men, including one from Kerala, who were part of an ISIS-inspired group called the “Ansar-ul-Khilafah Kerala,” exposed the spread of grassroots Islamism in Kerala through social media platforms like Telegram and Facebook. This rise in radicalization in Kerala is blamed mainly on the growth of online preaching activities and easily accessible online propaganda materials, as well as material physically distributed by lay preachers and Islamic centers.

The figures from other states — Telangana (16), Karnataka (9), Maharashtra (8), Madhya Pradesh (6), Uttarakhand (4), Uttar Pradesh (3), Tamil Nadu (4) and Rajasthan (2) — speak volumes about the pan-Indian reach of ISIS’s message and ideals. ISIS also has some propaganda directly focused on India. A May 2016 video message titled “The Bilad al-Hind [Land of India] – Between Pain and Hope,” featured what was supposedly a Syria-based exclusively Indian fighting unit. In the film, ISIS threatens to wage jihad against India and urges all Muslims to take revenge against the injustices to Indian Muslims in Kashmir, for the demolition of Babri Masjid and for the communal riots in Gujarat and Muzaffarnagar. Most of the militants featured in the video are suspected to be former Indian militants who fled India in recent years.

The first two accompanying passages point out that in mid-June, the US State Department designated Mohammad Safi Armar, an Indian militant, as a “Specially Designated Global Terrorist.” Armar, who goes by the *nom de guerre* Yousuf al-Hindi, is noted as the chief recruiter for ISIS in India. He has faked his own death a number of times in the past, but is believed to be alive. The second passage claims that he is the first Indian-origin ISIS militant to be sanctioned by the US.

As the third passage points out, India’s Home Minister Rajnath Singh recently underscored that, despite a sizeable Muslim population, ISIS has not been able to gain a foothold in India. That confidence notwithstanding, ISIS’s violent ideals have clearly managed to entice some Indian youth into its fold. **End OE Watch Commentary (Roul)**

Source: US names IS’ top India recruiter a global terrorist,” *The Hindu*, 15 June 2017. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/is-india-recruiter-named-in-us-terror-list/article19077720.ece>

“The Islamic State group’s top India recruiter and a senior coordinator of its European attacks network were named Thursday on the United States’ terrorist sanctions list.”

...

“Armar, a native of Karnataka, is the Islamic State group’s leader and chief recruiter in India, the department said. It blamed him for cultivating “dozens” of IS supporters involved in building the group’s operations in the country.”

Source: Karnataka born ISIS chief recruiter Mohammad Shafi Armar named ‘global terrorist’ by US,” *Financial Express.com (India)*, 16 June 2017. <http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/is-chief-recruiter-in-indian-subcontinent-mohammed-shafi-armar-named-global-terrorist-by-us/720969/>

“The fugitive chief recruiter for ISIS in the Indian subcontinent Mohammed Shafi Armar was today named a ‘Specially Designated Global Terrorist’ by the US, becoming the first Indian leader of the dreaded terror outfit against whom America has slammed sanctions.”

Source: Dev Goswami, “ISIS failed in India despite country’s large Muslim population: Rajnath Singh,” *India Today*, 3 June 2017. <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/isis-failed-in-india-despite-countrys-large-muslim-population-rajnath-singh/1/970005.html>

“India is the second largest country as far as Muslim population in the world is concerned. I can say with full responsibility that despite such a large population (of Muslims), ... ISIS has not been able to set foot,” Rajnath Singh said.

“The fugitive chief recruiter for ISIS in the Indian subcontinent Mohammed Shafi Armar was today named a ‘Specially Designated Global Terrorist’ by the US, becoming the first Indian leader of the dreaded terror outfit against whom America has slammed sanctions.”