

# Foreign Military Studies Office

# OEWATCH



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*FOREIGN NEWS & PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT*



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#### ON THE COVER:

Горная подготовка морских пехотинцев Северного флота (Mining training for the Northern Fleet marines).

Source: Russian Defense Ministry, <https://мультимедиа.минобороны.рф/multimedia/photo/gallery.htm?id=61881@cmsPhotoGallery>, CC 4.0.

# OEWATCH

## Foreign News & Perspectives of the Operational Environment

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## Radios in the Russian Ground Forces

**OE Watch Commentary:** Military communications in the Russian Ground Forces have come a long way from simple audio and visual methods for transmitting combat command-and-control orders to advanced multichannel automated systems that provide real-time communication with fixed and mobile facilities at practically unlimited range. In practice, this has meant the Russian Ground Forces' once notoriously unreliable communications (especially at the tactical level) have been much improved. In terms of organizational structure, the radio communication system of the Russian Ground Forces can be provisionally divided into two main parts. The first is High Frequency (HF) systems that operate using the principles of ionospheric radio wave propagation that have transmitters of 500 Watts or more. These systems are designed to provide long-range, over-the-horizon communications for operational and strategic level control.

Although the Ground Forces do have satellite communication capabilities, HF appears to be the primary means of over-the-horizon communications. These radios currently consist of several large families. The R-161 Poisk family was widely fielded in the 1980-1990s, and has since been replaced by the R-166 Artek family, which was developed in the late 1990s. The accompanying excerpted article, from the 12 December 2018 edition of *Krasnaya Zvezda*, discusses the next generation of the Russian Ground Forces' long range, over-the-horizon radios for operational and strategic level control, the R-176 Antey family. Among other technological innovations, the R-176 Antey family, is reportedly a Software Defined Radio (SDR), meaning a radio that is primarily manipulated through software instead of hardware such as mixers, filters, modulators/demodulators, etc. These types of radios are capable of receiving and transmitting different waveforms based solely on the software used, instead of requiring physical modifications of hardware.

The second main part of the Ground Forces' communications consists of low-power mobile, portable, or transportable VHF/UHF radio communication systems that have power up to 100 Watts, which are used for tactical purposes. Currently, the R-168 Akveduk, Russia's fifth generation tactical radio system, is the primary tactical radio in service with the Ground Forces, Airborne, and Naval Infantry. These radios, widely fielded in the late 2000s, provide capabilities for digital data transmission and resilience against jamming. Although the R-168 Akveduk was a major advancement over the previous Arbalet series, the Akveduk man-portable radios were too bulky for convenient dismounted use.

The accompanying excerpted article from the 19 October 2018 edition of *Krasnaya Zvezda*, is by Colonel General Khalil Arslanov, Chief of the Russian Federation Armed Forces Communications Directorate, and Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation Armed Forces. Colonel General Arslanov lays out the architecture and future of the military communications, and concludes by describing Russia's sixth generation of tactical radios, the R-187 Azart family. Aside from other advancements, the R-187 is also an SDR radio that has digital data transmission, encryption, and electronic warfare resilience capabilities. Unlike the R-168 Akveduk family that consists of over 20 different radios, the Azart family has only three radios: the Azart-P (4km), Azart-N (12km), and Azart-BM (40km). The first reports of the R-187 Azart entering service began in 2012, and has reportedly been used in the Crimea, Eastern Ukraine, and Syria. Interestingly, the Russians have reportedly already fielded a UAV-based repeater to extend the range of the system. Although the R-166 and R-168s are still the predominant operational and tactical communication systems in the Russian Ground Forces, the fielding of the R-176 and R-187s will significantly enhance Russian command and control (mission command) capabilities. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

*“In contemporary warfare, the role of information, telecommunication, and automated systems is growing, and the means and methods for using them to achieve victory are improving constantly. This makes demands on troop command and control, and consequently the communication system, more stringent.”*



LEFT: Радиостанция Р-166-0,5 (R-166-0,5 radiostation), RIGHT: Портативная радиостанция Р-187П1 Азарт (R-187P1 Azart radio).

Source: Vitaly V. Kuzmin, <https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/270MSBr/i-6JMFxm/A> (left), <https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/4th-Kantemirovskaya-Tank-Division-Open-Day-Part2/> (right), CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>).

(continued)



## Continued: Radios in the Russian Ground Forces

**Source:** Colonel General Khalil Arslanov, “На острие технического прогресса (On the Cutting Edge of Technical Progress),” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 19 October 2018. <http://redstar.ru/na-ostrie-tehnicheskogo-progressa>

*One of the top-priority tasks in the military communication realm is the creation and deployment of a unified automated digital communication system. At the same time, a key role in increasing the efficiency of troop usage and enabling the combat potential of armaments to the maximum extent possible is played by the Russian Federation Armed Forces' communication system, which is being built based on the latest science and technology achievements in the field of information and telecommunication technologies. An analysis of the wars and military conflicts of modern times argues that conflicting parties employ advanced developments in the armament realm broadly and without delay. In contemporary warfare, the role of information, telecommunication, and automated systems is growing, and the means and methods for using them to achieve victory are improving constantly. This makes demands on troop command and control, and consequently the communication system, more stringent.*

*One of the top-priority building missions in the military communication realm is the creation and deployment of the Russian Federation Armed Forces' unified automated digital communication system (OATsSS) [объединённой автоматизированной цифровой системы связи (ОАЦСС)] based on the use of the latest domestic developments in the field of state-of-the-art digital satellite, radio, radio relay, and tropospheric communication resources, as well as digital information sharing systems employing fiber optic technologies. Serious attention is being devoted to defining unified operating principles for the Russian Federation Armed Forces' unified automated digital communication system, its protection and security. Automated communication control system elements are under development for command posts of all levels...*

*The realization of new types of communication services requires a fundamentally different approach to communication system building. Within the framework of scientific research and experimental design work conducted by Russian Defense Ministry scientific research organizations, principles have been developed for employing advanced communication systems, military communication equipment prototypes using wireless broadband access to communication system resources, software-defined radios, and highly mobile subscriber access to communication system resources...*

*At the same time, radio communication resources play a key role in providing for the command and control of subunits on the battlefield. First and foremost, we are talking about sixth-generation radio sets that allow building increased-capacity cognitive radio communication networks and under conditions of organized and unforeseen interference. Such devices allow for organizing “one-to-one” radio communication in automatic and automated modes with all means and methods for conducting combat. Moreover, they include a continuous automatic radio relay mode that allows for establishing long-distance radio communication during subunit operations in mountainous and rugged terrain without using additional equipment.*

**Source:** Yuriy Avdeyev, “Радио сможет самообучаться (The Radio Will Be Able To Self-Learn),” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 12 December 2018. <http://redstar.ru/radio-smozhet-samoobuchatsya/>

*The R-176 Antey system (P-176 «Антей») includes field and fixed products for the organization of short-wave communication, which are designed to work as part of Ground Troops communication nodes at the operational and strategic control levels. They provide communication channels to the officials of control points and provide automatic and automated transmission of data, telephone, and telegraph information in the face of interference at distances of several thousand kilometers. The system includes nodal receiving and transmitting hardware, autonomous radio stations, and fixed receiving and transmitting systems. In addition, in order to ensure a complete standardized line of radio facilities, the concern initiated a deep modernization of the serial radio station R-166-0.5 for use in command and control. As a result of the work done, the radio facilities of the Antey system are expected to be used at all levels of Armed Forces management, from brigade to the General Staff...*

*Specialists note that all system elements are built on a modern technological base. They are based on Tishina SDR [software defined radio] modems, which together with the developed special software implement automatic adaptation to the current conditions of radio communication. Due to this, as well as a set of technical solutions, it is possible to form a set of products that function as a single system and provide a high level of automation...*

*According to experts, the Antey system will make it possible to significantly improve the efficiency of military short-wave radio lines when subjected to deliberate enemy interference. It has a good chance of becoming a standardized interbranch and interdepartmental means for organizing radio communication in field and fixed conditions...Among other things, the innovation has good prospects for entering the export market, where there is a great demand for such communication equipment.*

*Speaking about further improvement of the existing fixed system of decameter radio communication [high frequency/HF], it should be noted that one of the main directions is the creation of its automated network covering the entire territory of Russia and providing fixed protected and unprotected facilities of Russian Federation Armed Forces ground, sea, and air echelons with mainline radio channels of required stability and capacity in various operating conditions.*

*There will be changes also to tactical level control radio equipment. Now, as they say, it is near the finish line, namely at the stages of preliminary and state tests there is development of a number of sixth-generation radio station systems. They include mobile, portable, and transportable equipment that make it possible to build self-organizing and self-restoring radio networks with dynamic routing and automatic retransmission of traffic for the troops. Portable equipment from one of these systems has been supplied on a mass basis for some years to brigades and divisions of the Russian Federation Armed Forces...*





## Northern Fleet Will Receive Automated C&C System Integrating Air, Land and Sea

**OE Watch Commentary:** The Soviet Union and, later, Russia made serious efforts to develop an operational-level reconnaissance strike complex which could identify and destroy threat targets in near-real time. There were significant difficulties in integrating air and ground reconnaissance to develop a comprehensive intelligence picture and targeting matrix. Russia has now realized that capability at the tactical and operational level and is expanding this to also integrate naval surface intelligence into the comprehensive, common display as the accompanying excerpted article reports. Artificial intelligence will process data and recommend systems to eliminate threats across the vast Arctic. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

*“Presently, the Northern Fleet is saturated with state-of-the-art reconnaissance systems.”*

**Source:** Aleksandr Kruglov and Aleksey Ramm, “Холодный интеллект: военные накроют Арктику сплошным полем наблюдения (Cold Intellect: Military personnel will cover the Arctic with a solid surveillance field),” *Izvestia*, 21 December 2018. <https://iz.ru/823286/aleksandr-kruglov-aleksei-ramm/kholodnyi-intellekt-voennye-nakroiut-arktiku-sploshnym-polem-nabliudeniia>

*Ministry of Defense spokesmen ...stated that the effectiveness of the advanced automated command and control system is being tested jointly with representatives ...of the defense industry. They plan to transfer the system to the Northern Fleet in 2019.*

*Presently, the Northern Fleet is saturated with state-of-the-art reconnaissance systems. Navy, ground forces, and air force formations have their own command and control systems, where information, which is received from their own systems, is accumulated. Lack of cross-service integration does not permit the full realization of their potential.*

*Now all weapon systems will receive centralized command and control. They will receive information from the Fleet’s combat ships, Naval Aviation aircraft, radio-technical and radar sites, unmanned aerial vehicles, and airborne early warning and control aircraft. The intelligence information will converge and will be processed in real time with the use of artificial intelligence. Its mission is to determine possible enemy operations and to transmit potential decisions to commanders.*

*All of the information will converge at the combat information post and will be displayed on a special screen. All ground-based, airborne, and naval surface targets, and, in the future, the situation on the “underwater” front – information about enemy submarines and unmanned submersibles will arrive from sonar stations - will be plotted on the screen in real time. The system will instantaneously determine the type of detected targets, the threat level, speed, altitude, and direction of movement. If necessary, the C&C system will issue target designations. It will permit the establishment of the continuous exchange of information among all of the users, which will provide the capability to instantaneously react to a change in the combat situation.*

*Now a commander of any level will obtain a complete picture of enemy operations and recommendations for their destruction. That information will permit the adoption of a precise and effective decision at all command and control levels. And it will also help rationally assign subordinate men and equipment. For example, if necessary it could send additional ships to an area to provide security of navigation in the water areas of the Northern Maritime Route. The system could also expeditiously make decisions about the employment of strike weapons, including cruise missiles.*

*That system is needed not only in wartime but also in peacetime, taking into account the enormous expanses, which one needs to monitor in the Arctic. Russian Federation Admiral Selivanov, the former Chief of the RF Navy Main Staff, stated that “The experiments on the introduction of a similar system were conducted approximately 30 years ago. It was initially called the air and naval situation illumination system. That C&C system is urgently needed in the Northern Fleet. We have to track enormous expanses in this region. This year a new mission has appeared – monitoring the Northern Maritime Route”.*

*The Northern Maritime Route – is the shortest route between Russia’s European portion and the Far East. It has been defined by Russian Federation law as Russia’s historically developed national single transportation line of communications in the Arctic. Foreign military ships will be able to sail along the Northern Maritime Route only after the notification of Russian authorities.*

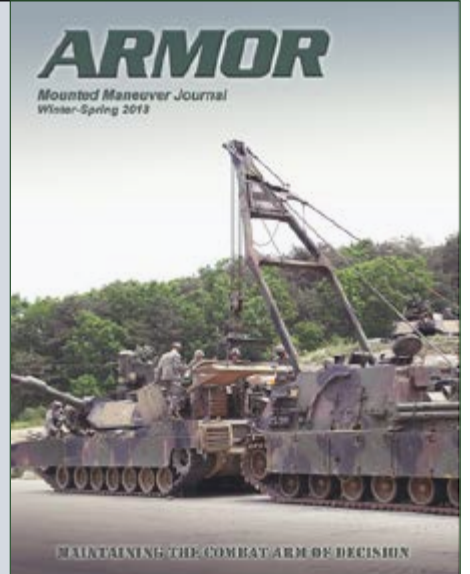
## Reconnaissance-in-Force Russian Style

By Lester W. Grau

“Integrated fires, rapid detect-destroy systems and the controlled, merciless onslaught of smaller robot tanks and assault vehicles may rip through robust defenses to determine the true nature of the defense and prepare the main attack to totally dismantle it. To the Russian way of thinking, the reconnaissance-in-force remains a viable method of tactical intelligence. Learning how to employ it optimally is the current challenge.”

This paper was originally published in *Armor* journal’s Winter-Spring 2018 edition.

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/230764>





## The Inflatable Sentry

**OE Watch Commentary:** In 2016, the Russian Ministry of Defense reactivated the “Lighter-Than-Air Systems Department” in the Aerospace Forces and adopted a lighter-than-air systems technology development concept: the “Dirigibles, Aerostats, and Air Balloons until 2025” (дирижаблей, аэростатов и воздушных шаров до 2025 года). The purpose of this was not only to develop a replacement for the 1950s era lighter-than-air systems currently used by the Aerospace Forces for traditional purposes, such as air and missile defense, and scientific research, but also to develop new balloons, dirigibles, and aerostats to support new Aerospace Forces’ missions. The Russians consider lighter-than-air systems as an alternative to unmanned aerial vehicles because their payload capacity is an order of magnitude greater, and their loiter time can be measured in terms of days instead of hours. This loiter capability is so great that they are often referred to as “static reconnaissance systems” (статичными разведчиками).

Most discussions of new Russian lighter-than-air systems involve systems for air and missile defense, but the accompanying excerpted article from *Izvestiya* discusses the AKV-05 aerostat, a system intended to provide persistent surveillance of the ground. The AKV-05 system consists of a ground control post mounted on an all-terrain vehicle, a tethered aerostat, a towed electromechanical winch for the aerostat, and a mobile gas replenishment unit. The AKV-05 aerostat is a 50 cubic-meter helium balloon that maintains an operational altitude of 300 to 1,000 meters with equipment weighing up to 16 kg. The AKV-05 is equipped with an onboard computer that can automatically adjust altitude and remain fixed on position at wind speeds of 15 m/s (with gusts of 25 m/s). In its standard configuration, the AKV-05’s maximum flight time is 75 hours, during which it can provide round-the-clock electro-optical video surveillance, including with a thermal imager. In good weather conditions, the electro-optical system can reportedly read license plates at an altitude of 300 meters and range of two kilometers, and can spot objects within a 10-km radius. If proven successful, the AKV-05 aerostat could enhance Russia’s Reconnaissance-Fire System (разведывательная-огневая система), especially for security purposes such as Russia is now engaging in Syria. Not only is the AKV-05 seen as a targeting asset, but it is also being considered for use as a radar platform, communications (retransmission), signals intercept, electronic warfare, and weather purposes. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

**Source:** Aleksandr Kruglov and Aleksey Ramm, “Надувной часовой: важные военные объекты будут охранять аэростаты (The Inflatable Sentry: Aerostats to Guard Important Military Sites),” *Izvestiya*, 14 December 2018. <https://iz.ru/815399/aleksandr-kruglov-aleksei-ramm/naduvnoi-chasovoi-vazhnye-voennye-obekty-budut-okhraniat-aerostaty>

*The armed forces are to receive a new generation of tethered aerostats. The official name of these complexes is AKV-05. They have been tested in Syria, at the Humaymim airbase and during the liberation of Palmyra. The plan is to use the aerostats with video surveillance and thermal imaging devices for guarding important military facilities. The first batch will cost the military 120 million rubles [\$1,739,703]. According to experts, they will be versatile platforms for hi-tech surveillance systems...*

*AKV-05s are currently being tested in Syria, where they are in active use to guard and monitor the environs of the Humaymim airbase. In 2016 they were in the sky above Palmyra, watching the operation to liberate the city. All data from the aerostats were being transmitted in real time to the National State Defense Management Center...*

*The plan is to fit other equipment to the aerostats in the future, including radars, communication, signals intercept, and electronic warfare devices, and target acquisition. The aerostat can serve as a weather station, a communications relay, or a radar station capable of detecting a target within a radius of 200 km.*

*Aerostats are relatively inexpensive and memories of them were prompted by the emergence of hi-tech miniaturized intelligence-gathering systems, military expert Vadim Kozyulin explained to *Izvestiya*. “An aerostat can lift technologically advanced surveillance gear to high altitudes and make it much more effective,” he said. “These complexes are fitted with a colossal number of detectors and sensors that watch what is happening on the ground. In ‘defense’ mode it has a powerful database with a detailed map of the terrain which is updated in real time. Any kind of change -- for example, a vehicle leaving, people moving around, or any kind of work beginning -- triggers the data processing program.” Artificial intelligence monitors the situation, analyses changes, and flags up any kind of suspicious trend. This enables prompt detection of threats, Kozyulin said.*

*The use of aerostats for communications was tried out during the USSR’s war in Afghanistan, and they were found to extend the range of radio traffic to four or five times that of ground-based devices. Modern technologies and materials have made aerostats safer to use. Among their advantages are the ability to remain over a single location for an extended period and the high quality of the signals they transmit. Aerostats enable communications in places where it is impossible to lay cables or rapidly deploy a network of mobile communication hubs -- for example, in mountains or the Arctic tundra. These complexes are much cheaper than ground-based assets, of which a vastly greater number are needed for signals coverage of the same area.*

*“The plan is to fit other equipment to the aerostats in the future, including radars, communication, signals intercept, and electronic warfare devices, and target acquisition. The aerostat can serve as a weather station, a communications relay, or a radar station capable of detecting a target within a radius of 200 km.”*





## The S-350 Vityaz Air Defense System

**OE Watch Commentary:** The S-350 Vityaz air defense system is the result of a joint Russia-South Korean venture that consists of a 50K6E command post (capable of servicing up to eight launchers), 50N6E multifunctional radar, and the 50P6E launcher (with 12 missiles). Although the S-350 lacks the range of the S-400, its capability to fire three missile types: the 9M96E2 (120km), the 9M96E (60km), and the 9M100 (10km), provide a significant advantage over the S-400, mainly that the S-350 does not require a short-range system such as a close range Pantsir-S1 or Tor missile system to protect it from cruise missiles and other “close” threats.

The S-350 is reportedly a more capable system than the S-300 and foreign counterparts because of: the superiority of the 50N6E X-band multifunctional radar; the automation of target detection, targets tracking, and missile launch systems; the increased number of simultaneously tracked targets and increased rate of fire for repulsing mass cruise missiles strikes, other offensive air weapons (including UAVs), and precision munitions; improved operating characteristics that decrease maintenance issues and provide increased reliability. In general, the S-350 is purported to have greater capabilities, but lower operating costs than the S-300 and foreign counterparts.

The accompanying excerpted article from *Gazeta.Ru* discusses how the S-350 will replace the S-300 and Buk-M1-2 in the Russian Aerospace Forces. In addition, as with other air defense systems, the S-350 will be fielded in a naval variant (the ship-borne Poliment-Redut) to reduce costs through economies of scale. If the S-350 Vityaz meets expectations, this joint Russia-South Korean venture could be successful not only as a domestic weapon system to supplement the S-400 and eventually S-500, but also as an export item for countries wishing to upgrade their air defense capabilities. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

**Source:** Rafael Fakhrutdinov: “Российские военные получают новейший зенитный комплекс «Витязь» (The Russian Military Will Get the Latest ‘Vityaz’ Air Defense Complex),” *Gazeta.Ru*, 30 December 2018. <https://www.gazeta.ru/army/2018/12/30/12114157.shtml>

*The new S-350 “Vityaz” air defense missile complex will arrive in the Russian Aerospace Forces inventory next year, the Russian Ministry of Defense Information and Mass Communications Department reported. Besides this, the RF VKS will obtain approximately 10 sets of Pantsir-S air defense missile-gun complexes and S-400s...*

*“Conversations about the development of nonstrategic missile defense system (NPRO) have already been conducted for a long time, furthermore, the state tests of the S-350 Vityaz mobile complex, which should arrive to replace the S-300 and Buk-M1-2, are being conducted right now”.*

*For example, one launcher of this complex transports 12 missile interceptors, despite the fact that the S-300 has a total of four. What is more, Vityaz will have a greater number of channels, which permit it to fire at more targets simultaneously. But we need to point out that, if necessary, one can also accommodate the launchers on ordinary trucks with the possibility of their camouflage”, the expert indicated.*

*And, in the analyst’s words, camouflaging them as ordinary cargo motor vehicles will permit the NPRO complexes to be inconspicuous for the probable enemy’s reconnaissance systems, “whose spies can hypothetically stroll along the streets of Russian cities”...*

*“...the state tests of the S-350 Vityaz mobile complex, which should arrive to replace the S-300 and Buk-M1-2, are being conducted right now.”*



Air Defence System “Vityaz” (english “Knight”).

Source: By Zumlik - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3199885>.





## Bigger is Better: The T-80BVM Tank Modernization

**OE Watch Commentary:** The accompanying excerpted article from *Svobodnaya Pressa* discusses the armor-piercing fin-stabilized discarding sabot tracer (APFSDS-T) 3BM60 Svinets-2 round that upgraded T-80BV tanks will now be capable of firing (after the upgrade the tank will be referred to as a T-80BVM). The Svinets-2's core consists of depleted uranium and tungsten, and is reportedly capable of penetrating up to 830mm of rolled homogeneous armor (RHA). In comparison, *Svobodnaya Pressa* states that a similar round for the American M829A1 Abrams penetrates up to 700 mm, the M829A2 Abrams 750 mm, and the M829A3 Abrams 770 mm. Apparently, the kinetic energy of these rounds is very important, the Russians are keen to get longer and heavier rounds into tank barrels. The Svinets-2 is reportedly 740mm long but the new Armata tank has a similar 125mm gun that is capable of firing a 1000mm long shell capable of piercing 900-1000mm of RHA. It appears likely that if the Armata is fielded, it may be equipped with a 152mm cannon to facilitate larger and much heavier rounds, including barrel-launched antitank guided missiles (ATGMs), as the Russians may be reaching the capability limits of their 125mm tank guns in terms of RHA penetration.

The accompanying interview of Major General Sergey Kisel, Commander of the 1st Guards Tank Army, published in *Krasnaya Zvezda*, sheds some light on how he and likely most of the Russian Ground Forces see the differences between the T-72, T-80, and T-90, as all three platforms are evidently found within the 1st Guards Tank Army. In terms of modernization, the T-80BV, T-72B3, and T-90A are all apparently perceived to be at roughly the same level of modernization and combat capability. Although the T-80 has been criticized due to its gas guzzling turbine engine, there are specific uses for it. The T-80 was designed to be a high-speed "breakthrough tank" on the battlefield and it also could be Russia's tank for the arctic region, as the turbine engine is less problematic in cold weather conditions than more conventional diesel engines.

**End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

**Source:** Vladimir Tuchkov, "T-80БВ: «Реактивный» танк получил урановые снаряды (The T-80BV: 'Jet' Tank Provided with Uranium Shells)," *Svobodnaya Pressa*, 23 December 2018. <https://svpressa.ru/war21/article/219941/>

*The upgraded Russian T-80BVM tank was provided with the capability to employ gun ammunition using depleted uranium, according to the Russian Federation Defense Ministry. This is the armor-piercing fin-stabilized subcaliber 3BM60 Svinets-2 projectile, the core of which is made of depleted uranium with added tungsten to give hardness. Such shells are called "crowbars" and are used in almost all countries in which there is a tank-manufacturing industry.*

*When choosing uranium as a material for the production of "crowbars," its radioactive properties are not taken into account. The value of this material lies, first, in its large specific mass, which is equal to 19 grams per cubic centimeter. This is much higher than the specific weight not only of iron, 7.9 grams per cubic centimeter, but also of lead, 11.3 grams per cubic centimeter.*

*According to the laws of elementary physics, a higher mass projectile has greater kinetic energy. An additional quality is achieved due to the fact that the "crowbar" has a significantly smaller diameter than the caliber of the gun. Due to this, the air resistance in flight is reduced and there is a smaller drop in speed. The armor-piercing ability increases correspondingly.*

*The modernized T-80 tank also uses the Svinets-1 subcaliber projectile in which the core is made of tungsten carbide. It is able to pierce 700-740 mm homogeneous (single-composition) armor at a distance of 2 kilometers. With the Svinets-2 this feature reaches 800-830 mm. For comparison, the American M829A1 subcaliber projectile can pierce up to 700 mm homogeneous armor, the M829A2 750 mm, and the M829A3 770 mm... Second, uranium is a pyrophoric material. Once inside a tank, the "crowbar" shatters into tiny fragments that self-ignite, causing a fire. That is, another striking factor is added...*

*Meanwhile, their power was at variance with tank guns. The increase in quality was achieved by increasing projectile length to 740 mm. The ammunition turned out to be promising since the loading machinery in the country's then tanks could only work with smaller length ammunition. But new guns with the appropriate machinery, that were adapted for the new ammunition, were soon created for new modifications of T-90A and T-72B3 tanks. The initial velocity of the Svinets-2 core was 1750 meters per second and mass was 4.6 kg. The American M829A3 had a projectile velocity of 1675 meters per second and mass of 4.9 kg. For the T-80 tank to be able to use nonstandard length armor-piercing subcaliber projectiles, its latest modification was equipped with a new 2A46M-4 gun.*

*Currently the tank ammunition designers are increasing the power of "crowbars" by creating the new fin-stabilized armor-piercing subcaliber Vakuun projectile for the T-14 Armata tank. This tank uses the 2A82M gun, which is a new gun for this range of tanks. The length of the projectile reaches 1000 mm. According to reports, it should pierce 900-1000 mm of homogeneous armor.*

*All the above ammunition is used for 125 mm caliber, and the American ones 120 mm smoothbore guns. However, Uralvagonzavod is working on the creation of a second modification of the T-14. This will use the 2A83 152 mm caliber gun...*

**“The upgraded Russian T-80BVM tank was provided with the capability to employ gun ammunition using depleted uranium.”**

(continued)





## Continued: Bigger is Better: The T-80BVM Tank Modernization

**Source:** Viktor Khudoleyev, “По заветам первоармейцев (According to the First Guardsmen),” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 14 December 2018.  
<http://redstar.ru/po-zavetam-pervogvardejtsev/>

**What is the 1st Guards Tank Army like today? What tasks does it face?**

*[Kisel] The army incorporates motorized rifle, tank, artillery, surface-to-air missile, and missile formations and military units, including the celebrated Tamanskaya Motorized Rifle Division and Kantemirovskaya Tank Division. Today, in terms of combat composition, these are unique formations, unequaled in the Ground Forces in terms of combat potential...*

**With what are the army's formations and units equipped? Which modern models of armament and military hardware are coming into military formations now?**

*Today the 1st Tank Army is fully supplied with modern models of fighting vehicles developed by our engineers. There are modernized T-72B3 tanks with reinforced protection equipped with the latest multichannel thermal imaging sight, a ballistic calculator, an improved armament stabilizer, an automatic target tracker, and other innovations. Their electronics make it possible significantly to enhance the accuracy of hitting targets. Our main battle tank, the T-72B3, possesses sufficient specifications to detect and destroy any enemy on the battlefield. The T-72B3 is a reliable tank. It differs from foreign models in that it is far smaller – which makes it less vulnerable. At the same time it has a faster rate of fire and possesses good marching capabilities. We also have subunits with T-90 tanks that differ fundamentally from other vehicles in terms of the degree of protection for the crew, the long firing range, and more powerful engine.*

*T-80BV and T-80U tanks, which have gotten a good name for themselves, remain in the arsenal. The armament system on the T-80BV is the same as on the T-72B3 and the T-90. A special feature of the T-80BV is that this tank is capable of operating at low temperatures. Its gas turbine engine, whose design does not provide for a cooling liquid, is undemanding in frosts. The T-80BV and the T-80U are distinguished by unique marching specifications and are capable of covering large distances in a short space of time. The T-80 was originally developed as a breakthrough tank and can reach a speed of 90 kph...*

**Recently digital technologies, automated control systems, UAVs, and robotized systems have been actively introduced in the Armed Forces. How is this affecting modern tank combat?**

*The technologies, including digital technologies, that are now in the service of our Armed Forces, including the 1st Guards Tank Army, predetermine the success of combat and ensure the enemy's total defeat.*

*The introduction of increasingly complex technical systems requires constant raising of the servicemen's level of knowledge and combat training. Thus, a tankman is obliged to have thorough knowledge of hardware, ballistics, and the special features of modern combined-arms combat, which has become exponentially more complex in recent decades. Today demands are made of a tank commander that at one time were made of commanders of large subunits.*



Танк Т-80БМ (Т-80ВМ main battle tank).

Source: Vitaly V. Kuzmin, <https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/ARMY-2018-Demonstration-part-1/I-PGvmxI6/A>, CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>).





# The Power Struggle for Control of Russia's Arctic

**OE Watch Commentary:** A Russian state corporation is a non-commercial, non-profit organization, established by Russian federal law and directly owned by the state. Rosatom was established in 2007 as Russia's leading energy production and development organization. Rosatom took over the assets and powers of the Federal Atomic Energy Agency. With over 350 enterprises, Rosatom is Russia's largest electrical energy generation company and is deeply involved in scientific research, the development and construction of domestic and foreign nuclear power generation plants, Russian nuclear weapons, nonnuclear energy development, nuclear medicine, and even super computer production and software design. Key to the accompanying excerpted article, it also owns the world's only nuclear-powered icebreaker fleet. The Ministry of Transport has lost control of Arctic shipping in a power struggle and now Rosatom will control the shipping routes, budget monies and ability to input or draft proposals on state policy for the Arctic including development and infrastructure. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

*“The company that employs more than 250,000 people and engages in a multitude of activities related to nuclear power development and production is now formally Russia's management authority for the Northern Sea Route.”*

**Source:** Atle Staalesen, “It's a law - Russian Arctic shipping to be regulated by Rosatom,” *The Barents Observer*, 2 January 2019. <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/arctic/2019/01/its-law-russian-arctic-shipping-be-regulated-rosatom>

*Rosatom has officially been granted the leading role in the development of the vast Russian Arctic. The company that employs more than 250,000 people and engages in a multitude of activities related to nuclear power development and production is now formally Russia's management authority for the Northern Sea Route.*

*The law was adopted by the State Duma on the 11th December and signed by Vladimir Putin on the 28th. The new legislation comes as Russian Arctic shipping is rapidly increasing. In 2018, about 18 million tons of cargo was transported on the sea route-an increase of almost 70 percent from 2017. And more is to come. According to Vladimir Putin's so-called May Decrees on top national priorities, shipping on the Northern Sea Route will reach 80 million tons by year 2024.*

*Rosatom's new powers in the Arctic include development and operational responsibilities for shipping, as well as infrastructure and sea ports along the northern Russian coast. The responsibilities of the Northern Sea Route Administration, which ... operated under the Ministry of Transport, will be transferred to Rosatom.*

*Putin ..., in early 2017, made it clear that a coordinating government agency for the Northern Sea Route was needed. A battle between Rosatom and the Ministry of Transport followed. In December 2017, it became clear that the nuclear power company had won that fight.*



Vladimir Putin With Director General of State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom Alexei Likhachev.

Source: Kremlin.ru [CC BY 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>) or CC BY 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)], <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56946>.





# The Arctic Will Have Prominent Role in 2019 Operational-Strategic Exercise “Center”

**OE Watch Commentary:** The Central Operational Strategic Command (and Military District) borders Central Asia and China in the south, the Arctic in the north, the Eastern Operational Strategic Command in the east and the Western Operational Command in the west. Its ground forces are deployed along Russia’s southern border. Every year, Russia rotates its major strategic exercise among the Southern (Kavkaz), Western (Zapad), Eastern (Vostok), and Central (Tsentr) Military Districts. This year, it is the Central Military District’s turn in August and September, according to the accompanying excerpt from *Izvestia*. Although the exercise will focus on the Central Military District, it will be a nationwide exercise and possibly involve Chinese and Central Asian participation. The Arctic borders the Central Military District and the Northern Fleet Operational Strategic Command has conducted several significant exercises on its Arctic territory. The Northern Fleet Operational Strategic Command will play a major role with its 14th Army Corps, Aerospace Forces and Fleet.

The 200th Separate Coastal Motorized Rifle Brigade and the 80th Arctic Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade will evidently disembark and maneuver on the Novaya Zemlya Archipelago. The 61st Naval Infantry Brigade and the Northern Fleet’s Tactical Group (based on the New Siberian Islands Archipelago) will probably conduct amphibious landings in the New Siberian Islands Archipelago. Part of the Pacific Fleet, which controls the eastern entrance to the Northern Maritime Route, will probably join the Northern Fleet in Arctic naval maneuvers.

What will likely be missing from these maneuvers is Russia’s sole aircraft carrier. In late October 2018, the *Admiral Kuznetsov* was leaving dry dock in Murmansk when its floating dry dock sank and a 70-ton crane fell onto the vessel and punched a four-by-five meter hole into its deck. The Swedish-built dry dock is the only Russian dry dock that can handle the *Admiral Kuznetsov*. How long it will take to salvage and repair the 330-meter long dry dock is unknown, but a year is a conservative guess. The *Admiral Kuznetsov* was undergoing extensive rebuild and modernization which was scheduled for completion in 2021. The accident has put the carrier bilge repairs on hold for at least six months and how long this accident will delay repairs of the carrier completion is guesswork. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grua)**

*“The Tsentr-2019 Exercises will also prove a large-scale inspection of the effectiveness of the Armed Forces Arctic Grouping.”*

**Source:** Aleksandr Kruglov and Aleksey Ramm, “В Арктике будет жарко: войска испытывают Крайним Севером (It Will Be Hot in the Arctic: The Troops Are Being Tested by the Far North),” *Izvestia*, 18 December 2018. <https://iz.ru/822691/aleksandr-kruglov-aleksei-ramm/v-arktike-budet-zharko-voiska-ispytaiut-krainim-severom>

*A Ministry of Defense spokesman stated that the Tsentr-2019 Strategic Exercises will occur in August-September of next year. Several important exercise phases will occur in the Arctic Region on the territory from Novaya Zemlya to the Novosibirsk Islands. The infrastructure for the maneuvers is being prepared right now. Port and mooring areas are being built for troop redeployment.*

*The manpower of the Northern Operational-Strategic Command will be involved in the exercises to the maximum extent possible. Two arctic motorized rifle brigades will “fight” at full strength. The ground forces will have to operate under difficult climactic conditions. They will pay special attention to the accomplishment of tactical missions and also to rear services and maintenance support in the Arctic.*

*The defense of the Northern Maritime Route is a priority and its defense should be rehearsed during the exercises.*

*According to Military Historian Dmitriy Boltenkov, “Pacific Fleet forces will certainly participate. Northern Fleet forces passed through the Bering Strait into the Pacific Ocean and participated in the maneuvers at the Vostok-2018 Exercises. It is possible that Pacific Fleet ships will conduct a ‘return visit’ to the northern seas next year. Air Defense forces will deploy and bomber aviation will mass. The arctic motorized riflemen and naval infantry will be on alert and load onto ships so they can rehearse offensive and defensive combat in the Polar Region.”*

*The maneuvers will verify the capabilities of the armored vehicles, which have been specially developed for the region. Tor-M2DT and Pantsir-SA air defense systems, MT-LBV and BTR-82A armored vehicles, the T-80BV tank, and the Toros fire support and escort armored vehicle will be exercised. The DT-10PM and DT-30PM all-terrain vehicles will demonstrate their capabilities.*

*Northern Fleet ships, nuclear submarines, and Naval Aviation will participate in the exercises, as will coastal forces, including Bastion anti-shipping missile systems.*

*The Tsentr-2019 Exercises will also prove a large-scale inspection of the effectiveness of the Armed Forces Arctic Grouping. According to Military Expert Viktor Murakhovskiy:*

*“A full-fledged air, naval surface, and underwater situation monitoring system has been created in the Arctic. We need to maintain this system in a combat ready state. The grouping’s strategic mission is to guarantee the security of navigation along the Northern Maritime Route. Control of this area also permits us to efficiently conduct the regrouping of the Navy’s forces and to redeploy ships from the Northern Fleet to the Pacific Fleet and back along the shortest route. That regrouping was already conducted this year during the Vostok-2018 maneuvers.”*

*The exercise is also a test of the aerospace defense system and the coordination between the ground grouping and the Navy. Special Operations Forces and Naval Infantry will play a very important role in the exercises. According to Military Expert Vladislav Shurygin, the arctic summer is challenging... It is extremely difficult to move along the tundra because, having been freed from the ice, it is transformed into a continuous swamp. “It is impossible to involve a major ground grouping in these exercises...but they don’t fight using divisions and armies in the Arctic. Summer and the beginning of fall – is the most favorable time for the Navy because the waters of the coastal sea will be ice free”...*



## Preparation for the 2019 Army International Games

**OE Watch Commentary:** While the major events will not take place until August 2019, Russian defense officials have already started the planning and preparation for one event, the actual competition for the annual Army International Games. As the accompanying excerpt from the military news source *Krasnaya Zvezda* points out, one new event this year, the “Sayansk March [which] involves competitions of mountain subunits under winter conditions...will be held at a different time – from 18-21 February 2019.” This will be the fifth iteration of these international military games, and as the Russian military official quoted in the article acclaims, “thirty-two different competitions in 10 states are planned in 2019,” to include using training ranges for the first time in “India, Uzbekistan, and Mongolia.”



Logo for the Army International Games.  
Source: Russian Defense Ministry, [http://mil.ru/et/news/more.htm?id=12159407@egNews&\\_print=true](http://mil.ru/et/news/more.htm?id=12159407@egNews&_print=true), CC 4.0.

Besides the Sayansk March race, new competitions in 2019 will include the Cavalry Marathon, Hazard Area, and Pole Star events. The article points out that the Cavalry Marathon will include “mounted elements,” the Hazard Area- “a contest for the best emergency-rescue unit,”

and the Pole Star, which “will be held in Belarus” will be designed around competition performing “missions...after dark.” Another change for 2019 games includes an expanded number of events for women, including “the Tank Biathlon, True Friend, and Military-Medical Relay competitions.” The article points out that women will “compete not with the men, naturally, but among themselves in a separate category.” The Russian Ministry of Defense has “invited 85 countries to take part in the 2019 games,” though a final headcount is not yet available (in 2018, military representatives from 32 countries participated). **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

*“Lieutenant-General Ivan Buvaltsev announced that the Russian Defense Ministry had invited 85 countries to take part in the 2019 games.”*

**Source:** Marina Shcherbakova, “АрМИ-2019: подготовка уже началась (ArMI-2019: Preparations Have Already Begun),” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 21 December 2018. <http://redstar.ru/armi-2019-podgotovka-uzhe-nachalas/?attempt=1>

*The Army International Games 2019 1st International Planning Conference has been held in the Patriot Congress and Exhibition Center.... The locations, times, and particular features of the competitions and also the requirements of the arms, military and special equipment, and missiles and munitions employed at the games were conveyed to the participants.*

*Opening the conference, Lieutenant-General Ivan Buvaltsev noted first of all the growing popularity of the Army International Games, to which the expansion of their geography, specifically, testifies. “Thirty-two competitions in 10 states are planned in 2019,” he announced, pointing out for comparison that 28 competitions in seven states were held in 2018.*

*Increasingly new countries are expressing a wish and readiness to hold this competition or the other on their territory. The organizers of the games are meeting them half-way, and competitions will in the future be held for the first time in India, Uzbekistan, and Mongolia....*

*The Cavalry Marathon is a new competition...There will be four new competitions in 2019 altogether. Aside from the Cavalry Marathon, these are Hazard Area, Sayansk March, and Pole Star.*

*The name Cavalry Marathon speaks for itself – mounted elements will be taking part. Hazard Area is a contest for the best emergency-rescue unit... Sayansk March involves competitions of mountain subunits under winter conditions. They will be held in Krasnoyarskiy Kray at the range facility of the Yergaki Mounting-Training Center. August on the territory of Russia is not suitable for winter conditions, naturally, Sayansk March is the sole international competition which will be held at a different time – from 18-21 February 2019.*

*The timeframe of all the other competitions remains unchanged – from 3-19 August. The competition of Pole Star special units will be held in Belarus. There’s nothing surprising in the name, which was proposed by the organizers: for special forces on missions frequently after dark it is this celestial luminary in the northern hemisphere which helps get one’s bearings....*

*Lieutenant-General Ivan Buvaltsev announced that the Russian Defense Ministry had invited 85 countries to take part in the 2019 games.... In addition, the chief of the RF Armed Forces Main Combat-Training Directorate, announced some distinguishing features of ArMI-2019. One such is that contests of women’s teams also are planned in the Tank Biathlon, True Friend, and Military-Medical Relay competitions. They are to compete not with the men, naturally, but among themselves in a separate category....*





## Cossacks – Hybrid Defense Forces

**OE Watch Commentary:** Raising military awareness, readiness and patriotism remain key objectives of the Kremlin's domestic strategy. With their long history of protecting the frontiers of the Russian state, the Cossacks have responded well to this increased focus on militarism and the need to protect the Russian state. The accompanying excerpt from the official news agency *TASS*, describes a recent initiative at an "assembly of the All-Russian Cossack Society," where members "considered the creation of a single Cossack army." According to the excerpt, President Putin sent a congratulatory telegram to the assembly, asserting that "the Cossacks are not only reviving, but are becoming a more significant constructive, creative force."

The accompanying excerpt from the military weekly, *Voенно-Промышленный Кurier* (*Military-Industrial Courier*) describes the "creative" ways these Cossack forces might be used. The author of the article, military expert K. Sivkov, begins by claiming that "the structure and combat composition of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation are still focused primarily on the conduct of classical wars, which significantly reduces the possibility of repelling hybrid aggression." According to Sivkov, to handle these hybrid threats, Russia needs to "introduce irregular special forces (IS), into our Armed Forces." Sivkov goes on to divide these "irregular special forces" into "irregular defense forces (IDF) and active irregular forces (AIF)" whereby the IDF are "intended for solving problems on the territory of Russia," while the AIF would focus on missions "outside Russia's borders." Cossacks would fall into the IDF category.

Sivkov stresses that these Cossack forces "as far as possible, should be linked, at least at a strategic level, to the actions of regular troops, especially when conducting special operations. That is, to be actually under a single command." He suggests that IDF forces like the Cossacks be entrusted with "a wide range of tasks of territorial defense and counteraction to irregular aggression, for the solution of which the involvement of regular troops is either inexpedient or impossible."

Even with the advent of Russia's new National Guard, over the past few years, Cossack forces have proven valuable in helping to disperse opposition rallies within Russia. Just as unidentified Russian forces have been used to handle missions "outside Russia's borders," the Kremlin will likely continue to develop plans whereby "hybrid" Cossack forces are used to crush dissent and maintain stability within Russia. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

*"Such a structure of irregular troops actually means the re-establishment of a real Cossack force in Russia - a specific warrior people who will become a reliable support of the state and government in the most critical conditions."*

**Source:** "Путин: казачество в России становится значимой конструктивной и созидательной силой (Putin: the Cossacks in Russia are becoming a significant constructive and creative force)," *TASS*, 27 November 2018. <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/5839261>

*President Vladimir Putin sent greetings to the participants and guests of the constituent assembly of the All-Russian Cossack Society.... "Today, thanks to the initiative, active position of public organizations, volunteers and caring citizens, the support of the authorities and the Russian Orthodox Church, the Cossacks are not only reviving, but are becoming a more significant constructive, creative force," the telegram says.*

*...Earlier it was reported that for the first time in history, Russian Cossacks would create an All-Russian Cossack society, which would coordinate the work of the Cossacks throughout Russia. Representatives of all 11 registered Cossack troops of Russia will gather in Moscow on November 27 to participate in the second big round (gathering representatives of various Cossack troops to make an important decision) to consider the creation of a single Cossack army. The army will be headed by an ataman appointed by the president of Russia....*

**Source:** Konstantin Sivkov, "Атаманы диверсий (Atamans of sabotage)," *Voенно-Промышленный Кurier*, 10 December 2018. <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/46915>

*...The structure and combat composition of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation is still focused primarily on the conduct of classical wars, which significantly reduces the possibility of repelling hybrid aggression. It is necessary to improve the appearance of our armed forces in such a way that they can be effectively used in various forms of modern wars....*

*...This should be a special 'army,' designed to conduct an irregular armed struggle, irregular special forces (IS), which should be introduced into our Armed Forces in addition to the existing general-purpose forces and strategic deterrence.*

*...The experience of the wars of the beginning of the 21st century shows that irregular combat can be used both for offensive and for defense. Accordingly, in the structure of IS should be highlighted the main elements that differ in the objectives of the application and the specifics of the struggle. Namely: the irregular defense forces (IDF) and active irregular forces (AIF). The first are intended for solving problems on the territory of Russia, the second, outside its borders.*

*...But at the same time, as far as possible, they should be linked, at least at a strategic level, to the actions of regular troops, especially when conducting special operations. That is, to be actually under a single command. This means that such a specific component should appear in the structure of the armed forces of Russia.*

*...It is advisable for the IDF to entrust the solution of a wide range of tasks of territorial defense and counteraction to irregular aggression, for the solution of which the involvement of regular troops is either inexpedient or impossible....*

*...Such a structure of irregular troops actually means the re-establishment of a real Cossack force in Russia - a specific warrior people who will become a reliable support of the state and government in the most critical conditions....*



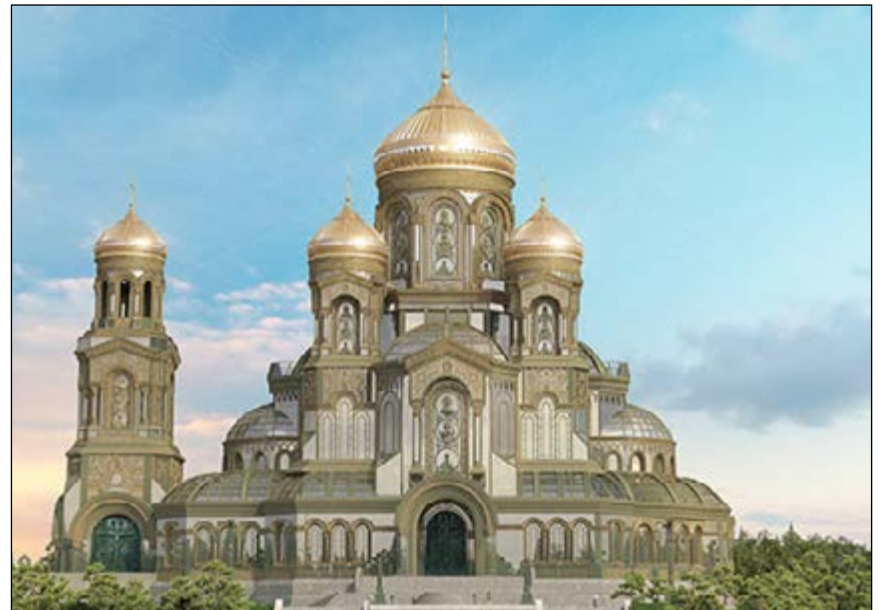
## Update on Military Church Construction

**OE Watch Commentary:** As previously reported, the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) is in the midst of constructing a huge Orthodox church dedicated to the military on the grounds of Patriot Park (Kubinka), located just outside of Moscow (see: “Constructing Military Ideology,” *OE Watch*, October 2018). According to the church’s website (see: <https://hram.mil.ru/>) nearly two billion rubles have already been collected and preliminary work on its construction has begun.

As the accompanying excerpt from the official news agency *TASS* points out, the church, constructed “exclusively on voluntary donations” is planned to be completed by “the 75th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War,” 9 May 2020. The excerpt also clarifies a statement made by Defense Minister Shoigu who had earlier announced that “captured German technology of World War II will be melted down to create the steps of the main temple.” However, instead of smelting “unique and historically valuable weapons...only elements of the Wehrmacht’s captured weapons stored in the Armed Forces warehouses will be used.”

“Voluntary” funding for the construction of this church has also come under some scrutiny. According to the accompanying excerpt from a regional news source in Khabarovsk, local “commanders were ordered to collect amounts from their subordinates...even from those military personnel who profess a different faith.” The required “voluntary” donations were reportedly small (500 rubles or \$8), but as the article points out, “when you multiply it by the number of servicemen, you get an impressive amount.”

In constructing this new military temple, the Russian leadership continues to combine the centerpiece of its current ideology (the victory in the Great Patriotic War) with more traditional beliefs and practices. At this point, it is not altogether clear how these elements will mix and what this new structure will offer. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**



Three-dimensional concept of the Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces.  
Source: Russian Defense Ministry, <http://mil.ru/mcis/news/more.htm?id=12206176@egNews>, CC 4.0.

*“The construction of the temple will be carried out exclusively on voluntary donations.”*

**Source:** “Минобороны рассказало, какую технику вермахта используют для ступеней главного Храма ВС РФ (The Ministry of Defense told which Wehrmacht equipment is being used for the steps of the main Temple of the RF Armed Forces),” *TASS*, 28 December 2018. <https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/5961209>

*The Ministry of Defense of Russia will not use unique and historically valuable weapons of the Wehrmacht during the construction of the main church of the Russian Armed Forces. The official representative of the military department, Igor Konashenkov, told reporters on Friday.*

*“For the smelting of individual components (steps, etc.) for the main church of the Armed Forces in honor of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War, only elements of the Wehrmacht’s captured weapons stored in the Armed Forces warehouses will be used,” said Konashenkov. He said that we are talking about ammunition, small arms, as well as individual elements of artillery and armored weapons. According to the official representative of the Ministry of Defense, there is no unique, historical or military value in the listed samples....*

*Earlier, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu at a meeting of the Public Council of the Ministry of Defense said that the captured German technology of World War II will be melted down to make the steps of the main temple of the Russian Armed Forces, which is being built in Moscow Kubinka.... The main temple of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation will be erected by the 75th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War, 9 May 2020.... The construction of the temple will be carried out exclusively on voluntary donations.*

**Source:** Marina Emel’yanova, “Хабаровских военнослужащих заставляют жертвовать на строительство храма (Khabarovsk military forced to sacrifice the construction of temple),” *dvhab.ru*, 12 December 2018. <https://www.dvnovosti.ru/khab/2018/12/14/92369/>

*Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu initiated the construction of a temple of the Russian Armed Forces. Funds for the construction should be raised through donations, but money is being demanded forcibly from the Khabarovsk military....*

*Donations from military personnel for the construction of the main church of the Armed Forces should be exclusively voluntary, said Sergey Shoigu. But the project is so ambitious that it is difficult to imagine how you can raise money for it.... at first, they really tried to collect donations for all this, but then, apparently, they decided to accelerate.*

*“Money has been collected for several months already - they volunteered at will. But this week, all branch commanders were ordered to collect amounts from their subordinates, and according to the lists of names. This applies even to those military personnel who profess a different faith. The amount is small, but forced donations are wrong. It’s impossible to refuse...,” said a Khabarovsk soldier who wished to remain anonymous.*

*Gather from each Khabarovsk soldier- 500 rubles. The amount is really small, but when you multiply it by the number of servicemen, you get an impressive amount.*





## Systemic Challenges to Raising Military Morale

**OE Watch Commentary:** Current Kremlin propaganda, directed at both the domestic and foreign audience, portrays a positive image of the modern Russian soldier, as one fully prepared to defend the country's interests. To reinforce military discipline and morale, the Kremlin recently resurrected the Main Military-Political Directorate (GVPU) of the Armed Forces (see: "Constructing Military Ideology," *OE Watch*, October 2018). In an extended interview in the weekly *Voенно-Promyshlenniy Kyrrier* (*Military-Industrial Courier*), retired Colonel Viktor Baranets (who once also served in the Soviet-Russian Military-Political Directorate and who now hosts a popular radio program dealing with military issues) shares his opinions on the current state of morale within the Russian armed forces. Some of his observations are revealing.

Baranets begins by talking about the need to counter Western propaganda, which is allegedly designed "to manipulate the brains of our servicemen, to sow doubt about the correctness of the political course of the country's leadership." He claims that this was one of the primary reasons behind the "creation of the GVPU on a new basis." However, according to Baranets, the current challenge stems from the fact that "today the state system is largely unjust." He suggests that "we will not raise patriotism, if the people have little borscht on their plate." He rhetorically asks, "why should I protect Abramovich's oil rigs and shed blood for the oligarchs, if my mother, who has worked as a nurse for 50 years, has a minimal pension?" He goes on to assert that today's pol-mil officer cannot merely avoid these questions, but rather must explain to the soldier that the country remains in a difficult state of transition, and that there is a difference between love of country and love for the current economic and political situation.

Baranets sees the lack of a formal state ideology as the major problem facing the new GVPU. Since the Russian constitution forbids such an ideology, GVPU workers will be unable to "deal with military-political problems." He concludes the interview with a number of recommendations, one of which asserts that to better develop ideology within the armed forces, all military media "should become an instrument of the Main Military Political Directorate," rather than remaining independent of this directorate. Under Baranets' model, the Russian military would "have a department that would protect servicemen from the flood of lies and slander from abroad."

To help maintain military high morale, the Russian military has reintroduced political-military officers and the GVPU. However, as Baranets suggests, without systemic changes to the political and economic structure of the Russian state, this new directorate may prove ineffective. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

*"To educate the younger generation on the basis of patriotism is good. But we will not raise patriotism, if the people have little borscht on their plate."*

**Source:** Viktor Baranets and Oleg Falichev, "Солдатская правда (Soldier's Truth)," *Voенно-Promyshlenniy Kyrrier* (VPK), 25 December 2018. <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/47252>

*...I'm not talking about the fact that Western propaganda is trying in every way to handle the brains of our servicemen, to sow doubt about the correctness of the political course of the country's leadership. A paradoxical situation has arisen. Almost every day we tell from TV screens about the superiority of our weapons, the new look of the army, the growth of its professionalism, exercises and training, the performance of combat missions in Syria ... But do we know the mood of the soldiers themselves, sergeants and officers, their morale and political state? That is, we deal with iron things seriously, but then we hardly know nothing about the soul of the soldier....*

*...When the Ministry of Defense of Russia realized that this spiritual sphere fell out of sight, then it was decided to create a new GVPU on a new basis. In the era of the information war unleashed against Russia, this is especially important.*

*...Imagine a situation where private Ivanov approaches the commander and says: why should I protect Abramovich's oil rigs and shed blood for the oligarchs, if my mother, who has worked as a nurse for 50 years, has a pension at the subsistence minimum? From such questions you cannot not wave away. And we need to work with the soldiers with an understanding of how and why we find ourselves in the current historical condition. Yes, today the state system is largely unjust, but each of us has a Motherland, our beloved Motherland, as the poet said, which must be defended, whoever stands behind you - Abramovich or a veteran of World War II....*

*...I have an ambiguous attitude towards the new structure - the Main Military-Political Department. Why? The GVPU should deal with military-political problems in the military and at the same time rely on state ideology. But this is not allowed by the main law of the country - the Constitution. So, we are trying to build the GVPU... in the sand....*

*...To educate the younger generation on the basis of patriotism is good. But we will not raise patriotism, if the people have little borscht on their plate. Soldiers will ask pol-mil workers, why such a gap between the rich and the poor? Why in this immensely resource-rich country, are there 20 million destitute? These soldiers' questions must be answered truthfully... A mil-pol worker must honestly say that after the collapse of the USSR, we have been going through a difficult time. On the one hand, we proclaimed a social state, on the other - in fact, we ended up in oligarchic capitalism....*

*...I think that the military press should become an instrument of the Main Military Political Directorate. Because ideology is not developed by the press service, but by the military-political structure of the defense department. Secondly, the structure of the Defense Ministry of the Russian Federation does not have a department that would protect servicemen from the flood of lies and slander from abroad.... counter-propaganda should become one of the most important areas of work....*



# Flawed 'Strategic Partnership': Putin's Optimism on China Faces Harsh Reality

by Alla Hurska

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For the full article, see: <https://jamestown.org/program/flawed-strategic-partnership-putins-optimism-on-china-faces-harsh-reality/>

**OE Watch Commentary:** During the annual VTB Capital Investment Forum “Russia Calling!” on November 28, President Vladimir Putin called the frictions between Beijing and Washington a “window of opportunity” for Russia to achieve a qualitatively new level of bilateral economic relations with China. The following day, Beijing hosted the First Russian-Chinese Energy Business Forum, which boosted Russia’s confidence in its status as China’s key partner in terms of energy-related deals. Russia’s vision of its role vis-à-vis China was perhaps best expressed by President Putin on November 15, during his meeting with Prime Minister Li Keqiang in Singapore, on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit: “Relations between Russia and China are now creating a strong basis for a privileged strategic partnership.” These positive sentiments toward China are fully shared by mainstream Russian policymakers and experts. A reading of pro-Kremlin sources would suggest that Russia’s much-desired “turn to the East” has been a complete success. The reality, however, appears to be more complicated and less unequivocal.

When assessing the state of Sino-Russian economic cooperation between 2015 and 2018, authoritative Russian sources note that, in 2015, Russia (for whom China was the leading trade partner) found itself only in 15th position among China’s trade partners. By 2018, Russia still had not entered the top ten list. Whereas, “in spite of growing frictions, Chinese-American trade hit a new record level [that year], increasing to \$414.2 billion.”

The second set of problems boils down to the fact that, despite the encouraging rhetoric, China is cooperating with Russia only in those areas that Beijing itself deems beneficial and potentially lucrative. As noted by Yuri Zaitsev from the Gaidar Institute, China is well aware of the economic sanctions imposed on Russia and their effect. But “China is willing to invest in the Russian economy only under certain circumstances,” he argued, noting that this provides Beijing with leverage to “impose its interest on Moscow.”

Particularly troubling, from the Russian point of view, has been the news that Chinese banks are unwilling to support investments in Russia due to the growing risks for potential investors. Namely, the Central Bank of the Russian Federation has reported “problems with Chinese commercial banks stemming from economic sanctions imposed by third parties.” As explained by Vladimir Danilov, the representative of Russia’s Central Bank in Beijing, “some Chinese banks are construing counter-Russian sanctions in an extremely broad manner.” Danilov noted that for the moment this does not threaten bilateral monetary operations; “yet, a certain amount of difficulty is present.”

This assessment was presented in a much less benign light by Skymax managing partner Igor Shibarov, who pointed out the longevity and growing complexity of the problem. Specifically, Shibarov said that the predicament became evident approximately one and a half years ago, when Chinese financial institutions started to become far less enthusiastic when it came to dealing with Russian customers. For instance, he noted that “it is still possible to open up a company, but it is impossible to set up a bank account [in China] with a Russian passport. If the director is a Russian citizen—you are out of options... [I]n one bank, they informed us that, ‘You have one week to withdraw your money and close down the account.’ We tried to explain that we have big contracts here, asked for at least a month—a week was what we received in the end.” Shibarov also said that, at some Chinese banks (not only on the mainland, but in Hong Kong as well), they were told that the institution had received clear instructions not to allow any financial operations by Russian passport holders. At other banks, such as the China Merchant Bank, his clients were asked to “take the money, close their accounts, go, and never come back.”

The despondent picture worsened further when Russian sources started to report that Chinese companies have not only slowed down investing in the real sector of the Russian economy, but, following the example of Western countries, began to actively withdraw their financial capital. Specifically, in January–June 2018, Chinese investors withdrew more than \$1 billion. As a result, the total share of Chinese investments in Russia is now less than 1 percent of the overall investments flow. In comparison, the share of Chinese investments in Russia is 49 times lower than that of Cyprus and 6 times less than Germany. On top of that, such major and sought-after projects as the idea to sell a share of the Russian state-owned oil giant Rosneft to China’s CEFC, or construction of a high-speed “Eurasia” railroad (Beijing–Moscow–Berlin) have suffered a sound defeat.

It now appears that Russia’s much-hailed “turn to the East,” seen in Moscow as an antidote to Western sanctions and international isolation, is gradually demonstrating its profound weaknesses. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurska)**

*“Almost all of outflow was connected with an immediate reduction of its presence in Russia: 92 percent of the amount (\$921 million) was taken directly taken out from the capital of Russian companies.”*

**Source:** “Китай объявил России инвестиционный бойкот (China announced an investment boycott of Russia),” *Finanz.ru*, 5 December 2018. <https://www.finanz.ru/novosti/aktsii/kitay-obyavil-rossii-investicionny-boykot-1027783124>

*...In the first half of the year, Chinese investors took out \$1.005 billion and their total investment dropped to \$3.184 billion. Almost all of outflow was connected with an immediate reduction of its presence in Russia: 92 percent of the amount (\$921 million) was taken directly taken out from the capital of Russian companies...*





## Russia-Belarus Open Disagreement Reflects Complexities in Moscow-Minsk Relations

**OE Watch Commentary:** At a December 2018 summit of the Eurasian Economic Union – currently consisting of five former Soviet Republics – President Lukashenko of Belarus launched into an unexpectedly open and direct questioning of energy policy with Russian President Putin. While Lukashenko specifically underscored the seeming unfairness in the price Belarus pays for Russian natural gas at the meeting, oil represents another point of contention between the two states. Russia’s so-called “tax maneuver” – Moscow’s decision to lower the export tax on its oil over the next six years – is expected to lead to a significant decrease in Belarusian revenues, as Minsk would be required to stop charging export tax as well (Belarus is a major transit state for Russian oil). The accompanying excerpted article from *Pravda* provides some additional context. At a follow-on bilateral meeting on 25 December in Moscow, the Kremlin’s published, brief transcript of the opening statements revealed a more amicable tone; however, lingering issues persist between the two states.

Notwithstanding a series of agreements (e.g., the Union Treaty) signed by Minsk and Moscow in the late 1990s that aimed at closer integration, President Lukashenko (in power since 1994) has endeavored to maintain an independent foreign policy and overall sovereignty of Belarus. Minsk plays an important regional diplomatic role within the framework of the ongoing conflict in the Donbas region of Ukraine, periodically hosting meetings of representatives (“working subgroups”) of the Trilateral Contact Group (made up of Ukraine, Russia, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation, or OSCE). Minsk also participates directly in the OSCE’s Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine, with eight personnel deployed (per SMM statistics, as of 24 December 2018).

Regarding defense matters with Russia, Belarus has regularly participated in expansive Russian military exercises, such as Zapad (“West”) 2017 and Zapad 2013. As well, Belarusian and Russian servicemen train together in regular exercises of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), along with military representatives of the other CSTO members – Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Yet, despite Moscow’s stated intent in 2013 to establish a Russian air base within Belarus – which had followed a 2009 air defense agreement – this has not yet come to fruition. Moreover, President Lukashenko in late 2018 specifically noted that there was no need for such basing.

Lukashenko has of late tacitly encouraged an increase in Belarusian language usage, though the great majority of Belarusian citizens utilize Russian as their language of choice (both are official languages in Belarus), and Lukashenko delivered his first formal address in Belarusian in 2014. Whether this, in concert with other recent trends, reveals a legitimate sovereignty concern of the longstanding ruler – especially in the aftermath of the Ukrainian crisis – remains to be seen. Lukashenko has also increased his engagement with the EU and even recently softened his tone toward the US, to some effect: the release of Belarusian political prisoners in August 2015 led the (Council of the) EU to temporarily suspend most sanctions then directed against Minsk. Current sanctions (“restrictive measures”) expire on 28 February 2019. Against the backdrop of these developments, it is evident that a Russian-Belarusian bilateral relationship that once seemed to be quite automatic, has for some time now appeared to be more convoluted. **End OE Watch Commentary (Sarafian)**

*“President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko made a statement that under the pretext of deep integration, Moscow wants to include his country within the Russian Federation.”*



Vladimir Putin on Friendly Match of National Hockey Stars. Ice arena “Bolshoy”, Sochi, 4 Jan 2014. - With Aleksandr Lukashenko, Viacheslav Fetisov and Valeri Kamensky.

Source: Kremlin.ru [CC BY 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>) or CC BY 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)], [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fetisov\\_Lukashenko\\_Putin\\_Kamensky\\_Sochi\\_4\\_January\\_2014.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fetisov_Lukashenko_Putin_Kamensky_Sochi_4_January_2014.jpg).

**Source:** “Будет ли Россия присоединять Белоруссию (Will Russia annex Belarus),” *Pravda*, 17 December 2018. <https://www.pravda.ru/world/formerussr/belorussia/17-12-2018/1402767-0/>

*President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko made a statement that under the pretext of deep integration, Moscow wants to include his country within the Russian Federation...The crux of the conflict is that [President] Putin, [Prime Minister] Medvedev, and [Deputy Prime Minister] Kozak are firmly broadcasting “between the lines” to the President of Belarus that no benefits and unique offers will come until Belarus begins to integrate deeper into the Russian economy, and Lukashenko does not want to betray [Belarusian] sovereignty for a barrel of oil...*



## Azerbaijan Purchases More Belarusian Equipment

**OE Watch Commentary:** The government of Azerbaijan's purchases of weapons and equipment from Belarus has drawn increased attention over the past couple of years. The accompanying excerpted article reports on another recent Azerbaijani acquisition from Belarus, while also providing a look at areas in which Azerbaijan is looking to increase its capabilities and additional context to the Azerbaijan-Belarus security cooperation partnership. The article comes from *AZE.az*, a pro-government source in Azerbaijan, and it reports how Azerbaijani forces put "the Belarusian electronic warfare system 'Groza-S' [Thunderstorm] developed by KB Radar" into service last year.

The expert interviewed for the article claims that the system is "capable of not only interrupting the UAV communication but also the satellite communication with the operator." The title of the article is worth noting, claiming that "Azerbaijan purchased a 'killer' of Armenian unmanned aerial vehicles." Armenian forces reportedly have around a dozen unmanned aerial vehicles and utilize them in a reconnaissance role. The expert goes on to note how international sales of military equipment sometimes include conditions that "certain electronic applications and firmware should be installed in the equipment, which in case of a need allows the manufacturer to

block the operation of the system" and that "Belarus does not have any claims to anybody in the international arena and that is why it provides the buyers of its weaponry guarantees that there will not be such applications that would be able to interfere with the operation of the military equipment." This is worth noting in light of a 2017 incident in Azerbaijan involving a UAV from the Israeli Aeronautics Defense Systems, which resulted in the Israeli government suspending the export license of that company (see: "Israel's Investigation Into a UAV Strike on the Armenian Army," *OE Watch*, October 2017). As the government of Azerbaijan continues to acquire new weapons and equipment, the partners it looks to do business with might be just as important as the systems themselves. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**



Location of Azerbaijan and Belarus.

Source: Turkish Flame [Public domain], from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Azerbaijan\\_Belarus\\_Locator.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Azerbaijan_Belarus_Locator.png).

*“Belarus does not have any claims to anybody in the international arena and that is why it provides the buyers of its weaponry guarantees that there will not be such applications that would be able to interfere with the operation of the military equipment.”*

**Source:** Bakhram Batiyev, “Азербайджан купил в Беларуси «убийцу» армянских беспилотников (Azerbaijan purchased a “killer” of Armenian unmanned aerial vehicles in Belarus),” *AZE.az*, 10 January 2019. <https://aze.az/azerbaydzhan-kupil-v-belarusi-ubiytsu-armyanskikh.html>

*...the clear indication of the new phase of strengthening the Azerbaijani Army -- its reinforcement with precision and high quality weaponry and equipment that the head of state mentioned -- can be considered the electronic warfare (EW) equipment and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) jammers...*

*In 2018, the Azerbaijani Army operationally deployed the Belarusian electronic warfare system “Groza-S” [Thunderstorm] developed by KB Radar...The “Groza-S” system is mounted on a self-propelled vehicle chassis. This is a jamming station and part of the electronic warfare system. P-934UM2 “Groza-S” is similar to P-934UM and RP-378AM but it provides higher speeds for detecting the sources and higher accuracy in determining the direction of the movement and generating signals for digital interference and positioning and blinding radio communication circuits with either pre-programmed tuning of operating frequency or simultaneously with 16 radio circuits working on fixed frequencies. It takes no more than 10 minutes for deployment of the station after positioning.*

*...prominent Belarusian military expert Aleksander Alesin noted that “Groza-S” is one of the most modern systems of electronic warfare, capable of not only interrupting the UAV communication but also the satellite communication with the operator.*

*...Belarus offers prices that are significantly lower than what other countries offer. In addition, Belarus can guarantee the absence of electronic bugging in the system. Now modern systems and military equipment are sold on condition that certain electronic applications and firmware should be installed in the equipment, which in case of a need allows the manufacturer to block the operation of the system. This is done in order to avoid the undesirable use of this or other types of the weapons, for example, against a friendly country or its interests. Belarus does not have any claims to anybody in the international arena and that is why it provides the buyers of its weaponry guarantees that there will not be such applications that would be able to interfere with the operation of the military equipment, Alesin said.*

*...The thing is that there is a trusting relationship formed between the presidents of our countries. Azerbaijan has long been closely cooperating with the Belarusian military industrial complex and we know that some time ago, Minsk supplied Baku with air defense systems and last year it delivered “Polonez” [MLRS]...*





## Central Asia's Security Cooperation Initiatives

**OE Watch Commentary:** Reports from Central Asia on security cooperation largely focus on activities involving armed forces of the region working with Russia, NATO members, and China, among a few other partners. While Central Asian media consider this security cooperation important for the development of their respective militaries and for maintaining relations with the aforementioned partners, the accompanying excerpted articles demonstrate how activities between governments in the region has become more common as relations between governments has improved (see: “The Joint Tajik-Uzbek Effort to Demine the Border,” *OE Watch*, November 2018).

The article from *Asia-Plus*, a news website with a focus on Tajikistan, reports on a recent agreement in which the Kazakh government will provide Tajikistan with military equipment. The article notes how “Kazakhstan previously provided assistance with mine detectors, chemical detection devices, stretchers, and water tanks among other things” and that the recent agreement “provides for training Tajik officers in military schools in Kazakhstan.” The article from *Sarbaz*, a Kazakhstan Ministry of Defense publication, provides a report on developments within the Kazakh armed forces in 2018, including how “special forces units of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic participated in the tactical-special exercise ‘Añyraqai.’” Security cooperation like this may not receive much attention in the region, much less internationally, but it is worth continuing to watch if governments in the region continue to improve relations between each other as they have over the past couple of years. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

“Kazakhstan previously provided assistance with mine detectors, chemical detection devices, stretchers, and water tanks among other things.”

**Source:** Avaz Yuldashev, “Казахстан в очередной раз окажет Таджикистану военно-техническую помощь (Kazakhstan will again render military-technical assistance to Tajikistan),” *Asia-Plus*, 28 December 2018. <https://news.tj/ru/news/tajikistan/security/20181228/kazakhstan-v-ocherednoi-raz-okazhet-tadzhikistanu-voenno-tehnicheskuyu-pomosh>

...the governments of the two countries signed an agreement on the rendering of free military-technical assistance to Tajikistan, the press service of the Defense Ministry of Kazakhstan reports...Astana and Dushanbe will later agree on a list of military property to be transferred. Kazakhstan previously provided assistance with mine detectors, chemical detection devices, stretchers, and water tanks among other things...the agreement (also) provides for training Tajik officers in military schools in Kazakhstan.

**Source:** Oksana Sotskaya, “Итоги боевой подготовки ВС РК 2018 года (The results of combat training of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2018),” *Sarbaz*, 28 December 2018. <https://sarbaz.kz/ru/army/itogi-boevoy-podgotovki-vs-rk-2018-goda--183612110/>

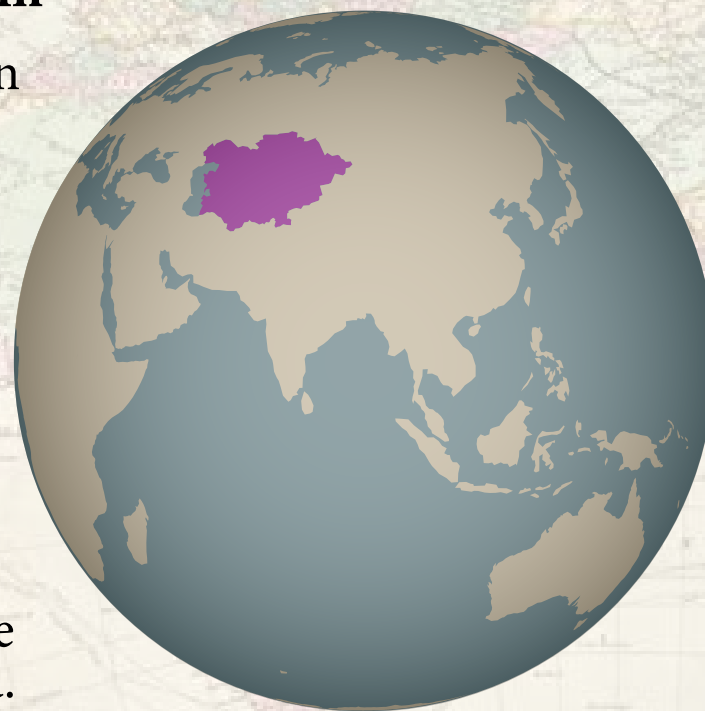
...Soldiers of special forces units of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic participated in the tactical-special exercise “Añyraqai”...As a result of the six day joint exercise, all objectives were achieved...more than 300 service members took part...

## 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/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/194880>







## Regarding French “Yellow Vests” Protests

**OE Watch Commentary:** The riots that broke out in France last year received attention from a number of sources, including commentary from Eduardo Mackenzie, a highly regarded editorialist who opined then that Macron’s policies were likely to incur more of the same protests down the road. So far, his prediction appears to be proving correct, with the protests continuing. The accompanying excerpted references include a piece by Eduardo Mackenzie, along with two other references, which together are representative of widespread interest in the protests throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

As evidenced in the second accompanying reference, the protesters have seemingly reached a level of organizational sustainability. They confidently claim they will be showing up to protest every week for the coming year, in spite of the physical crackdown by the Macron administration. The third accompanying reference may reflect European leftist support of the yellow vests. The article concentrates on a differential in the way protesters are being prosecuted in Paris versus the rest of the country (more rapid prosecution in the capital), but does not hazard to editorialize why. The far left seems ambivalent -- to not want to remain on the sidelines during a popular protest against government authorities, but at the same time apprehensive about the consequences of their support to what seems to be a mostly nationalist ideological flavoring.

Placing the riots in longer historical context, the accompanying image is of a riot in Clichy, an industrial suburb of Paris. It is a renowned depiction of the 1891 economic riots there, not the ones in 1937 or 2005, or numerous smaller before, after and in-between. Some of them had geostrategic consequences, some not so much. The consequences of the current riots is unknown; however, the protest may be turning into the existential test of the Macron government. In turn, such a form of French government failure would logically be a major blow to the prestige and prospects of the European Union as an organizational entity. The next French elections could see a more divided internationalist left and a better consolidated nationalist right. Macron had floated the notion of a European army. That idea seems to be sinking, and those yellow vests are not life jackets for it. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

*“It is a symptom of a profound social malaise.”*



1 May 1891 - Riot at Clichy.

Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1ermai1891.jpg>, Public Domain.

**Source:** Eduardo Mackenzie, “Francia: El octavo round contra Macron (France: the eighth round against Macron),” *IFM Noticias*, 8 January 2019. <https://ifmnoticias.com/francia-el-octavo-round-contra-macron/>

*“Emmanuel Macron does not want to admit that political violence is not going to stop the yellow vests...It is a symptom of a profound social malaise long in the making and that demands practical fundamental political answers that the government to date has been incapable of formulating....The chief executive proposes carrying out a ‘great debate’ in order to know what the aspirations are ...It is unknown how this ‘debate’ will work...the dialog has small chance of calming the immense popular quarrel... Prime Minister Edouard Philippe promises more technical measures: he announces the deployment of 80,000 troops in France, 5000 of which in Paris, and that his services will make a file of individuals who will be prohibited from demonstrating.”*

**Source:** “Protestas en Francia: Miles de chalecos amarillos salen a las calles de Francia por octava semana consecutiva (Protests in France: Thousands of yellow vests go onto the streets of France for the eighth consecutive week),” *Público España* and *Europa Press*, 5 January 2019. <https://www.publico.es/internacional/protestas-francia-miles-chalecos-amarillos-salen-calles-francia-octava-semana-consecutiva.html>

*“...We are going to be here demonstrating every Saturday during all of 2019. We are going to assure that the citizens recover power...In spite of the decline in the mobilization in Paris, in other large cities the ‘yellow vests’ movement continues having ample effect, although for the moment disturbances have not been produced, as in former occasions...Since the beginning of the protests, more than 1500 demonstrators have been wounded, 53 of them gravely, and almost 1100 police have been left injured. Ten persons have also died, principally in accidents related to the barricades and breaks in the roadways...”*

**Source:** “‘Chalecos amarillos’: el número de detenidos asciende ya a 5.339 personas segun datos oficiales (‘Yellow Vests’: According to official data, the number of arrests has now risen to 5, 339 persons),” *Movimiento Politico de Resistencia*, 8 January 2019. <https://movimientopoliticoderesistencia.blogspot.com/2019/01/chalecos-amarillos-el-numero-de.html>

*“In less than two months, from the beginning of the mobilization the 17th of November, the demonstrations of the ‘yellow vests’ 5,339 police arrests have taken place in France, according to an accounting of the Ministry of Justice...The juridical responses that have followed the arrests has shown a significant difference in treatment between Paris and the provinces.”*





## Chinese Military Launches Largest-Ever Joint Logistics Exercise

**OE Watch Commentary:** In December, the People's Liberation Army held “Joint Logistics Force 2018B” (联勤力量2018B), its largest-ever joint logistics exercise, involving 37 PLA units and civilian companies scattered across five provinces and two municipality-level cities. A video report on the exercise shown during December 19 edition of *Military Report*, a regular program on Chinese state television, outlined the purpose and some of the missions undertaken as part of the exercise. The Chinese military is improving its ability to rapidly mobilize units to move intra-regionally, resupply forces engaged in combat—particularly air defense forces—and to evacuate and treat casualties. A component of the exercise highlighted across Chinese media coverage was cooperation with civilian companies for logistical support.

China's package delivery industry is well developed, due to the explosion in demand from the growth of e-commerce, and PLA logisticians are well aware of the benefits such civilian supply networks could provide in a conflict. On 23 October 2017, the PLA Air Force's Logistics Department signed Strategic Cooperation agreements (战略合作协议) with China Railway Express, China Post Express, SF Express, Deppon Logistics, and JD Logistics. These are massive companies with networks of warehouses and fleets of planes. JD Logistics, for example, is part of China's largest online marketplace.

Video of the December logistics exercise showed SF Express using one of its transport jets to move cargo for the PLA. Deppon Logistics, another commercial transport company, was shown providing ground transport support. Civilian companies working together with military units refueled transport aircraft (such as the Y-8) and used drones to locate simulated casualties.

At lower levels, local civilian companies' facilities can also play a role. Video of the exercise showed gasoline pumping lines set up on highway access roads to allow several trucks in a convoy to fill up simultaneously. Presumably, these have been set up at multiple points so that supplies can be moved by road without needing to stop for long periods and wait in line. Previous reporting (see: “Local Companies Provide Logistics Support During PLA Joint Exercise,” *OE Watch*, December 2018) indicated that similar set up have been used partnering with civilian gas stations. This type of “military-local” (军地) cooperation falls under the broader framework of Military-Civil Fusion (军民融合; also translated as Civil-Military Integration), a major focus area for Chinese military modernization and capability improvement plans.

The exercise not only tested military-local cooperation, but also between military services (particularly the Air Force and Army) and acted as a test of China's reforms of its military logistics system. In September 2016, the Joint Logistic Support Force (联勤保障部队) was created under the Central Military Command to replace the General Logistics Department.

Reporters for the PLA's official newspaper, as noted in the accompanying excerpted article, observed a component of the exercise under the Zhengzhou Joint Service Center, in the capital of Henan Province in Central China. Zhengzhou is home to one of the PLA's five Joint Logistic Support Centers (联勤保障中心), one for each of China's five theater commands (战区). These are subordinate to the Joint Logistic Support Base (武汉联勤保障基地) in Wuhan, Hubei province. Their joint nature means that they must be ready to resupply all of China's military services and respond to enemy attacks. Chinese state television also showed what appear to be missile containers being brought out of hardened underground facilities. Another component included simulated cratering of runways and repairs by logistics support force and air force personnel.

One of the PLA's main modernization goals is the “achievement of essential mechanization by 2020.” These exercises are a useful reminder that for the PLA mechanization is not simply about moving from motorized infantry to mechanized units, but also mechanization and informatization of its logistics support system. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**



A Shaanxi Y-8 transport at Zhuhai Airshow 2012.

Source: Alert5 [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shaanxi\\_Y-8.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shaanxi_Y-8.jpg).

(continued)



## Continued: Chinese Military Launches Largest-Ever Joint Logistics Exercise

*“Since the reform of the joint logistics force, the Zhengzhou Joint Service Center has accelerated the upgrading of the joint security system and promoted the security model from the military’s independent guarantee to the military integration guarantee.”*

**Source:** “Military Report (《军事报道》),” CCTV, 19 December 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WV5FRXa9HnA>

*Yesterday “Joint Logistics Force 2018B” [联勤力量2018B], the largest exercise since the establishment of the Joint Logistics Support Force was simultaneously launched across five provinces and two municipalities and involving 37 military and civilian forces.*

*This exercise focused on urban air defense and cross-regional support operations. Field medical teams drawn from the Central Theater Command General Hospital began by departing an airport in Hubei [Province] in an Air Force transport aircraft. Mobile support forces were also transported by railway and trucks to predetermined assembly areas. Field gas stations, and medical and food maintenance supply points were jointly set up by the military and local companies in expressway service areas to replenish troops transiting between regions. In the command center, the commander used a joint command situational awareness system to direct the exercise in real time. Following the mission instructions, the senior staff for ordnance, supply, transportation etc, issued orders to the participating troops*

*Ding Shichao [丁士超], a Logistics staff officer said: “It was issued to the troops in a list-based manner. On the one hand, it reduced the working hours of the staff officers of the organs. In addition, the troops saw it at a glance and knew who and where to protect them.”*

*During the drill, our air defense units were attacked by the enemy, equipment was damaged and the support personnel immediately deployed to provide equipment radar equipment and ground-to-air missiles to the air defense units. The repair team and the air force station jointly repaired the airport runway, and the fuel supply team quickly refueled military transport aircraft...*

*Zhao Xiaoguang [赵晓光], representative of a civilian logistics company said: “After receiving the requirements, we needed to coordinate our crews’ mission schedules, as well with the air field to [receive cargo] and then rapidly transport it.*

*In order to explore the military integration security system, the participating forces also mobilized local suppliers, logistics, catering, firefighting and other forces to build a rapid replenishment chain for military and civilian integration, regional integrated replenishment network, and serial cooperation zones.*

**Source:** “37支军地力量异地同步探索联训联保新模式 (37 Dispersed Military and Civilian Forces Simultaneously Begin Testing a New Model of Joint Training and Logistics Support),” PLA Daily, 29 December 2018. [http://www.mod.gov.cn/mobilization/2018-12/29/content\\_4833175.htm](http://www.mod.gov.cn/mobilization/2018-12/29/content_4833175.htm)

*The airport oil support team and the air force station jointly fueled the aircraft, and the local logistics companies and the joint logistics force jointly opened the supply station. The field medical center used drones and all-terrain ambulances to search for the wounded... 37 military forces were synchronized Exploring a new mode of joint military and military integration in the wartime.*

*Since the reform of the joint logistics force, the Zhengzhou Joint Service Center has accelerated the upgrading of the joint security system and promoted the security model from the military’s independent guarantee to the military integration guarantee. The center adopts the method of “base guarantee and mobile security linkage, joint logistics and service, military and local integration” to carry out joint training and joint insurance, covering “safety, supply, rescue, transportation, repair, prevention” and other protection categories. Force support capabilities.*

*The center actively researches and explores the military-civilian integration guarantee model of “backbone in the army, the main body is in the people”, mobilizes local logistics, catering, fire fighting and other forces to participate in the protection, and builds a rapid supply chain and regional integration of “funding, transportation and supply”. The supply network and the joint defense cooperation zone have accumulated experience for mobilizing local forces to participate in joint logistics support during wartime.*





## Luo Yuan Describes an Asymmetric Approach to Weaken the United States

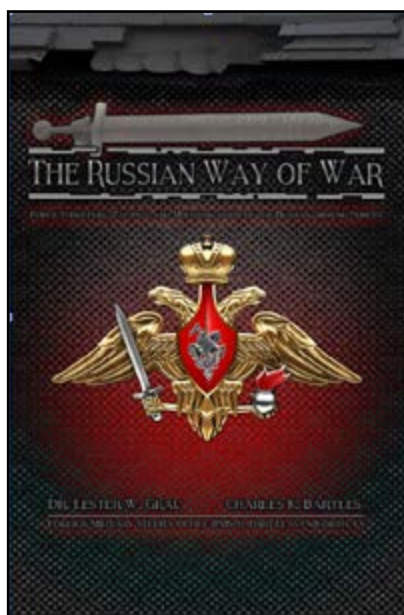
**OE Watch Commentary:** Retired Major General Luo Yuan, who is regarded as a key figure among China's "military hawks" due to his hardline opinions against the United States and US allies, gave a speech underpinned by classic Chinese military thinking during the recent 2018 Military Industry Awards Ceremony and Innovation Summit. In his speech, Luo, who currently serves as the executive vice president and secretary general of the China Strategic Culture Promotion Association, offered, as he put it, insight from "the angle of national strategy, using methods of formal logic." In his speech, Luo talks about some of the changes he has seen in the United States under the current administration. He talks about the "America First" policy, how the United States now views China as "the chief threat to its security" and "its primary competitor," the use of "competition strategy" to replace an "engagement strategy," and a "change in nuclear strategy" to name a few. Luo goes on to describe the United States as having "a kind of strategic anxiety," which he states is because "China has already developed into the world's number two power," and therefore the United States believes "China is going to surpass them."

Luo argues that China is not advocating for a trade war. However, "if the United States wants to fight," China "will fight to the end." He goes on to describe five asymmetrical measures to combat U.S. strengths. First, the United States relies on its military as "a pillar of the nation." Therefore, he states that China should strengthen the building of its own national defense power in such a way that does not merely catch up and that China must "develop what our opponent fears." It should attack US strength. An example is in the development of the DF-21 and DF-26 missiles, known as aircraft carrier killers. Luo explains that "if we sink one aircraft carrier, the United States loses 5,000 men. If we sink two... they lose 10,000." Therefore, rather than trying to catch up to the United States by building an equal number of aircraft carriers, having the missiles is more effective because they are developed "from the angle of the United States' weak spot." Second, since the United States views the US dollar as one of its pillars, China must diversify the international finance system by internationalizing the RMB. Third, since the United States relies on talent as one of its pillars, China should continue to develop its own high-tech industry with independent intellectual property rights. Fourth, since votes are important in the choosing of US leaders, China should attack industries that can impact the outcome of future elections. For example, agricultural states and the manufacturing and commerce industries have been Trump supporters. If China strikes at soybeans first, of which 62 percent are exported to China, it will hit Iowa especially hard. Iowa is "a state that supported Trump in the 2016 election." Finally, Luo argues that if the United States wants to see China as an enemy, China can temper itself into an "impenetrable enemy," then create new friendships, "until your enemies are more and more while your friends grow fewer and fewer."

Luo, who has hundreds of thousands of followers on Sina Weibo, a popular social media platform, frequently appears on national television and is likely influential within the military. His outspoken, hawkish nature on past events has raised concerns both domestically and internationally. His thinking is in line with ancient Chinese military strategies and philosophies, such as the 36 Stratagems, which describes cunning tactics that can be used in war and politics, and Sun Tzu's Art of War. Chinese strategy teaches using a more asymmetrical approach to attack the enemy. As Luo explains, China "should use strengths to attack the enemy's weaknesses... attack what the enemy fears! Where the enemy is soft, we develop!" **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

*“If we first attend to our own matters and develop China, then we will find ourselves in an invincible position, and no one shall get the best of us.”*

*- Deng Xiaoping*



### 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 the Russian Ground Forces consist of, how they are structured, how they fight, and how they are modernizing.

**DOWNLOAD AT:**

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

(continued)



## Continued: Luo Yuan Describes an Asymmetric Approach to Weaken the United States

**Source:** Luo Yuan, “在2018军工榜颁奖典礼与创新峰会上的演讲 (Speech at the 2018 Military Industry Awards Ceremony and Innovation Summit),” *Sina.com*, 23 December 2018. [http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:vunMQieQ8eYJ:blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_549c1d970102yl42.html+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us](http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:vunMQieQ8eYJ:blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_549c1d970102yl42.html+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us)

*The first major change is that the United States has now formally written “America First” into its “United States National Security Strategy.” ... The second major change is that the United States has now taken China both as the chief threat to its security, and as its primary competitor. ... The third major change is that the United States’ Trump administration is currently using “competition strategy” to replace the “engagement strategy” of the Obama era. ... The fourth major change is the replacement of the “Asia Pacific Rebalancing Strategy” with the “Indo-Pacific Strategy.” ... The fifth major change is that Trump has already replaced an “automatic spending cuts plan” with “Restoring American Military Power.” ... The sixth major change is one that we must be even more cautious toward—it is a change in nuclear strategy.*

*I have had multiple discussions with many experts who are researching the United States issue, with the conclusion that from top to bottom, the United States has a kind of strategic anxiety. ... It is because China has already developed into the world’s number two power, and this naturally causes anxiety for the number one.*

*This is what the Central Government has been saying. We do not advocate for a trade war, but we also do not fear fighting one. If the United States wants to fight, we will fight to the end. But, this fight also has two choices. The first choice is a “symmetrical counterattack.” If you fine us 50 billion US\$, we will fine you 50 billion US\$. ... What is the advantage of this? We have seized the moral commanding point. But, the United States cannot be hurt this way.*

*The second choice is an “asymmetrical counterattack.” I support making an “asymmetrical attack.” Just as our soldiers fight, we should use strengths to attack the enemy’s weaknesses. We attack what the enemy fears! Where the enemy is soft, we develop!*

*Today, I want to ask the chief engineers and experts sitting here, what is it that the United States fears? ... In understanding the strengths of the enemy, we must also know his weakness. You cannot always be comparing height and strength. In this way, the enemy will drag us down.... What are the United States’ strengths? I believe that the United States has five major pillars of the nation:*

*The first is that the United States relies on military as a pillar of the nation. Without strong military power, the United States could not have become a powerful country. Therefore, we must strengthen the building of our national defense power. ... I personally believe that we cannot just catch up and surpass in a straight line. We must swerve to pass. That is to say, we must develop what our opponent fears. Currently, the United States has 11 aircraft carriers. Do we need to develop 12 aircraft carriers before we can contend with the United States? I believe that this way of thinking is wrong. We cannot deal with an arms race. ... We currently have DF-21 and DF-26 missiles. These are aircraft carrier killers. If we sink one aircraft carrier, the United States loses five thousand men. If we sink two aircraft carriers, they lose ten thousand. Does the United States not fear this? Therefore, our military industrial chief engineers must consider development from the angle of the United States’ weak spot.*

*The second is that the United States relies on the US dollar as a pillar of the nation. ... We must internationalize the RMB.*

*The third is that the United States relies on talent as a pillar of the nation. ... I believe that this trade war is essentially a contest of technology and talent. That is why as soon as the trade war broke out, Chairman Xi quickly adopted three major measures: first, the convening of the National Technology Conference; second, a meeting between the Supreme People’s Court and the Supreme People’s Procuratorate; and third, an inspection of high tech industry.... Now, we need to tighten our belts again and join in anger against the enemy to develop our own high-tech industry with independent intellectual property rights.*

*The fourth is that the United States depends on votes as a pillar of the nation. If politicians in the United States have no votes, then they cannot stay in power. Where are Trump’s votes? They are in agricultural states and the manufacturing and commerce industries. Therefore, we first strike at soybeans; 62% of United States soybeans for export are exported to China. This accounts for 34.39% of Chinese soybean imports. A penalty on United States soybeans will hit Iowa especially hard, a state that supported Trump in the 2016 election. ...*

*The fifth is that the United States relies on making enemies as a pillar of the nation. ... Do you not want to see us as an enemy? Then we will temper ourselves into an impenetrable “enemy;” then, we will create new friendships, until your enemies are more and more while your friends grow fewer and fewer.*

*This year is the 40th anniversary of the Reform and Opening Up. We cherish greatly the memory of the advocate and chief designer of the Reform and Opening Up, Comrade Deng Xiaoping. Comrade Deng Xiaoping had a famous saying which I have borne in mind even until today. Today, let us all revisit these words of mutual encouragement, as I use them for the closing of my speech: “If we first attend to our own matters and develop China, then we will find ourselves in an invincible position, and no one shall get the best of us.”*





# Military-Civil Fusion Cooperation in China Grows in the Field of Logistics

**OE Watch Commentary:** This accompanying excerpted article gives an overview of recent agreements signed between private Chinese package delivery and transport companies and the Chinese military. While international carriers, such as DHL and Fed Ex have a major presence in China, domestic companies (e.g. Amazon.cn, Taobao, Alibaba and JD.com) have grown rapidly as demand for online shopping has risen. These are large companies that in some cases have hundreds of thousands of employees (China Post employs over 800,000 for example) and operate thousands of vehicles.

The growth of these industries is creating capabilities that the PLA is eager to exploit during wartime. Since 2017, when the Law of the People’s Republic of China on National Defense Transportation was enacted, the number of these agreements has risen dramatically. In particular, the PLA Air Force and Navy have embraced the potential of using civilian companies to augment their transport and resupply capabilities. The Navy has used civilian ships to move anti-ship units from the coast to islands, and as the article highlights, the Naval Academy is now using civilian transports.

The strategic cooperation agreement signed between the PLA Air Force and China Railway Express, Post Express, SF Express and Bandung Huayu to provide services for Air Force Logistics in particular is significant, and is on display in recent exercises. These agreements also formalize cooperation with logistics-related state-owned enterprises like China Post Group Corporation, China’s official post service. However, the article notes that legal and regulatory authorities needed to make this type of cooperation more effective need to be developed. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**



Central Military Commission  
Logistic Support Department  
Graphic by Peter Wood

1986

2019

FOREIGN MILITARY STUDIES OFFICE:

OVER 30 YEARS OF FOREIGN PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

(continued)



## Continued: Military-Civil Fusion Cooperation in China Grows in the Field of Logistics

*“With the rising homogenization of the private transportation industry, these companies have begun transforming into comprehensive logistics service providers, and are committed to creating an integrated logistics solution, which provides a good entry point for military-civilian fusion.”*

**Source:** “中铁物流携手海军 军民融合成发展新机遇 (China Railway Logistics Joins Hands With Navy, Developing New Opportunities for Military-Civil Fusion),” *E-Business Paper*, 12 December 2018. [http://www.cccss.com/index.aspx?cat\\_code=qyxw&article\\_id=56871](http://www.cccss.com/index.aspx?cat_code=qyxw&article_id=56871)

*On December 12th, the People’s Liberation Army Navy Naval Academy in Dalian (Liaoning Province) decided to cooperate with China Railway Logistics Group [中铁物流集团] on the “equipment supply point” project. The two partners will build a fast, efficient and accurate military-civilian fusion equipment supply system to provide the Academy with military supplies.*

*In fact, in order to ensure the smooth progress of the project, the two sides carried out careful preparations around the project in the early stage of cooperation. At the same time, according to specific requirements, in terms of the confidentiality of personnel, equipment and data, both parties have also made a series of safeguard measures through technical and management means.*

*In 2015, Xi Jinping first proposed to raise the development of military-civilian fusion to the status of China’s national strategy. Currently, the pattern of all-factor, multi-domain and high-efficiency military and civilian fusion development is step by step taking shape in China. At the same time, due to the explosive growth of China’s private express delivery and logistics companies, the competition between these companies has become increasingly fierce. With the rising homogenization of the industry, these companies have begun transforming into comprehensive logistics service providers, and are committed to creating an integrated logistics solution, which provides a good entry point for military-civilian fusion.*

*China’s military-civilian fusion work in the field of military logistics began [in 2017]. The Law of the People’s Republic of China on National Defense Transportation [《中华人民共和国国防交通法》], which was implemented on January 1, 2017, put forward the requirement that the state should rely on large and medium-sized transportation enterprises as the main support, organize the construction of strategic delivery support forces, enhance strategic delivery capabilities, and provides effective support for delivery companies to organize long-distance, large-scale defense transportation.*

*In June 2017, the relevant departments of the Air Force signed a 100-year strategic cooperation agreement with China Railway Express [中铁快运], Post Express [邮政速运], SF Express [顺丰速运] and Wanlong Huayu [万隆华宇] to provide services for Air Force Logistics. This is also the first time that the Air Force has effectively integrated civilian logistics companies for support.*

*On October 23 of the same year, the Air Force Logistics Department of the People’s Liberation Army signed the “Air Force Logistics-Civilian Logistics Military-Civil Fusion Strategic Cooperation Agreement” [《空军后勤物流军民融合战略合作协议》] with five logistics companies including China Post Express Logistics Co., Ltd., China Railway Express Co., Ltd., SF Group, Deppon Logistics and Jingdong Logistics.” The Air Force granted these companies the “Air Force Logistics-Civilian Logistics Military-Civil Fusion Strategic Cooperation Organization” qualification license. Over the next five years, the military and civilian companies will work closely together on 23 projects across 8 areas of logistics.*

*...It is worth mentioning that SF Express long ago established a special logistics business department. The group has successively undertaken military-civilian fusion projects such as equipment and parts loading and delivery and medicine transport. YTO Express Group Co [圆通] (a delivery service company) also set up the “Aviation Logistics Research Institute” [航空物流研究院] in 2016 with the Civil Aviation Management Institute. One of the [institutes’] major research topics is the implementation of the national strategy of “military-civil fusion” for express delivery, logistics and aviation business fields.*

*However, currently the Chinese military has only achieved low-level integration of local third-party logistics resources, and both the military and the civilians are still in need of strengthening in all aspects of cooperation. Additionally, the government also needs to further establish and improve the Military-Civilian Fusion-related laws and regulations to improve local logistics participation in military logistics, and provide legal support for the integration of logistics, and development of military-civilian fusion.*





# Chinese Military Completes Release of New Set of Military Training Regulations

**OE Watch Commentary:** Chinese media, including the accompanying excerpted article from *Xinhua*, have reported that the latest set of the PLA's Outline of Military Training and Evaluation (OMTE, 军事训练大纲) has "essentially been completed." The large number of new regulations are meant to dramatically increase realism in training. According to the PLA's self-assessment, the lack of supporting laws and regulations (including training) has been a major barrier to its modernization. The issue of updated training guidelines, manuals and regulations is an attempt to comprehensively address these issues.

A major part of the plan behind the rollout of the updated OMTE was the Central Military Commission (CMC) gaining a better understanding the actual needs of units and then exercising its authority, through organizations like the CMC Training and Administration Department (军委训练管理部), to standardize appropriate training and ensure that the regulations are followed.

The goal is for the new training regulations to be integrated into all aspects of China's defense modernization program. In particular, this is meant to overcome the previous disconnect between the education provided by training institutions (new soldier training centers, flight academies, navy colleges, etc.) and what soldiers need to know for their jobs in front line units. The new guidelines for the PLA Air Force, for example, have strongly emphasized "acting on one's own" [自主], greater freedom on the part of pilots or unit commanders to determine the correct course of action. Reporting on the OMTE describe them as up-to-date, reflective of the requirements of "actual combat" [实战], new enemy capabilities, or changes within the PLA's own technological capabilities. Greater emphasis has also been placed on training in unconventional and specialized fields (special forces, information support, electronic warfare, long-distance training for surface and submarine ships, etc.).

The roll-out of a joint command structure, supplanting the previous Army-centric system, has required a top-to-bottom change in procedures. Combined-arms and joint training is frequently mentioned. Older inefficient management and training practices are being scrapped, and where possible, the communications between branches and services streamlined. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**

**Source:** “我军新军事训练大纲主题工程基本完成 (The Majority of Our Military's New Training Program is Basically Completed),” *Xinhua*, 3 January 2019. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-01/03/c\\_1123942829.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-01/03/c_1123942829.htm)

*The second set of more than 900 new military training regulations across the entire PLA have been officially released after strict testing, and will be implemented on 1 January 2019. This marks the completion of the majority of our military's new military training program.*

*Revising a new military training program is a major task in creating training content and standardized system that is compatible with the requirements of modern warfare. A foundational goal [of the regulations] is creating training program that is in-line with national law. The first set of more than 700 new military training outlines for our military was officially issued in January 2018, providing important regulations for military training in the new era. In the past year, the entire army has increased the realism of its military training in accordance with the first set of new syllabuses, setting the stage for military training in the new era*

*“Revising a new military training program is a major task in creating training content and standardized system that is compatible with the requirements of modern warfare.”*



PLAAF Sukhoi Su-30 at Lipetsk-2.

Source: Dmitry Pichugin, CC BY-SA 4.0, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PLAAF\\_Sukhoi\\_Su-30\\_at\\_Lipetsk-2\\_\(modified\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PLAAF_Sukhoi_Su-30_at_Lipetsk-2_(modified).jpg)

## China Defends Xinjiang Program

**OE Watch Commentary:** On 24 December the Chinese language publication *huanqiu.com* published the accompanying excerpted article, which presented a Chinese perspective on its increasingly controversial political reeducation program targeting Uighurs in its Xinjiang region. The article refers to statements by the Foreign Ministry spokesperson about the issue. She first blamed Western media for sensationalizing the news and not using credible sources to discuss the situation in Xinjiang. She also suggested that the program is not targeted only at Uighurs or Muslims, despite the fact that they seem to only “train” people from that demographic group.

Responding to allegations that China was using an inflated threat of terrorism to justify the camps, the spokesperson asserted that China does not link terrorism to any particular religion. She also further justified the program by noting that in the last 24 months there were no instances of terrorism in Xinjiang. In addition, she mentioned measures that Western countries had taken in response to the threat of terrorism, such as the millions of cameras in London and vast array of surveillance equipment used by the police in New York, to demonstrate that China’s measures were comparable.

It is also notable that China deems the camp program to be successful enough that the spokesperson indicated the possibility for China to engage in exchanges about the program with other countries that are also dealing with terrorism. Her statement concluded by emphasizing the overarching prioritization of Xinjiang strategically, namely that China will continue to ensure the region is secure and stable so economic development can continue. Evidently, that will come at a cost for Xinjiang’s inhabitants who will be entered into the camps as part of the government fulfilling that apparent objective. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

*“I would also like to point out that the counter-terrorism stabilization and de-radicalization measures adopted by the Xinjiang Autonomous Region government to maintain security and stability are a useful, effective and positive method of preventive counter-terrorism.”*



Minaret close to Id Kah mosque, Kashgar (Kashi), Xinjiang.  
Source: CC BY-SA 2.5 es, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=431868>.

**Source:** “外媒称中国新疆加大对穆斯林的监视、拘留和同化行动 外交部回应 (Foreign media claimed that China’s Xinjiang has increased its surveillance, detention and assimilation of Muslims, with Foreign Ministry Responding),” *huanqiu.com*, 24 December 2018. <http://world.huanqiu.com/exclusive/2018-12/13888814.html>

*On December 24, 2018, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying hosted a regular press conference, some of which was recorded. I want to point out that on the issue of Xinjiang, some Western media have played a disgraceful role in sensationalizing the news recently. They are often based on hearsay. Considering the recent exaggeration of some Western media, I think it is necessary to emphasize a few more points/ First, the Chinese government’s consistent position is to oppose linking terrorism to any particular nation or religion. Second, the Uighurs are one of China’s 56 ethnic groups. The vast majority of Uighurs live in harmony with the other 55 ethnic groups in China. Third, for some people influenced by terrorism and extreme thoughts the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region government is helping them to learn language, law, and skills to eliminate terrorism and religious extremism.*

*Results have proved that the impact of anti-terrorism measures taken by Xinjiang in the past two years have been outstanding and positive. In the past few years, various types of terrorism incidents occurred frequently in Xinjiang, but now there have been no cases of terrorism for 24 consecutive months, and the sense of security of the people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang has been greatly improved. The placement of monitoring facilities is a common practice adopted by countries to maintain safety and stability.*

*Finally, I would also like to point out that the counter-terrorism stabilization and de-radicalization measures adopted by the Xinjiang Autonomous Region government to maintain security and stability are a useful, effective and positive method of preventative counter-terrorism. We are willing to strengthen exchanges of experience in this area with other countries that are also facing terrorism and extreme ideological threats to constantly improve.*





## Is Pakistan Acquiring Russian Tanks?

**OE Watch Commentary:** As the security cooperation between the governments of Pakistan and Russia continues to take shape there have been questions about how close the relationship could be alongside Russia's interest in maintaining good relations with India. The accompanying excerpted articles report on the Pakistani government's interest in acquiring T-90 tanks from Russia and they help gauge the reaction to it in India and what Pakistan looks to get out of it.

The article from *Live Mint*, an English-language newspaper in India, mentions the possible acquisition of "close to 600 battle tanks including T-90 tanks from Russia," but also notes how the overall plan is to "procure at least 360 battle tanks globally besides producing 220 tanks indigenously with help from China." Additionally, the article states that the Pakistani government is "in the process of inducting Chinese VT-4 tanks as well as Oplod-P tanks from Ukraine" and reports on how much of the armed forces' inventory of tanks are Chinese and Ukrainian. The article also mentions how Indian forces have been conducting "counter-terror operations" in Jammu and Kashmir, while the "Pakistan Army was fast reducing its gap with Indian forces in fighting a conventional war." While the article does not cite a specific source for this report, the article from *Quwa*, a news website focusing on defense issues in Pakistan, provides some background on the possible acquisition of T-90s.

The *Quwa* article, published in April 2018, mentions that Pakistan's Ministry of Defense "was clear in stating that talks are in play and that announcements will be made once they are completed," in reference to when a deal would be made. A new minister of defense, Pervez Khattack, assumed duties in August 2018, but the issue of funding does not appear to have changed, which the article notes "has been one of the major constraining factors" of acquiring the T-90s. The article also mentions that the Pakistani government has been looking for "an off-the-shelf MBT" and that this plan "has the T-90 in the running" for possible acquisition. There has been no official announcement from the government of Pakistan on acquiring Russian T-90s, just the unnamed source noted in the recent *Live Mint* article. It is unknown if, or when, Pakistan's acquisition of tanks will take place, but the timeline between the announcement in April and the December article is worth noting. In October, the Indian government signed a deal to purchase Russian S-400 missile systems, worth an estimated \$5 billion. The Indian government is likely concerned over Pakistan acquiring T-90 tanks from Russia, but it does not appear to have had a major impact on Indian-Russian security cooperation. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

**Source:** Manash Pratim Bhuyan, "Pakistan procuring 600 battle tanks from Russia to strengthen capability along border with India," *Live Mint*, 30 December 2018. <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/11fDdo391n5H63VR4b3j4N/Pakistan-procuring-600-battle-tanks-from-Russia-to-strengthe.html>

*...Pakistan has drawn up an ambitious plan to procure close to 600 battle tanks including T-90 tanks from Russia, primarily to bolster its combat prowess along the border with India, military and intelligence sources said Sunday.*

*...Apart from battle tanks, Pakistan Army is also procuring 245 150mm SP Mike-10 guns from Italy out of which it has already received 120 guns.*

*The sources said Pakistan was eyeing to buy from Russia a batch of T-90 battle tanks- the mainstays of the armoured regiments of the Indian Army, and that the move reflects Islamabad's intent to forge a deeper defence engagement with Moscow...The sources said as part of the mega plan to significantly revamp its armoured fleet by 2025, Pakistan has decided to procure at least 360 battle tanks globally besides producing 220 tanks indigenously with help from China.*

*Pakistan Army's move to enhance its armoured corps comes at a time when the Line of Actual Control in Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed growing hostilities in the last one year...But, when the Indian Army is focused on counter-terror operations, the Pakistan Army was fast reducing its gap with Indian forces in fighting a conventional war, the intelligence sources said.*

*Besides eyeing to procure T-90 tanks, Pakistan Army is also in the process of inducting Chinese VT-4 tanks as well as Oplod-P tanks from Ukraine, the sources said. Trials for both Oplod and VT-4 tanks have already been conducted by the Pakistan Army.*

*At present, Pakistan is learnt to have around 17 units of Chinese origin T-59 and T69 tanks, which comprise 30% of its total tank strength, the sources said. It also has 12 regiments of Al-Zarar tanks, which makes 20% of the tank fleet while Ukrain origin T-80-UD and T-85-UD as well as upgraded version of T-59 tanks comprise the rest 50% tank fleet...*

**Source:** Bilal Khan, "Pakistani Defence Minister: talking to Russia for Su-35, T-90 tanks and air defence systems," *Quwa*, 8 April 2018. <https://quwa.org/2018/04/08/pakistani-defence-minister-talking-to-russia-for-su-35-t-90-tanks-and-air-defence-systems/>

*On 05 April, Pakistan's Minister of Defence (MoD) Khurram Dastgir Khan told the Russian News Agency RIA Novosti that talks were underway with Russia for the procurement of air defence systems, the Sukhoi Su-35 Flanker-E and potentially the T-90 main battle tanks (MBT).*

*Khan did not provide a timeline as to when these negotiations are expected to reach fruition, but the MoD was clear in stating that talks are in play and that announcements will be made once they are completed...*

*Regarding the T-90 MBT, Khan outlined that Pakistan was "interested in T-90 tanks" and that it would "not be a one-time purchase, but a long-term commitment."...Pakistan and Russia had formally begun building bilateral defence relations following a memorandum-of-understanding (MoU) in November 2014...*

*However, the Pakistani MoD's statements underline the objective to recapitalize its conventional warfare capabilities...Unfortunately, a continual lack of funding has been one of the major constraining factors to such procurement. Thus, the supplier's willingness to extend a line-of-credit or loan to kick-start programs is of importance to Pakistan...Khan was also aware to highlight that an off-the-shelf MBT – which now apparently has the T-90 in the running – would be a long-term and multi-batch purchase.*

*“Besides eyeing to procure T-90 tanks, Pakistan Army is also in the process of inducting Chinese VT-4 tanks as well as Oplod-P tanks from Ukraine.”*





# Russia to Deploy Additional Anti-Ship Missile Batteries Near Japan by 2020

**OE Watch Commentary:** According to the accompanying excerpted article, Russian defense plans indicate that more anti-ship “Bastion” and “Bal” missiles will be deployed to the Kuril Islands, a disputed area between Russia and Japan. While Bastion missiles were previously deployed to Etorofu and Kunashiri in 2016, the plan expands the number of islands with anti-ship missiles to six.

Deploying the anti-ship missiles helps ensure the security of the Sea of Okhotsk, one of Russia’s two strategic “bastions” for its nuclear-missile equipped submarines, by ensuring that any enemy anti-submarine warfare ships would come under threat. A notional deployment of these systems on the largest and most habitable islands and Kamchatka (see map) would provide adequate coverage of the Kuril island chain and the straits leading into the Sea of Okhotsk.

Japan has purchased Aegis-ashore anti-missile systems and F-35 fighter jets from the United States and is modernizing its legacy fighter fleet to be capable of using modern long-range cruise missiles. Greater US presence in the Indo-Pacific area of operations—combined with a modernizing Japanese Self Defense Forces, may mean that concern for the continuing security of its bastions is a consideration behind the deployments.

However, an important background to this development is the improvement in Russo-Japanese relations. After World War II, the Soviet Union seized two islands in southern Kuril Islands. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe have been in talks to resolve the territorial dispute and are expected to meet later in January. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**



(continued)





## Continued: Russia to Deploy Additional Anti-Ship Missile Batteries Near Japan by 2020

*“Experts say the increasing military importance of the two islands will make their return to Japan even more difficult.”*

**Source:** “Russia eyes missile defense buildup on disputed isles near Hokkaido,” *Kyodo*, 30 December 2018. [https://www.japantimes.co.jp/?post\\_type=news&p=1668692](https://www.japantimes.co.jp/?post_type=news&p=1668692)

*Moscow is planning to boost its missile defense capabilities, including on disputed isles off Hokkaido, by 2020, an internal Russian government document showed Sunday, in a move likely to hurt the two nations’ efforts to step up talks on concluding a postwar peace treaty.*

*The plan indicates Russia places strategic importance on the islands in defending the Sea of Okhotsk and its nuclear force stronghold as well as countering the increasing U.S. military presence in the area to address a threat by North Korea.*

*Japan and Russia are looking to push ahead with peace treaty talks as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed in November to accelerate negotiations.*

*A Russian government source said the document obtained by Kyodo News was drawn up sometime after this summer. It remains unknown whether the plan was approved by Putin. Russian media recently reported on the envisioned military buildup in the area...*

*According to the document, new shore-to-ship missiles systems called the Bastion, with a range of more than 300 kilometers (over 180 miles), and the Bal, with a range of over 130 km (over 80 miles), will be deployed on six islands and on the Kamchatka Peninsula.*

*Missile systems were deployed in 2016 on Etorofu and Kunashiri, two of the four islands and islets off Hokkaido that are claimed by Japan.*

*The two islands, along with Shikotan and the Habomai islet group, are called the Northern Territories in Japan and the Southern Kurils in Russia. The former Soviet Union seized them following Japan’s surrender at the end of World War II in 1945.*

*Part of Hokkaido and the disputed islands will fall within the range of the missile defense systems.*

*According to the plan, missiles will not be deployed on Shikotan or the Habomai islets, whose return by the then-Soviet Union was mentioned in a 1956 declaration. Abe and Putin agreed in a meeting in November to advance negotiations on a peace treaty based on the declaration...*

*Russia has constructed four barracks for troops on Etorofu and Kunashiri, triggering a protest from Japan earlier this month. Experts say the increasing military importance of the two islands will make their return to Japan even more difficult.*

*Moscow has also expressed concern over Tokyo’s plan to deploy the U.S.-developed Aegis Ashore missile defense system, saying it will be difficult to conclude a peace treaty unless Japan explains its future security policy.*



In foreground two models of 3K55 Bastion, in background three models of 3K60 Bal, Army 2018.

Source: Boevaya mashina [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Models\\_3K55\\_Bastion\\_Armia2018.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Models_3K55_Bastion_Armia2018.jpg).



## New Chinese Air-Independent Propulsion System-Equipped Submarines

**OE Watch Commentary:** Chinese media have reported that a PLA Navy unit equipped with submarines have been upgraded to use air independent propulsion (AIP) systems. Video (see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXwKliE8uVc>) of the AIP-equipped unit in a separate news report appears to show Daxie Island, likely making this unit part of the 22nd Submarine Zhidui [支队]. The unit appears to have a mix of older Type 039A and newer Yuan Type 039B/Cs with more hydrodynamic sails.

The Chinese navy has long valued the asymmetric advantages of submarines, and made their development a priority, soon after the founding of the PLA. Military writings and observed training indicate that Chinese submarines' responsibilities include infiltration of enemy sea lanes and port areas, laying sea mines and hunting for enemy ships. However, as China's submarine force aged, and the technological capabilities of its regional competitors increased, the likely survivability of Chinese submarines declined. As of early 2018, China had 48 diesel electric submarines and of these, almost half were outdated Ming (Type 035) and Song (Type 039) classes.

However, according to this accompanying excerpted article, the successful introduction of this new system will dramatically increase the capabilities of new submarines. As noted by a military commentator, AIP systems allow diesel electric to travel longer-distances underwater and increase the submarines chances of successfully reaching their target areas undetected. Despite the expense, AIP's tactical advantages, along with their likely responsibilities within the First Island Chain stretching from Japan to the Philippines, likely make the system a worthwhile investment even compared to nuclear attack submarines capable of longer distances. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**



Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Mike Mullen visits the Chinese People's Liberation Army-Navy submarine Yuan at the Zhoushan Naval Base in China on July 13, 2011.

Source: DoD photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Chad J. McNeeley/Released - Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from Washington D.C., United States [CC BY 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chinese\\_Type\\_041\\_submarine.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chinese_Type_041_submarine.jpg).

**Source:** “我军AIP潜艇部队破多项纪录 专家解读技术优势 (Our Military's AIP Submarine Force Broke Several Records, Experts Explain its Technical Advantages),” *Science & Technology Daily*, 17 December 2018. [http://www.81.cn/2018zt/2018-12/17/content\\_9380143.htm](http://www.81.cn/2018zt/2018-12/17/content_9380143.htm)

*Recently, the first Air-Independent Propulsion (AIP) submarine-equipped unit [in the PLA] has set many naval records including the farthest distance sailed by a conventional submarine, the deepest dive, and successfully sank target ships at the extremes of its weapons' capabilities, which has attracted widespread attention.*

*Conventional submarines generally use a diesel engine and an electric motor to provide power while charging the battery while sailing or snorkeling. When sailing underwater, they use an electric motor for propulsion. However, diesel engines rely on air for combustion. Therefore, after the battery charge is depleted underwater, the submarine must surface, or use rechargeable batteries. Therefore, the conventionally powered submarine have limited underwater sailing time of between 10 and 100 hours. Because it must surface at regular intervals, which decreases its ability to remain undetected.*

*When equipped with the AIP system, the conventional power submarine does not need to obtain oxygen from the air when charging, and can be charged underwater. AIP submarines are characterized by their long battery life, good concealment and excellent quieting ability. It also enhances the ability to strike without warning and is regarded as a major technological breakthrough in global submarine development.*

*Military commentator Zhang Haixiong added: “AIP submarines are the second-most capable underwater attack capability after nuclear submarines. Nuclear submarines have stronger combat capability, but are more expensive. It is more suitable for some medium-sized maritime countries. The AIP submarine is the future development direction of conventional submarines.”*

*“When equipped with the AIP system, the conventional power submarine does not need to obtain oxygen from the air when charging, and can be charged underwater.”*





## New Milestones in the Modernization of the Philippine Navy

**OE Watch Commentary:** Philippines officials are calling 2018 a “banner year” for the modernization of the Philippine Navy. The accompanying excerpted article, published by the *Philippine News Agency*, offers an overview of some of the navy’s benchmarks reached over the past year. In short, according to the article, the navy officially entered the missile age and demonstrated an ability to sail beyond its territorial waters. On 21 November 2018, the navy’s formal entry to the missile age was marked by the firing of two newly-acquired Rafael Advanced Defense Ltd. Spike-ER (extended range) surface-to-surface missiles from three multi-purpose assault crafts (MPAC) reportedly constructed by Subic-based Propmech Corporation. Despite rough seas, guided through modern technology, both hit their targets. The Spike-ER system arrived in the Philippines in April 2018 and, having a range of eight kilometers, is the country’s first missile weapon capable of penetrating 39 inches of rolled homogeneous armor.

The MPACs are high-speed naval craft capable of exceeding 40 knots. Their missions can include patrol and fire support for troops. They can be armed with missiles, and machine guns, including remote controlled .50 caliber machine guns that are ideal for anti-piracy missions. The Philippine Navy currently has only nine MPACs, with another three expected to arrive over the next 12 months; however, according to Vice Admiral Robert Empedrad, the navy’s flag officer in command, another 42 would be optimal to enhance the navy’s capabilities through swarming tactics, which would enable it to engage larger, more capable ships that pose a threat.

The Philippine Navy also plans to acquire at least two Pohang-class frigates, donated by South Korea, beginning in 2020, and at least two Agusta Westland AW-159 “Wildcat” anti-submarine helicopters, which will be based aboard the frigates, by the first quarter of 2019. The frigates will be equipped with a primary and secondary gun system, sensors and torpedoes, and sensors for anti-air operations and the helicopters will have the capability to detect and engage underwater targets.

Paralleling its acquisitions, the Philippine Navy has been extending its reach by participating in overseas deployments and port visits. For example, for the first time ever, two ships participated in the annual RIMPAC exercises, held in Hawaii, and the ASEAN-China Maritime Exercise in Zhangjiang, in Guandong Province. It also made history by making a port visit to Vladivostok, Russia. While these milestones may appear to be insignificant in comparison with more advanced military powers, they are significant for the Philippines and indicate the country is moving in a new direction. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**



Missile-armed MPAC Mk. III attack boats during a live fire demonstration involving the launching of Spike-ER missiles in November 2018.  
Source: Philippine Navy Recruitment [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:MPACMk3\\_LiveFireExercise2018.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:MPACMk3_LiveFireExercise2018.jpg).

(continued)



## Continued: New Milestones in the Modernization of the Philippine Navy

*“Empedrad, meanwhile, said missile-armed MPACs can be utilized to defend Philippine waters through the so-called ‘swarming tactic’, where these craft will be committed to engage larger and more capable ships posing a threat to the country’s waters.”*

**Source:** Priam Nepomuceno, “PH Navy Expands Presence with Missile, Blue Water Capability,” *Philippine News Agency*, 24 December 2018. <http://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1056803>

*The [Philippine Navy] PN’s formal entry to the missile age took place off Lamao Point, Limay, Bataan last Nov. 21, when three of its multi-purpose assault craft (MPACs) fired the newly-acquired and installed Rafael Advanced Defense Ltd. Spike-ER (extended range) surface-to-surface missile during a capability demonstration witnessed by Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and Navy flag-officer-in-command Vice Admiral Robert Empedrad. During the exercise, the MPACs fired two Spike-ER missile rounds, which hit two surface targets. The said craft also utilized remote-controlled .50 caliber machine guns to neutralize another target.*

*The MPACs were constructed by the Subic-based Propmech Corporation and activated on May 22, 2017.*

*The Spike-ER system, which arrived in the country last April, is the PN’s first missile weapon capable of penetrating 1,000-mm (39 inches) of rolled homogeneous armor and has a range of eight kilometers.*

*Empedrad, meanwhile, said missile-armed MPACs can be utilized to defend Philippine waters through the so-called “swarming tactic”, where these craft will be committed to engage larger and more capable ships posing a threat to the country’s waters.*

*The PN chief added that the Navy needs an additional 42 MPACs to further enhance its capabilities to defend the country’s waters.*

*“Based on our matrix, dapat magkaroon tayo ng (we should have) 42 of these type of vessels, (the) MPACs. (We only have) nine, (with another) three coming over next year with the same missile capability. So kung sabay-sabay gumalaw yan (If these ships will operate simultaneously), when we are under siege, I think this will do harm to any threat whether internal or external,” Empedrad said last Nov. 21 aboard the strategic sealift vessel BRP Davao Del Sur.*

*MPACs are high-speed naval craft capable of speeds in excess of 40 knots and can be utilized for a variety of naval missions like patrol and fire support missions for troops.*

*It can also be armed with machine guns, missiles and a variety of other weapons.*

*In the same briefing, Lorenzana said the Spike-ER missile system acquisition will be followed by big-ticket items like frigates and corvettes, which will also be armed with more powerful and longer-range missiles.*

*“The Pohang-class frigate from ROK will also be delivered by next year equipped with a better weapons system that the Navy can already use as it prepares for the delivery of the two purposely-built frigates starting 2020,” he stressed.*

*The Pohang-class frigate is equipped with a primary and secondary gun system, sensors and torpedoes for anti-submarine as well as sensors for anti-air operations, Zata disclosed.*

*For the first time in its history, two PN ships, the BRP Davao Del Sur and BRP Andres Bonifacio (FF-17), joined this year’s “Rim of the Pacific” (RIMPAC) exercises, which took place in Hawaii on June 27 and ended Aug. 2.*

*Aside from RIMPAC, the Navy made history with BRP Tarlac (LD-601) making the first-ever port visit of a Filipino warship to Vladivostok, Russia.*

*Another Navy milestone, in terms of overseas deployment, is the participation of BRP Dagupan City (LC-551) and the 200-man contingent aboard her in the first-ever ASEAN-China Maritime Exercise (ACMEX) that took place in Zhanjiang in Guangdong, China last Oct. 21 to 28.*

*With the pending arrival of the Navy’s first two AgustaWestland AW-159 “Wildcat” anti-submarine helicopters by the first quarter of 2019, the PN will now have the capability to detect and engage underwater targets.*



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## Japan Considers Sales of Air-Defense Radar to Philippines

**OE Watch Commentary:** According to the accompanying excerpted article from *Nikkei Asian Review*, the Japanese government is in talks with the Philippines regarding a sale of Mitsubishi Electric's FPS-3 air defense radar system to improve Philippine air domain awareness. Japan had previously discussed selling radars to help cover the Philippines southern border with Indonesia in an effort to combat piracy.

The Philippine Armed Forces are undergoing a widespread modernization program meant to comprehensively upgrade their capabilities across all services. In June of 2018, President Duterte approved Horizon 2 of the Revised Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Program (RAFPMP), which covers 2018-2022. The Philippines has allocated \$5.75 billion to the effort.

The Philippine Air Forces' modernization strategy "Flight Plan 2028," adopted under former President Benigno Aquino III, singled out the Philippines' antiquated Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) system. In particular, its air-defense radars dated to the 1960s, and do not provide adequate coverage of the islands. Current Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte appears to have continued the plan. In addition to 12 FA-50 fighter jets purchased from South Korea, the Philippines has purchased Cessna 208B Grand Caravan ISR aircraft and Scan Eagle unmanned aerial vehicles. Japan has also donated five Beechcraft TC-90 maritime surveillance aircraft. Such aircraft can only work effectively if responding to cueing from early warning radars.

The article notes that the radars would cost between \$8.87 million and \$17.7 million. The Japanese government sees such sales not only as an economic benefit, but also as part of its goal of strengthening the defense capabilities of countries surrounding China. In addition to pitching sales to Thailand and Australia, the Japanese government has laid the groundwork for closer defense cooperation with India, including co-development and exploration of dual-use technologies. India also plans to purchase the ShinMaywa US-2 amphibious SAR aircraft from Japan. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**

**Source:** "Philippines sounded out by Japan on air-defense radar," *Nikkei Asian Review*, 8 December 2018. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/Philippines-sounded-out-by-Japan-on-air-defense-radar>

*Japan is considering selling air defense radar technology to the Philippines in what would be its first export of defense equipment since ending a nearly 50-year ban in 2014.*

*Tokyo is sounding out the Philippines about buying an upgraded model of the Mitsubishi Electric-made FPS-3 air defense radar system, which Japan's Air Self-Defense Force has used since 1991 in missile defense and monitoring airspace incursions. Tokyo has already begun offering technical information on the system to Manila.*

*Japan's thinking goes that upgrading the less-than-cutting-edge radar to meet the Philippines' needs will keep costs down, helping it win orders. The price is expected to be between 1 billion yen and 2 billion yen (\$8.87 million and \$17.7 million). Manila has also approached the U.S. and Israel on the matter, according to a source connected to the Japanese government, and may decide as early as the start of next year.*

*Japan's defense cooperation with the Philippines, which had centered on joint military exercises, has expanded into defense equipment in recent years. In March, Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force donated TC-90 trainer craft to the Philippine navy. And Japan agreed in June to grant parts for multi-mission UH-1H helicopters formerly used by the Ground Self-Defense Force to the Philippine air force.*

*The two sides are interested in partnering on maritime security as China continues to build up its military presence in the South China Sea, a vital sea lane for goods and energy shipments for both Tokyo and Manila...*

*Japan essentially banned arms exports for decades until April 2014, when the cabinet laid out basic rules letting the country transfer defense equipment and technology and participate in international joint development under certain conditions, such as when it contributes to Japan's security. Selling the radars to the Philippines was judged appropriate because it would further bilateral defense cooperation.*

*Tokyo has not yet sold any defense equipment under the new rules. Japan sought to build submarines for export to Australia, but lost the deal to France in 2016. An effort to sell P-1 patrol jets to the U.K. also fell through, and Japan lost a bid to supply radar for the Thai air force to a Spanish company.*

*“The two sides are interested in partnering on maritime security as China continues to build up its military presence in the South China Sea.”*



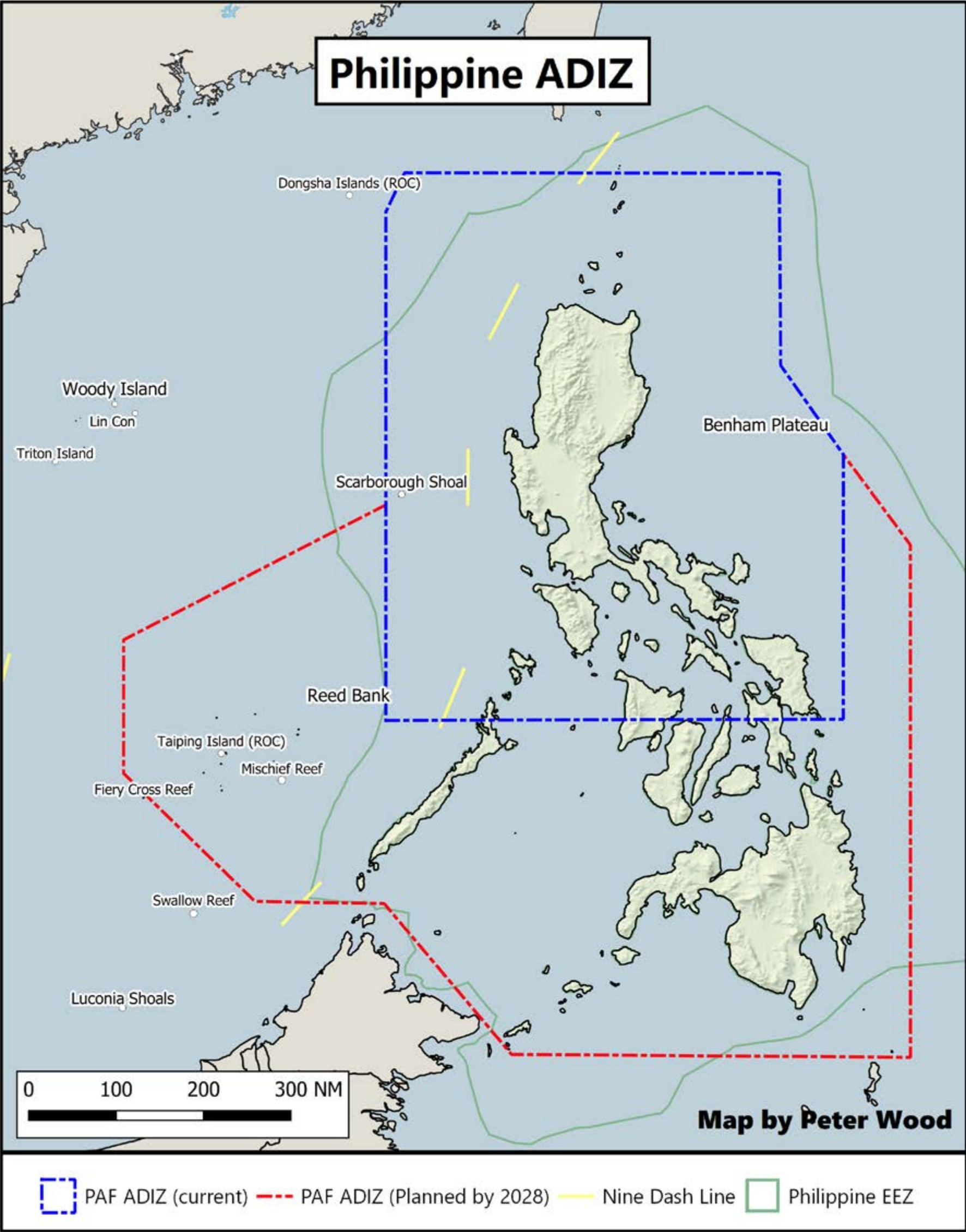
**China's cyber policy appears to have three vectors—peace activist, espionage activist, and attack planner—that dominate China's cyber policy. Some are always hidden from view while others are demonstrated daily. Three Faces of the Cyber Dragon is divided into sections that coincide with these vectors.**

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

(continued)



Continued: Japan Considers Sales of Air-Defense Radar to Philippines





## Musings of a Maute Militant in Mindanao

**OE Watch Commentary:** In 2017, the city of Marawi in Mindanao, the Philippines, erupted in violence when Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)-aligned militants invaded and succeeded in holding the city for several months. The militants were referred to locally as the Maute Group, because their leaders were two brothers with the last name Maute. However, little was known about the militants themselves. For the accompanying excerpted 12 December article, however, *Deutsche Welle* interviewed a Maute Group militant, which provided unique insights on the worldview of the young militant.

The militant stated he was 17-years old when he was recruited and that he received a financial bonus of over \$100 for joining, which he gave to his parents, who appreciated the money due to their poverty. On a cultural level, the parents were also proud to send their son off to a “liberation struggle,” as the majority Muslim Marawi region has a history of rebelling against the majority Christian government in the Philippines and the European colonizers in past centuries. In fact, according to the article, many Muslims in Marawi view the country’s rulers in Manila as imperialists themselves. Indeed, the militant believed the government was purposely settling Christians in Marawi so they would outnumber Muslims and that an Islamic State was a solution to the city’s myriad problems.

Although the militant did not have prior combat experience, he was brought to the jungle to engage in training in guns and knives. He was also given a monthly salary for the first time and would watch ISIS videos with his co-fighters that they would obtain on the Telegram app. According to the militant, the raid on Marawi occurred soon after Abu Sayyaf members entered the area near Marawi. However, when the fighting broke out, he was visiting his family. He therefore stayed in the city and served mostly as a spy on military positions for the Maute Group. The article thus provided a unique perspective on the way local and global factors merged to influence young Muslims in Marawi to support the fight against the government. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

*“There is a long tradition of Muslim families to send sons off to join the ‘liberation struggle’ in the south of the Philippines.”*



Marawi Ground Zero.

Source: Philippine Information Agency [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marawi\\_Ground\\_Zero.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marawi_Ground_Zero.jpg).

**Source:** “Terror threat lingers in Philippines despite Marawi victory,” *Deutsche Welle*, 12 December 2018. <https://m.dw.com/en/terror-threat-lingers-in-philippines-despite-marawi-victory/a-46783576>

*More than a year after the heaviest urban fighting in the Philippines since World War II, the historic center of Marawi, the country’s largest Muslim city on the southern island of Mindanao, remains sealed off. Abdul was 17 years old when he was recruited by local Islamist insurgents. He gave his parents the bonus he received for enlisting: 7000 pesos, the equivalent of about 120 euros. Mom and Dad were proud of him as this is a lot of money in this impoverished region. Plus, there is a long tradition of Muslim families to send sons off to join the “liberation struggle” in the south of the Philippines.*

*There’s a prevailing sense of injustice here, dating back to the Spanish colonizers who introduced Christianity in the 16th century and subjected the local indigenous and Muslim population to their “pacification” campaign. Then came the United States, briefly followed by Japanese forces in the 20th century. And today there are the so-called “imperialists” in the capital, Manila, up north. Abdul is convinced the vast majority of Filipino politicians are corrupt and dishonest. He also believes the government is sending “Christian settlers” to Mindanao to squeeze out Muslims like him. The dream of an Islamic state became his panacea against unemployment, poverty and anger.*





## Waiting for Thailand's Long-Awaited Election

**OE Watch Commentary:** Ever since a 2014 military coup in Thailand deposed the government of Yingluck Shinawatra, the ruling junta has promised to hold an election for prime minister. However, planned elections have been postponed a number of times while the junta struggles to maintain control over the country.

Rumors that the next poll, scheduled for 24 February, will not likely take place, prompted some frustrated citizens to take to the streets in protest, according to the first excerpted article, published by *Channel News Asia*. Critics have accused the junta of manipulating the system to maintain power. For example, according to the *Channel News Asia* article, a new constitution authored by the military “dilutes the power of elected governments and embeds (the military’s) role in politics and policy for the next 20 years.”

The second article, published by the *Nikkei Asian Review*, bring some clarity to a somewhat confusing issue by describing several important “things to know” leading up to the long awaited election. First, the planned 24 February election is now in doubt. According to the article, as of 4 January the commission had still not finalized the date. Meanwhile, in September, King Maha Vajiralongkorn endorsed two bills requiring a general election to take place. The law came into effect on 11 December. According to the constitution, the junta must hold the vote within 150 days from the time the law takes effect. Therefore, the election could be pushed to early May. Second, the King’s coronation is scheduled to take place 4-6 May. A coronation could take weeks to plan, which could give the junta an excuse to further postpone the election. Third, Thailand has a history of its elections being followed by unrest and coups and there are questions if the country can break this cycle.

Since embracing its constitutional monarchy in 1932, the country has endured more than 20 coups, including several failed ones, as the article explains. Some of the problems are the result of economic weakness and inequalities. Fourth, there are three main (party) contenders for the election. The Palang Pracharat is pro-junta. The Pheu Thai is comprised of supporters of ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his sister/ successor, Yingluck (who was ousted in 2014). The Democrat Party, formed in 1946, is the country’s oldest operating political party and has long been at the center of Thai politics; however, they have never defeated Thaksin’s party. Nevertheless, as currently reflected in Thai media there continues to be speculation and uncertainty regarding the election. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

**Source:** “Thai Protesters Urge Military to Honour February Election Date,” *Channel News Asia*, 7 January 2019. <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/thai-protesters-urge-military-to-honour-february-election-date-11092706>

*Thailand’s King Maha Vajiralongkorn has yet to sign a decree which allows the Election Commission to announce an official date, raising concerns that the polls will be delayed.*

*Fresh doubts emerged after the Royal Household Bureau announced the king had set his coronation on May 4-6, more than two and a half years after the death of his revered father.-*

*Protesters gathered on Sunday at Bangkok’s Victory Monument, wielding signs saying “Delay No More” and portraying junta leader Prayut Chan-O-Cha as a lying Pinocchio with a long nose.*

*The government has until May 9, 2019 to hold elections, according to a bill endorsed by the king in September.*

*But critics say the new military-authored constitution dilutes the power of elected governments and embeds its role in politics and policy for the next 20 years.*

**Source:** Masayuki Yuda, “5 Things to Know About Thailand’s Long-Awaited Election,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, 4 January 2019. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Turbulent-Thailand/5-things-to-know-about-Thailand-s-long-awaited-election>

*Why is it (the planned general election) so important?*

*This vote will test Thailand’s ability to return to a stable democracy after nearly five years of military rule. The question is whether the kingdom can break the cycle of elections, followed by civil unrest and a coup. Since Thailand embraced a constitutional monarchy in 1932 it has had more than 20 coups, including several failed ones.*

*Who are the main contenders?*

*There are three main political forces in Thailand: the Palang Pracharat Party, the Pheu Thai Party and the Democrat Party.*

*Palang Pracharat is pro-junta. Most of the junta’s cabinet members who wish to pursue a political career will gravitate to it...*

*Pheu Thai is home to supporters of ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his sister and successor, Yingluck, who was also removed in a coup.*

*The Democrat Party is led by former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva. It was formed in 1946 and is the country’s oldest operating political party. The Democrats have been at the center of Thai politics for a long time but they have never defeated Thaksin’s forces...*

*The junta’s order in November to redraw electoral districts led to complaints of gerrymandering, but it is unclear whether the change will favor pro-junta forces.*

*The three-horse race is likely to end with no party holding a majority, even with votes from smaller affiliates.*

**“Since Thailand embraced a constitutional monarchy in 1932 it has had more than 20 coups, including several failed ones.”**



## Indonesia “Preventive” Counter-Terrorism Arrests

**OE Watch Commentary:** On 19 December Indonesia’s *Tribun News* published the accompanying excerpted Indonesian-language article about the efforts undertaken by the national police to defend against terrorist attacks ahead of Christmas and New Year. According to the article, the police were so concerned about terrorist threats that they engaged in preventative arrests. The national police chief, for example, indicated that 21 suspected terrorists who were arrested in seven different regions of the country were not directly involved planning attacks before those two holidays. Nevertheless, the primary purpose of the arrests was to ensure the public that there would not be terrorist attacks over the holidays. It was, therefore, a confidence-building measure.

The article also noted the reason for heightened concern from the public about terrorism. On 13 May, there were bombings at churches in Surabaya carried out by a family of six (two parents with their children) on motorcycles who detonated explosives and killed more than 10 people. While the article did not state the specifics about the 21 individuals arrested, it did mention that two of them had been in Syria. They would have been among over 200 Indonesians who traveled to Syria to fight. The fact that the family who bombed the churches in Surabaya in May had also been in Syria has raised the threat level about other returnees from Syria, which was already high even before those attacks. Nevertheless, it appears that the police believe they obtained their desired end result due to the fact that Christmas and the New Year passed without incident. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

**Source:** “Jelang Natal dan Tahun Baru, Kapolri Sebut 21 Orang Terduga Teroris Diamankan dengan judul (Ahead of Christmas and New Year, the National Police Chief Announces 21 Suspected Terrorists Detained),” *Tribun News*, 19 December 2018. <http://www.tribunnews.com/nasional/2018/12/19/jelang-natal-dan-tahun-baru-kapolri-sebut-21-orang-terduga-teroris-diamankan>

*Before Christmas and New Year, the National Police managed to secure and arrest 21 suspected terrorists from 7 different regions. This was stated by National Police Chief General Tito Karnavian after a meeting in preparation for security ahead of Christmas and New Year. He claimed the arrests of 21 suspected terrorists were not directly related to the threat of terror on Christmas and New Year. However, this effort was carried out as a preventive measure for terrorism. The four-star general is concerned about terrorism, like what happened in the church in Surabaya, East Java, on May 13, 2018. “We take steps that we consider to be potential to ensure that the community believes that terror attacks will not exist,” he explained.*



Bahasa Indonesia: indahnya natal.

Source: Harry.r.sumartono [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DI\\_Jakarta.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DI_Jakarta.jpg).





## “Psychological War” along the Israeli-Lebanese Border

**OE Watch Commentary:** Israel’s “Northern Shield” operation, launched in early December 2018 to destroy cross-border tunnels dug by Hezbollah, is being interpreted by the Lebanese group’s supporters as a “psychological war” that Hezbollah can win. The accompanying excerpts from pro-Hezbollah media sources provide additional details on this perspective.

The first passage, from an article written by a Lebanese academic for the website of the pro-Hezbollah news channel *al-Mayadeen*, chastises “some Lebanese and Arab journalists” for doing Israel’s work, whether wittingly or not, by reacting with alarm to the operations and claiming that Israel is capable of launching a major war. In fact, the author claims, “[Hezbollah] is stronger than before while Israel is weaker than before” and “[Israel’s] domestic front is unprepared for war.” Those describing Northern Shield as a serious and alarming development, the author believes, are contributing to “the psychological war against us” (for more background, see: “The ‘Soft War’ on Hezbollah,” *OE Watch*, November 2018).

As noted in the second passage, from the pro-Hezbollah daily newspaper *al-Akhbar*, “Northern Shield” has played out heavily on social media, in particular Facebook and Twitter. The article’s author, a Lebanese journalist, describes a “methodical war” that includes “large groups” employed by Israel to “engage, infiltrate and converse with [Hezbollah] supporters,” in order to gather intelligence and undermine domestic popular support. Hezbollah supporters must be cautious on social media, the author warns, to avoid “providing the enemy with information ‘on a golden plate,’” whether intentionally or not. Hezbollah has in fact been successful in countering Israel’s “psychological war,” he argues, beginning with the group’s “smart silence” aimed at “draw[ing] the enemy’s curiosity without providing information.” At the same time, Hezbollah supporters have been “working steadfastly and precisely to provoke the enemy and influence it,” whether by circulating close-up photographs of Israeli soldiers stationed along the border or by taking advantage of the Israeli Army’s state of high alert and overreaction when confronted with routine Lebanese Army patrols, the sound of digging, or farmers working nearby. These are vulnerabilities that can be exploited, the author contends, and it is important “to move from defense to offense, in order to exhaust the adversary.” In a nod to the asymmetries of information-age psychological warfare, the author concludes as follows: “The enemy employs propaganda wars professionally. There is nothing missing for us to engage in a similar type of warfare employing all the capabilities at our disposal.”

**End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

“...the most precise and professional of psychological wars...”

**Source:**

الحرب النفسية على لبنان: مَنْ يقوم بها؟ وما الهدف؟

Leila Nicolas. “The psychological war on Lebanon: Who is conducting it? What is the goal?” *al-Mayadeen*, 12 December 2018. <https://goo.gl/89gtEG>

*Hezbollah’s professional way of dealing with the issue was notable, consisting of a constructive ambiguity policy and photographing of Israeli in various positions. Weapons were also seized from Israeli soldiers on the border with Lebanon, in what is the most precise and professional of psychological wars...*

*In this context, the alarmism with which some Lebanese and Arab journalists have treated this issue is notable. They have engaged in psychological warfare to the enemy’s benefit, calling for “taking care of Lebanon” and ridiculing all who say Israel is unable to launch a war. They call on the people to “not be drawn in by the illusion that Israel is unable to launch a war.” Whether with good or bad intentions, they do marketing for the enemy and contribute to the psychological war against us... These people overlook the truth, which is that the Resistance today is stronger than before while Israel is weaker than before. The enemy’s internal front is unprepared for war, and the situation following the Syrian war is different than it was before.*

**Source:**

الحرب النفسية جمهور المقاومة جاهز؟

Ayman Mohammed Bashir. “The psychological war: Are Resistance supporters ready?” *al-Akhbar*, 12 December 2018. [https://al-akhbar.com/Media\\_Tv/263041](https://al-akhbar.com/Media_Tv/263041)

*Since the Israeli enemy’s announcement that it had launched the “Northern Shield” operation to look for “cross-border tunnels” that Hezbollah could use in an upcoming war, the Israeli media’s methodical war against the Resistance, and in its Arabic manifestation tweets by the Israeli military’s spokesman, Avichay Adraee, has not stopped...*

*... the enemy amasses huge amounts of information on Resistance supporters through social media platforms. The enemy studies, analyzes and uses the information in its war. Whether knowingly or not, Resistance supporters provide the enemy with information “on a golden plate.” It is no secret that the enemy employs large groups to work on Twitter and Facebook, including Adraee’s personal accounts. The aim is to directly engage, infiltrate and converse with Resistance supporters...*

*... al-Manar Channel’s correspondent, Ali Shuaib, managed to launch a one-man war, annoying the Israeli Army by posting pictures mocking them. Adraee was forced to respond to them. Nonetheless, the solution at times lies in “smart silence,” which draws the enemy’s curiosity without providing information to the adversary, as in the case of a response...*

*The other party is disturbed when listening to the sound of digging, and they fire in the air when a routine Lebanese Army patrol drives by. They also fear the movement of farmers or planting of trees along the border. All movements large and small are taken into consideration. In short, their war can be turned against them...*

*These types of wars require defensive capabilities to match military operations. Is it important in them to move from defense to offense, in order to exhaust the adversary. This requires the other party to have sufficient information on the enemy, its culture, and the nature of his thinking, to translate them into effective tools in the context of battle...*

*We ourselves should not err in our understanding of psychological warfare, including the electronic type, and its consequences...*

*The enemy employs propaganda wars professionally. There is nothing missing for us to engage in a similar type of warfare employing all the capabilities at our disposal.*



## Cleric Speaks on Iran's Foreign Militias

**OE Watch Commentary:** The Iranian press increasingly covers tension between the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and President Hassan Rouhani. While the Western media sometimes paints this as a conflict between hardline and reformist factions, both parties are absolutely committed to the ideals of Ayatollah Khomeini's 1979 Islamic Revolution; rather, their dispute often revolves around tactics or power.

In the accompanying excerpted article, from a news outlet affiliated with the IRGC, Ali Shirazi, the Iranian Supreme Leader's special representative to the Qods Force, pens an open letter to Rouhani. The general thrust of his essay is to criticize Rouhani for compromises and diplomacy with the West. He castigates Rouhani for compromising revolutionary values in order to negotiate with the West on such issues as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Financial Action Task Force (see: "Accepting FATF is Absolutely Forbidden," *OE Watch*, August 2018), and the Counter Terrorism Finance agreements. Iran continues to object to the latter two agreements in part, if not in whole, because of restrictions it would impose on groups like Hezbollah and Hamas which the United States and other Western countries designate as terrorist groups, but which the Iranian government sponsors as resistance movements.

Perhaps the most important aspect of Shirazi's letter, however, is his embrace and endorsement of various militias, not only Lebanese Hezbollah which the IRGC helped found, but also Ansarallah, the main Houthi military group in Yemen. Iranian diplomats sympathize with the Houthi cause in Yemen, but are careful to deny direct links; Shirazi appears—not for the first time—unconcerned about such diplomatic nuance. In addition, Shirazi claims that Iran finds strength and influence in other groups, such as the religious, pro-Iranian "Haydariyun" in Iraq as well as the Popular Mobilization Forces, many of which remain under Iranian command and control in Iraq. Shirazi also talks about the Zeynabiyun and the Liwa Fatemiyoun, two groups fighting in Syria whose members, respectively, are drawn from Pakistan and Afghanistan, as being under general Iranian control. That he sees the proliferation of these groups as a sign of Iranian strength suggests the creation and deployment of proxy groups remains a key component of IRGC's strategy. That Shirazi represents the supreme leader suggests that Ali Khamenei also backs the proxy group strategy.

Lastly, Shirazi cites Iranian progress in developing missiles and drones as a sign of its technical prowess and ability. Curiously, he uses public statements by a retired Israeli missile expert to support his claims. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

**Source:** "Sokhani Samimaneh ba Ra'is Dawlati Davazdahom (A Friendly Talk about the President of the Twelfth Government)," *Tasnim News*, 8 December 2018. <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1397/09/17/1893881>

*Mr. President! Despite all the tricks, schemes, sanctions, threats, and the battles and brutal acts of the enemies, today we are on the verge of the 40th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. The people are brave and faithful and adhere to the line of the Imam and the Guardianship. We have intelligence, top-notch youth who are neither afraid nor hopeless. In terms of military, ground, air and naval equipment, we are the foremost power in the region. Because of faith, courage, and sacrifice, we have missiles, advanced submarines, and unmanned drones.*

*Mr. President! Today, Iran enjoys the support of Hizbullah, Ansar Allah, the Popular Mobilization Forces, the Haydariyun, the Zeynabiyun, the [Liwa] Fatemiyoun, Syria's homeland defense [force] and the power of the Palestinian Mujahedin."*

*Mr. President! Uzi Rubin, the former head of the Israeli Missile Defense Organization, said Iranian missiles were examples of good engineering, and said, "Iran has gained these successes despite sanctions." He added, "On technical grounds, I respect the people who have done these things."*



The Zeynabiyun flag unveiled at the Jamkaran mosque in Qom.  
Source: Jamkaran.ir, <http://cdn.jamkaran.ir/main/2017/05/Y2A0460-580x350.jpg>.



## Turkey's Fight against ISIS

**OE Watch Commentary:** According to a statement by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey will fight to put an end to the existence of ISIS in Syria despite concerns from some Turks over taking on this new task. However, Turkey has not revealed how it plans to fight against the remaining ISIS elements. The accompanying excerpted article from *Anadolu Ajansı* provides information regarding the existence of ISIS in eastern Syria while the article from Turkey's *Hurriyet Daily News* sheds light on how Turkey will fight against ISIS.

The *Anadolu Ajansı* article states that ISIS still controls the territory between Hajin and Baghus, the districts of Abu Kamal in Deir ez-Zor province. Also, ISIS is present east of Homs and in the deserts of western Deir ez-Zor, but the presence in these territories is rather in cell structures. The author argues that the ISIS will not be able to resist the fire power of the Turkish Armed Forces for long in these territories when Turkey starts operations in Syria. Therefore, ISIS will probably evacuate its fighters from Syria to Iraq. The article claims that Turkey has tremendous experience in fighting terrorism and that it will prevail against ISIS in a short period of time.

According to the *Hurriyet Daily News* article, Turkish President Erdogan said Turkey “can perfectly eliminate all terrorists in the east of Syria” as it did in mid-2016 through Operation Euphrates Shield. Additionally, Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar noted on 1 January 2019 that “The Turkish Armed Forces have now taken a task and the responsibility in the fight” against ISIS. The author suggests two options to fight ISIS. First, for Turkey to fight ISIS in Syria will require ground and air operations nearly 250 miles into Syrian territory and the article notes that Russia has already assured Turkey that the Syrian air defense system will not intercept Turkey's aircrafts. Also, for a successful operation, actors involved in the Syrian conflict must assure Turkey about any possible confrontations with Syrian regime forces and the People's Protection Units or YPG, a Kurdish armed group in Syria waging war on ISIS. Second, having Iraq take on the responsibility to fight ISIS, since the remnants of ISIS fighters in Syria are close to Iraqi border. The article mentions there is a possibility that Turkish authorities may discuss this option with Iraqi President Barham Salih during his visit to Turkey.

Both articles acknowledge the complexity of fighting ISIS in Syria and they caution the Turkish government to involve all actors in Syria while taking on this responsibility. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gunduz)**



Turkish soldiers with their vehicles conduct patrol on outside Manbij, Syria.

Source: Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri (VOA) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Turkish\\_soldiers\\_conduct\\_patrol\\_on\\_outside\\_Manbij\\_Syria.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Turkish_soldiers_conduct_patrol_on_outside_Manbij_Syria.jpg).

(continued)





## Continued: Turkey's Fight against ISIS

**Source:** Kutluhan Görücü, "Fırat'ın doğusundaki DEAŞ varlığı (Existence of ISIS in the Eastern Euphrates)," *Anadolu Ajansı*, 31 December 2018. <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz-haber/fratin-dogusundaki-deas-varligi/1352881>

*Today...the territory under the control of ISIS is between Hajin and Baghus. Besides this region, it is known that there is a presence of ISIS in the east of Homs and in the deserts of western Deir ez-Zor. However, the presence of the organization in this region can be characterized as being in the form of cells due to desert conditions rather than in settlements.*

*ISIS staged attacks several times in the city of al-Tabqah in al-Raqqa province. It can be said that ISIS is also present in this region. After al-Raqqa, the region that suffered the biggest attacks is the suburb of Deir ez-Zor and ISIS is still strong there.*

*How the fight against ISIS will be conducted is not clear yet and it has not been shared with public...*

*The long-term resistance of terrorist elements does not seem possible due to the superior firepower and moral superiority of the Turkish Armed Forces...*

*In fact, ISIS can use the chaotic environment to evacuate its members to Iraq or use the Iraqi-Syrian border for logistics and replenishing its needs. As a matter of fact, the main motivation of the leadership of this organization is to focus on Iraq...*

*Turkey has gained experience in the fight against ISIS with carrying out operations like Euphrates Shield inside and outside of Turkey. It is likely that this experience and capability will be reflected in the field to achieve results in a short time.*

**Source:** Serkan Demirtaş, "How will Turkey fight against ISIL?," *Hurriyet Daily News*, 2 January 2019. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opinion/serkan-demirtas/how-will-turkey-fight-against-isil-140182>

*ISIL has started to lose influence and territories after dozens of countries, under the leadership of the U.S., launched a global campaign against it.*

*Erdoğan had assured the U.S. president that Turkey can perfectly eliminate all terrorists in the east of Syria...*

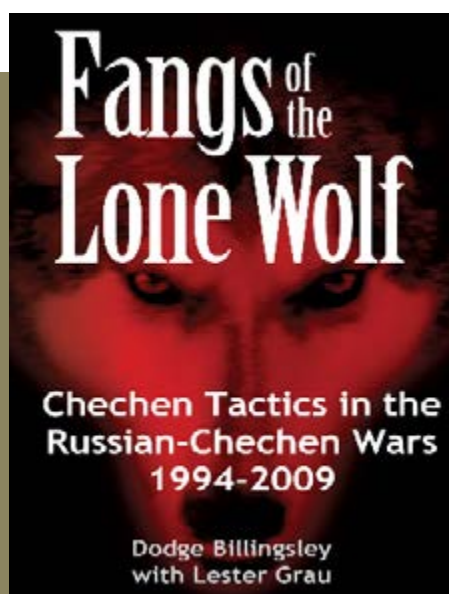
*Turkey is now entrusted with the task of wiping ISIL remnants out from the east of Syria. Turkey's Defense Minister Hulusi Akar, who is the former chief of General Staff, confirmed this new task of the Turkish army. In a statement on Jan. 1, he said, "The Turkish Armed Forces have now taken a task and the responsibility in the fight against Daesh as a result of a conversation between our president and Mr. Trump. We will efficiently fulfill this duty in the coming days," using the Arabic acronym for ISIL.*

*There is no discussion over Turkey's determination in fighting against ISIL, but the question is how it will be held...*

*Clearing this area from ISIL would surely require ground and air operations. If Turkey is to do this, it has to deploy thousands of troops and requires military equipment into an area around 400 kilometers away from the Turkish border. It has also been clarified by the Russians that its aircrafts will not be intercepted by the Syrian air defense system. Plus, all relevant actors should assure Turkey that neither the YPG nor the Syrian army will be on its way to Abu Kamal.*

*...One other option would be to let Iraq engage in the fight against ISIL. The territories being controlled by ISIL are very close to the Iraqi border... It would be no surprise if Erdoğan and Iraqi President Barham Salih also discussed the need to fully eradicate ISIL in the region during the latter's visit to Ankara in the coming days.*

*... Turkey will surely continue its close coordination with all relevant parties, mostly the U.S. and Russia, on how to secure its potential fight against ISIL.*



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

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-books/195587/download>



## Turkey: Debating a Post-US Syria

**OE Watch Commentary:** The prospect of a US withdrawal from Syria has generally been welcomed in Turkey. However, it has also ignited a debate on some of the strategic and tactical challenges that Turkey may face in the aftermath of such a withdrawal. The accompanying articles from the Turkish press provide insight into this debate.

The first accompanying article features a quote by Turkish Presidential Spokesperson and the Chief Advisor to the President, Ibrahim Kalin. Kalin expresses that they are “pleased” with the withdrawal decision but raises questions such as “what kind of structure will be left behind; what will happen to the heavy weapons that have been deployed, and [what will be] the fate of American military bases and logistics centers.” The concern is that the heavy weapons that have been deployed may fall into the hands of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or other actors, eventually finding their way into Turkey, or worse, those weapons may be used to attack Turkey. Similarly, there is concern that the US bases will be taken over by forces belonging to the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG)-- a Kurdish group that Turkey considers to be an extension of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK)-- a terrorist group with whom Turkey has a long and painful history.

The second passage is from a radio interview with Soli Özel, a respected international relations expert. Özel points out that the pressure on ISIS will be lifted, and discusses the risk of a power vacuum emerging with the US withdrawal. He describes this as being similar to the power vacuum that emerged in Iraq after the US withdrawal from the region in December 2011. Just as that withdrawal had raised concerns in Turkey about Iraq’s territorial integrity in the long run, this withdrawal is raising concerns about Syrian territorial integrity. Specifically, the concern is that the power vacuum creates a risk that remnants of ISIS forces will become proxies for outside powers to meddle in Syria’s internal affairs, eventually leading to a de-facto partitioning of Syria, with the Syrian Kurds in the northeast ending up with their autonomous region. For Turkey, preserving Syrian territorial integrity is a key interest and priority for the long-term.

The third passage, written by a highly respected former Turkish Ambassador to the US, Faruk Loğoğlu, discusses some of the geopolitical challenges that Turkey may face. He notes that the decision actually “increases Turkey’s burden in Syria.” With a US departure, he points out that the different interests of Russia, Iran and Turkey, will only be highlighted, and Turkey will be in a tougher spot, given its differing priorities with Russia and Iran. Namely, Turkey’s priority of preventing a Kurdish autonomous region along its borders is not shared by Russia or Iran. From Turkey’s perspective, this would create more problems in the long run. (For background, see Karen Kaya, “The Syrian Crisis from a Neighbor’s Perspective: The View from Turkey,” <https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/202242>). **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

*“We are pleased with ... Trump’s decision to withdraw [from Syria], but it needs to be clarified as to what kind of structure will be left behind, what will happen to the heavy weapons that have been deployed, [and what will be] the fate of American military bases and logistics centers.”*



**Source:** “Turkey asks US to hand over military bases in Syria,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, 8 January 2019. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-asks-us-to-hand-over-military-bases-in-syria-140358>

*[Turkish Presidential Spokesperson Ibrahim Kalin:] We are pleased with [President] Trump’s decision to withdraw [from Syria], but it needs to be clarified as to what kind of structure will be left behind, what will happen to the heavy weapons that have been deployed, [and what will be] the fate of American military bases and logistics centers.*

**Source:** “Soli Özel: ABD Suriye’den çekilmesi anafora yol açacak (Soli Özel: The US withdrawal from Syria will lead to a vacuum),” *Bidebunuizle Show on RS FM*, 21 December 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrAmdf3PiaE>

*The pressure on ISIS will be lifted... The same kind of power vacuum that emerged in Iraq when the US withdrew in December 2011 will emerge in northern Syria. ... From Turkey’s perspective, entering this power vacuum... can lead to a dangerous situation... Also, the US forces have some military equipment and bases there that will be available to PYD-YPG in the absence of the US.*

**Source:** Faruk Loğoğlu, “2019’da Türk dış politikasını bekleyenler! (Things to expect in Turkish foreign policy in 2019!),” *Gazete Duvar*, 1 January 2019. <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/forum/2019/01/01/2019da-turk-dis-politikasini-bekleyenler/>

*The US decision to withdraw its troops from Syria has not decreased Turkey’s burden, on the contrary, it has increased it.... Following the US decision to withdraw its troops, the developments on the ground will be dependent on the cooperation between Turkey-Russia-Iran. The differences in the interests and priorities of these three actors ... will be greater than their common denominators due to reasons related to the US absence on the ground...*





## Increased Saudi Focus on the Red Sea

**OE Watch Commentary:** In October 2017, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia announced a massive project to build a futuristic city from scratch along the Red Sea's Gulf of Aqaba coastline. Called NEOM, the semi-autonomous, high-tech utopia would include Saudi, Egyptian and Jordanian land. A self-declared "aspirational society," NEOM is according to its own website "The world's most ambitious project" (see: <https://www.neom.com/>). The ambitions were tempered in October 2018, when key investors, advisers and experts quit the project following the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. As reported by the Financial Times, the Saudi crown prince himself told a visiting business delegation that after that "no one will invest [in the project] for years."

Not all of Saudi Arabia's Red Sea projects are this ambitious or aspirational, at least on paper. In mid-December 2018, the kingdom hosted the foreign ministers of most Red Sea littoral states to discuss the formation of a new security alliance, to be called "The Council of Red Sea States." The meeting was followed up in early 2019 by "Red Wave-1," a joint Saudi-Egyptian naval and special forces exercise on the Red Sea, which reportedly also involved forces from Jordan, Djibouti, Sudan, and the Saudi-backed Yemeni government.

The proposed security alliance would serve many purposes, according to local media reports. Along with establishing a security regime to ensure trade flows in and out of the Red Sea, the new alliance would broadly seek to contain the growing influence of "the Turkey-Qatar-Iran 'Axis of Evil'" in the area, as stated in the first accompanying excerpt, from the mainstream Egyptian daily *al-Masry al-Youm*. Researchers and commentators cited in the second excerpt, from the Arabic-language website of Germany's *Deutsche Welle*, argue that the alliance sends a message to the West about Saudi Arabia's need to act independently and establish a durable security alliance of its own. The eastern shores of the Red Sea, per one of the commentators, is finally getting the attention it deserves given that it represents "Saudi Arabia's security, strategic, and political depth." The third accompanying passage, from the Qatari daily *al-Araby al-Jadid*, is unsurprisingly pessimistic on the alliance's prospects, given "fears" that it will be used as "a tool to normalize relations with Israel," which is also a Red Sea littoral state. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

“...Saudi Arabia's security, strategic, and political depth...”



Topographic map in English of the Red Sea.

Source: Eric Gaba (Sting - fr:Sting) [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>) or CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>), via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Red\\_Sea\\_topographic\\_map-en.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Red_Sea_topographic_map-en.jpg).

### Source:

Samer Ibrahim. "Experts: The 'Red Sea entity' announcement due to 'Iranian and Turkish threats'," *al-Masry al-Youm*, 12 December 2018. <https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/1350684>

خبراء: الإعلان عن «كيان البحر الأحمر» بسبب تهديدات إيران وتركيا

*According to experts in African affairs, the Yemen war and the instability in the Bab al-Mandab Straits during the war, Gulf concerns regarding oil and global trade flows, meddling by the "Turkey-Qatar-Iran" Axis of Evil in the Red Sea, and the absence of a true security regime in this area, are the true reasons for "establishing the Red Sea entity."*

### Source:

"Saudi and the Red Sea... Marriage of politics and economics to break the isolation?" *Deutsche Welle Arabic*, 13 December 2018. <https://goo.gl/Gr8rTG>

السعودية والبحر الأحمر..زواج السياسة والاقتصاد لكسر طوق العزلة؟

*According to Dr. Ghassan al-Attiya... "Riyadh undoubtedly needs to restructure its accounts and reduce its reliance on the United States, thus sending the West a message that it has alternatives after the failure of the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council"...*

*According to Saudi journalist and political analyst Ahmed Adnan, Saudi Arabia has a problem in the Red Sea, and "this area has over previous decade not been given true interest, especially the eastern shores of the Red Sea, which in fact represent Saudi Arabia's security, strategic, and political depth. This new organization is mean to fulfill these needs and requirements"...*

### Source:

"'Red Sea States Council'... Saudi and Emirati goals," *al-Araby al-Jadid*, 12 December 2018. <https://goo.gl/vBzs4s>

مجلس دول البحر الأحمر... أهداف سعودية وإماراتية

*... amidst a lack of clarity regarding the true goals of this council and fears that it will be a tool to normalize relations with Israel in the future, given that Israel itself is a Red Sea littoral state... those fears come in light of Tel Aviv's directives to open up to Africa and some Arab countries, amidst talk of secret meetings previously held between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Arab leaders, on the one hand, and first-time visits to Israel by leaders of African countries such as Chad. This also includes official statements by the [Israeli] occupation state on its willingness to travel to Arab capitals, as when Netanyahu visited Oman last month.*





## A Turkish Military Base in the Red Sea

**OE Watch Commentary:** Suakin Island of Sudan could be Turkey's third military base abroad after it established bases in Qatar and Somalia. During his visit to Sudan in December 2017, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan reportedly asked Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to lease Suakin Island in the Red Sea to Turkey. At the time, President Erdoğan rejected the claims that Turkey might establish a military base on the island; however, now Turkey is not hiding the fact that it is establishing a military base there. The accompanying excerpted articles, one from the pro-government newspaper *Yeni Akit* and the other from state-owned *Anadolu Ajansı* highlight what Turkey might achieve by establishing a military base in the Red Sea.

*“While Turkey has become a force for ensuring peace and prosperity of the people in the region, [it] will assume geopolitical supremacy with a military base on Suakin Island.”*

According to the *Yeni Akit* article, even though it is intended to be a naval base, it will also be supported by the Turkish Land and Air Forces. The article states that with this military base, Turkey will contribute to the balance of power against other countries such as Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Iran, who have each established a presence in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean. Turkey's establishment of a military base on Suakin Island has especially affected relations between Egypt and Sudan. Egypt already reinforced its military base in Eritrea, which neighbors Sudan, with more troops. The article argues that Turkey will assume geopolitical supremacy by establishing this military base and will become an influential power in the Red Sea.

During the recent visit to the island, Turkish Minister of National Defense, Hulusi Akar, brought with him the Chief of General Staff and the President of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA). TIKA was founded in 1992 to implement Turkish foreign policy priorities in Turkic countries that have cultural and language ties to Turkey in Central Asia. However, in recent years it has expanded its work to restore Ottoman heritage in the Balkans and elsewhere. The presence of TIKA indicates Turkey may not only establishing a military base, but also engaged in restoring the island's Ottoman heritage, as the island was an Ottoman forward outpost in the Red Sea.

According to the article from *Anadolu Ajansı*, Saudi Arabia announced a new alliance with Jordan, Egypt, Djibouti, Somalia, and Sudan to curb the influence of Iran, Turkey, and Qatar in the Red Sea. Turkey has worked to expand its influence in the Horn of Africa since 2002. Turkish President Erdogan has made several trips to the region and has signed bilateral agreements with countries in the Horn of Africa, including Somalia and Sudan. As a result, Turkey has established a military base in Somalia and most recently Sudan has allocated Suakin island to Turkey to establish a military base. The article notes how Suakin Island is located right across from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and that ultimately, “Turkey's rapprochement with these regional countries and Qatar” as well as the establishment of the base on Suakin Island, “worry Saudi Arabia.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Gunduz)**



Suakin, Sudan, ruins of egypt national bank (2008).

Source: Bertramz [CC BY 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Suakin,national\\_bank.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Suakin,national_bank.jpg).

(continued)





## Continued: A Turkish Military Base in the Red Sea

**Source:** “Türkiye askeri üs kuruyor (Turkey to establish military base),” *Yeni Akit*, 13 November 2018. <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/turkiye-askeri-us-kuruyor-543984.html>

*The place where the TAF [Turkish Armed Forces] is establishing a base on Suakin Island [and] which was allocated to Turkey during President Erdoğan’s visit to Sudan was determined. During President Erdoğan’s visit to Sudan, it was determined that the TAF would establish a base on Suakin Island...*

*...While the TAF is expected to establish a naval base on the island, it will include land and air forces as well. Land forces will assume duties on the island with the support of Naval and Air Forces elements.*

*With the Suakin Base, Turkey will become a counterbalance in the axis of Egypt, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Iran from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean.*

*This move... will create a secure and peaceful sea route in the Gulf of Aden. While Turkey has become a force for ensuring peace and prosperity of the people in the region, [it] will assume geopolitical supremacy with a military base on Suakin Island.*

*Last week, the Minister of National Defense Hulusi Akar inspected the work in Suakin Island as part of his visits to Libya, Sudan and Somalia. Akar’s delegation included the Chief of General Staff Yaşar Güler, representatives from the Turkish Armed Forces and Foreign Ministry, and the TİKA [Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency] President Serdar Çam.*

**Source:** Dr. Necmettin Acar, “Kızıldenizde jeopolitik kamplaşma (Geopolitical alliances in Red Sea),” *Anadolu Ajansı*, 18 December 2018. <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz-haber/kizildenizde-jeopolitik-kamplasma/1342043>

*On 11 December [2018] international news agencies announced that Saudi Arabia formed a new alliance in the Red Sea region with five other countries (Jordan, Egypt, Djibouti, Somalia, and Sudan). Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir said this new alliance was formed to protect Saudi Arabia and its neighboring countries interests, to create synergy among regional countries to prevent outside influence to protect the stability of the region...*

*...the main objective of this alliance is to create a geopolitical supremacy favoring Saudi Arabia and to curtail Iran, Turkey and Qatar’s influence on the region...*

*...since the beginning of 2000s, the Red Sea region has become a region where Turkey, Iran, and Qatar have influence... [Therefore,] Saudi has decided to take measures against Turkey, Iran, and Qatar...*

*Turkey’s interest in the region has been in four areas including political, economic, social, and cultural... President Erdogan’s visits to 30 African countries since 2002 has played a role in establishing relations especially with countries in the Horn of Africa... The important gains from [building] these relations are Turkey opening a military base in Somalia and Sudan’s allocation of Suakin Island to Turkey. Suakin Island in terms of its location in the Red Sea is located across from the city Jeddah... Turkey’s rapprochement with these regional countries and Qatar and establishing a military base on Suakin Island worry Saudi Arabia...*

## THE MAD SCIENTIST LABORATORY BLOG

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## Security Challenges in the Black Sea

**OE Watch Commentary:** The Russian annexation of Crimea in March 2014 has impacted the balance of power in the Black Sea in Russia's favor as its coastal line along the Black Sea grew from almost 300 miles to nearly 750 miles. Russia plans to add 15 to 18 vessels to its Black Sea Fleet by 2020. The littoral states of the Black Sea (despite three out of six of them being NATO members, including Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania) have not been able to form a unified stance to counterbalance Russian ambitions in the Black Sea. The accompanying excerpted article from *Sigma Insight Turkey*, a website with an independent group of Turkish experts, provides a detailed account of the security challenges in the Black Sea and the threat that Russia poses.

The article outlines the following security challenges in the Black Sea. First, the authors believe that the Turkish government's status quo policy "proved to be untenable after Russian illegal annexation of Crimea." Second, the poor relations and dynamics "among the six littoral states complicates the emergence of a viable maritime security framework necessary to meet common challenges." For example, Russia decreased "Ukraine's share of growth in Black Sea shipments and is poised to challenge other littoral states by strengthening its competitiveness by military means." Bulgaria is worried a disruption to maritime trade routes will affect its imports and exports in the Black Sea, as it accounts for about 80 percent of its trade. Third, Russia's influence and intimidation impacts the behavior and relations among the littoral states. As Bulgaria worries about the increasing risk of disruption to trade routes, it has also been intimidated by Russia to refrain from joining any regional security organizations. The authors state that it is highly likely that Russia may "increase its influence over the Bosphorus and Dardanelles." Additionally, Russia "seeks to foster mistrust and division among Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey in order to preclude them from acting in concert or forging a strong NATO flank." While NATO's Black Sea littoral states lack well-defined contingency plans and well-equipped armed forces to counter Russian aggression, the authors point out how Turkey is the only country in the region with fully "developed anti-submarine warfare" capabilities. Therefore, as the article states, NATO "remains vulnerable" against Russian aggression in this region.

The article provides suggestions regarding how to address these security challenges in the Black Sea. First, NATO should make a "common security threat assessment" for the region to address the vulnerabilities of each country against Russia. Second, economic development that would increase the prosperity of the regional states will help shield them from Russian disinformation, political penetration and populist appeals. Finally, the authors note how the littoral states could learn from the experiences and cooperation of the Baltic States and Scandinavian countries to deter Russia from posing threats to the region. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gunduz)**

**Source:** Dr. Reyhan Sahin Allahverdi, Dr. Sibel Akova and Lect. Velida Kijevcanin Zimanjic, "Uncertainties and Weaknesses in International Security Around the Black Sea Region," *Sigma Insight Turkey*, 21 December 2018. <https://sigmatrkey.com/2018/12/21/uncertainties-and-weaknesses-in-international-security-around-the-black-sea-region/>

*...Six countries surrounding the Black Sea lack common agenda and that despite the fact that three out of six states namely, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey are NATO member states, while Georgia and Ukraine aspire to become NATO members in the future. The view in these countries regarding their major adversary Russia lacks cohesion, sharpness and understanding what needs to be done to deter aggressive Russia...*

*...Turkey's policy of status quo proved to be untenable after Russian illegal annexation of Crimea and a turn of Crimea into Fortress Russia because the balance of power in the Black Sea region has shifted in favour of Russia, although Turkey is not yet ready to admit this point.*

*...the poor state of relations among the six littoral states complicates the emergence of a viable maritime security framework necessary to meet common challenges... Russia has for instance reduced Ukraine's share of growth in Black Sea shipments and is poised to challenge other littoral states by strengthening its competitiveness by military means... The risk of disruption to maritime trade flows is growing, and the prospect that Russia will try to increase its influence over the Bosphorus and Dardanelles should not be underestimated.*

*...Russia also seeks to foster mistrust and division among Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey in order to preclude them from acting in concert or forging a strong NATO flank... Among NATO members in the Black Sea region only Turkey has fully developed anti-submarine warfare... the Black Sea eastern flank of NATO remains vulnerable to any potential attack from and by Russia and is not yet ready to defend itself...*

*A common security threat assessment is needed for NATO's Black Sea eastern flank... Economic development is crucial among NATO states in the Black Sea as this would help shield each society against Russia's disinformation, political penetration and populist appeals to sectors of society... Russia looking to exploit any opportunity to surprise five littoral states... perhaps five littoral states can learn a lesson or two from experience of the Baltic States and Scandinavian countries. For that they require unity, patience, understandings of each other shortcomings, and readiness to help each other as it was done in case of the Baltic States, when Scandinavian countries helped the latter and the Baltic States helped each other. Furthermore, Bulgaria and Turkey in particular should be ready to overcome painful historical legacies...*

**“...the Black Sea eastern flank of NATO remains vulnerable to any potential attack from and by Russia and is not yet ready to defend itself.”**





## Turkey to Stay in Afghanistan until 2021

**OE Watch Commentary:** On 25 December, the Turkish Parliament passed a motion to extend Turkey's presence within the NATO-led "Resolute Support Mission" in Afghanistan until 2021. The accompanying passages from Turkish sources discuss Turkey's role within this mission.

Resolute Support was launched on 1 January 2015, following the conclusion of the previous NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission at the end of 2014. Resolute Support's mission is to help Afghan security forces and institutions develop the capacity to defend Afghanistan and protect its people in a sustainable way. The mission comprises approximately 16,000 personnel from 41 NATO allies and partners.

As the passages note, Turkey currently has 469 personnel within Resolute Support. The passages discuss comments by Volkan Bozkır, the President of the Foreign Relations Commission within the Turkish Parliament. Bozkır notes that Turkey has spent over \$1.1 billion to support Afghanistan, and carried out over 1000 projects in every single province of Afghanistan. Bozkır also notes that, for the period of 2018-2020, Turkey has promised to provide \$20 million each year to Afghanistan, for a total of \$60 million for the three-year period. In addition to the support that Bozkır discusses, it should be added that the current Commander of the Hamid Karzai International Airport (or Kabul International Airport) is a Turkish Brigadier General. Bozkır also notes that the security situation in Afghanistan is still fragile and that attacks are continuing, calling on regional countries and the international community to continue their support until a sustainable foundation for peace and stability has been achieved.

Turkey and Afghanistan share a special relationship based on strong religious, historical and cultural ties, which date back to the founding of both countries. These ties made it easier for Turkey to play an active role in Afghanistan within ISAF from 2001 until the end of 2014. While Turkey did not participate in counterinsurgency or counterterrorist operations in ISAF, Turkish troops played important roles in ensuring security in their area of responsibility, providing logistical assistance to other international forces, training Afghan security personnel and contributing to capacity development. Turkey has also played an important role in training local police and military forces in Afghanistan. In addition, Turkish forces have run several Provincial Reconstruction Teams (called PRTs) in different parts of Afghanistan. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

**Source:** "TBMM'de Afganistan tezkeresi kabul edildi (Afghanistan motion accepted in the Turkish Grand National Assembly)," *CNNTurk.com*, 25 December 2018. <https://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/tbmmde-afganistan-tezkeresi-kabul-edildi>

*The Presidential motion to extend the period of duty for the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) units in Afghanistan has been accepted in the Turkish Grand National Assembly General Council. TAF will stay in Afghanistan for two more years.*

**Source:** "Türkiye, 2 Yıl Daha Afganistan'da Kalacak (Turkey will stay in Afghanistan for 2 More Years)," *Asya'nın Sesi (Voice of Asia)*, 26 December 2018. <https://asyaninsesi.com/turkiye-2-yil-daha-afganistanda-kalacak/>

*[Turkish Parliament Foreign Relations Commission President] Volkan Bozkır said that the progress in Afghanistan is still very fragile and noted that "Until the peace and stability in Afghanistan becomes sustainable, it is critical that the region's countries and the international community continues its support."...*

*Bozkır said that the total assistance that Turkey has provided to Afghanistan has surpassed \$1.1 billion dollars, noting that "Over 1000 projects have been carried out in every single province of Afghanistan."...*

*Bozkır noted that Turkey currently has 469 personnel in Afghanistan within the Resolute Support Mission, noting that "Despite all the efforts, the security situation in Afghanistan is fragile. Peace has not been achieved and attacks continue."*

*Bozkır noted that, "It was declared during the Warsaw Summit that our financial assistance [to Afghanistan] would be a total of \$60 million for the period of 2018-2020, to be paid in the form of \$20 million each year. The \$20 million promised for 2018 is being transferred in installments."*

*On the other hand, Bozkır noted that the Afghan parliamentary elections, which took place on 20 October 2018, were an important step. He reminded that if the upcoming Presidential elections to be held in Afghanistan in the spring of 2019 were successful, this would be another important step in establishing an environment conducive to political compromise."*



International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) logo (LEFT), Resolute Support Mission logo (RIGHT).  
Source: LEFT: North Atlantic Treaty Organization via Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ISAF-Logo.svg>, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Public Domain.  
RIGHT: Kopiersperre via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Resolute\\_Support.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Resolute_Support.svg), Public Domain.

**“The total assistance that Turkey has provided to Afghanistan has surpassed \$1.1 billion dollars... Over 1000 projects have been carried out in every single province of Afghanistan.”**



## IRGC: Iran Can Extend Ballistic Missile Range

**OE Watch Commentary:** In the accompanying excerpted article from *Mashregh News*, an outlet close to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the commander of the IRGC's aerospace force, addresses Iran's missile program against the backdrop of a broader speech about how the United States and Europe cannot be trusted. He praises Iran's go-it-alone attitude and argues that if Iranian authorities listen to or compromise with the West, the Islamic Republic would face terrorist movements and military threats within its own territory. That he singles out both the Pahlavi regime (overthrown in 1979) and alleged US support for separatist movements highlights growing concern about the increasing profile and popularity of Reza Pahlavi, son of the ousted shah, as well as recent attacks in Iranian Kurdistan, Khuzestan, and Balochistan.

In the same speech, Hajizadeh acknowledges that sanctions and military embargoes had caused Iran difficulty, but said that indigenous defense industries (many of which the IRGC controls) had overcome such difficulties and enabled Iran to develop cutting-edge military technology.

Iran's continued development of ballistic missiles remains a diplomatic bone of contention between Tehran and many Western states. In the article, Hajizadeh urges his followers not to worry about the 2,000 kilometer limit to Iran's ballistic missile range, assuring them that such a limit is self-imposed and the result of a political decision, and that Iran has the technology to exceed that. Indeed, Iran has increasingly launched satellites utilizing the same rocket technology that could be used for longer range missiles. This creates a situation where Iran seeks diplomatic benefit from limiting its range, while pursuing the technology and means to extend its missiles' reach at will.

Beyond discussion of the longest range missiles, Hajizadeh brags about Iran's medium-range arsenal. Though he does not say as much outright, the 300-400 kilometer range missiles would be capable of hitting almost any US military facility in the Persian Gulf region, while the 700 – 800 kilometer range missiles could target Iranian adversaries in Saudi Arabia or Afghanistan. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

*“We have no technical or contractual limitations on the range of missiles.”*

**Source:** “Europa va Amrika Tigheha-ye Yek Qichi baraye Fishar beh Iran Hastand (Europe and America are twin blades of a scissors to pressure Iran),” *Mashregh News*, 10 December 2018. <https://www.mashreghnews.ir/news/918359>

*General [Amir Ali] Hajizadeh said that Iran's jihadist and revolutionary outlook has solved many problems from the beginning of the revolution to the present, including confrontation with the separatist groups and the Holy Defense [Iran-Iraq War]...*

*He added: “One of our fundamental problems is the economic and military boycott, but today we have missiles and UAVs and a variety of equipment, and this is due to self-sufficiency, pursuit of a revolutionary outlook, and to be at the forefront of revolutionary people in this area....”*

*The commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Air Force Corps noted the range of ballistic missiles, and added: “We have the ability to build missiles with taller fins.” The 2000-kilometer range is not limited by technical restraints, but what [the 2,000 km range] we have decided on to date is based on our needs. Many enemy bases are between 300-400 km and the next step is 700-800 km. We have no technical or contractual limitations on the range of missiles.*



Iran's Khorramshahr missile with a range of 1200 miles.

Source: Hossein Zohrevand, Tasnim News Agency via Wikimedia Commons, CCA 4.0. <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/media/1396/06/31/1526662>.

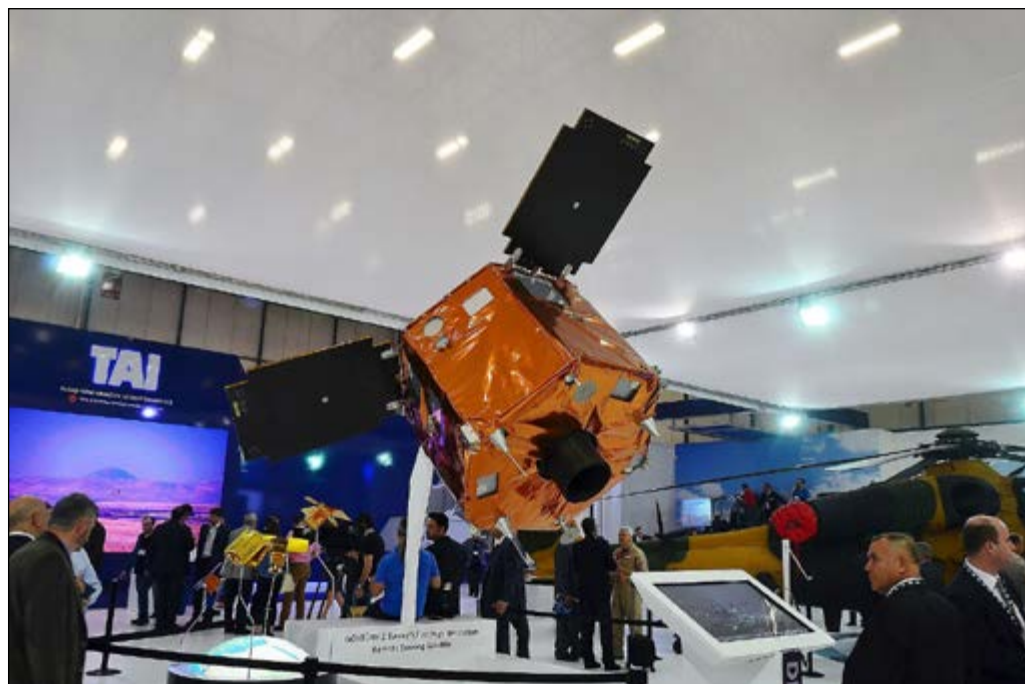


## Turkey to Create Space Agency

**OE Watch Commentary:** On 13 December 2018 Turkey announced the creation of a space agency after a 20 year delay. The agency will coordinate space activities and strengthen the Turkish aerospace industry. The accompanying excerpted article from the state-owned *Anadolu Ajansı* provides information about the objectives Turkey aims to achieve by creating a space agency. According to the article, there are a number of reasons why Turkey created this agency now. First, one mission of the agency is to provide support and strengthen the Turkish aerospace industry. The second is to boost Turkish capabilities in space technology by improving and capitalizing on the scientific infrastructure and creating human capital. Third, a national space agency, with increased Turkish space technology capabilities, will lead to independent access to space. Finally, it aims to coordinate with other scientific and technological fields and institutions to create an independent Turkish aerospace policy.

The article also argues that aerospace requires collaboration between various fields and sectors such as civilian and military

and public and private. Space technology is not completely new to Turkish public and private sectors. The Turkish Air Force Command operates two satellite systems for reconnaissance and surveillance. Göktürk 2, Turkey's first high-resolution electro-optical satellite was a joint venture of the Turkish Aerospace Industries and TUBITAK Space and was launched into orbit in 2012. Göktürk 1, a military reconnaissance and observation satellite, was developed by the Italian Telespazio and French partner Thales Alenia Space and put into orbit in 2016. The development of Göktürk 3 is underway. Turkey also has communication satellites, including Türksat 1B (launched in 1994), Türksat 1C and Türksat 2A (launched in 1996 and in 2001 respectively), Türksat 3A (in 2008), as well as Türksat 4A (in 2014) and Türksat 4B (in 2015). The communication satellites Türksat 5A and Türksat 5B are planned to be launched in 2020 and 2021 respectively. The author concludes the article by stating that creating and maintaining a space agency is a "matter of national security" for Turkey. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gunduz)**



Reconnaissance and surveillance satellite Göktürk 2 (model) of Air Force Command by Turkish Aerospace Industries at IDEF 2015.

Source: CeeGee [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:TaiIDF2015\\_\(8\).JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:TaiIDF2015_(8).JPG).

*“...the most important functions of space agencies are to create a national space strategy and to create a science and technology policy towards space.”*

**Source:** Arda Mevlütoğlu, “Uzay Ajansı ve Türkiye’nin uzay teknolojilerindeki yeri (Space Agency and Turkey’s place in space technologies),” *Anadolu Ajansı*, 26 December 2018. <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz-haber/uzay-ajansi-ve-turkiye-nin-uzay-teknolojilerindeki-yeri/1349127>

*The Turkey Space Agency (TUA) was established on December 13 by Presidential decree... The establishment of the TUA has been followed for a long time by those who are interested in the field and the aerospace industry sector.*

*The TUA will have financial and administrative autonomy as well as a special budget...The TUA will prepare and carry out the National Space Program...*

*The necessity and importance of Space Agency*

*...First of all...the most important functions of space agencies are to create a national space strategy and to create a science and technology policy towards space. Aerospace is a sector in which the most advanced technologies are being used and it brings in many different disciplines by nature...*

*...the vast majority of systems, platforms and applications developed for space are combined together by different users. In other words, military and civilian areas of usage are mostly intertwined... In this sense, the national space agency has the function of a coordination mechanism between military, commercial, industrial, public and academic stakeholders.*

*It is a matter of national security to ensure that the activities of all the elements in the military, commercial or other areas of space are provided in an uninterrupted and secure manner. Therefore, the space agency is of critical importance for the pre-determination, analysis and preparation of emergency action plans, for managing and ultimately disposing of all kinds of natural or man-made threats and risks...*





## Iran's Army Aviation Gets UAV Unit

**OE Watch Commentary:** The Islamic Republic of Iran prides itself on its indigenous military industries which, in recent years, have invested greatly in shipbuilding, ballistic missiles, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). In the accompanying excerpted article from Iran's official state news agency, *IRNA*, Brigadier General Yousef Ghorbani, the head of the regular army's aviation unit, talks about starting up an army aviation UAV unit. Such an announcement suggests the advances in Iran's UAV program are real and that UAVs are well-integrated into Iranian military doctrine. Ghorbani speaks about five categories of Iranian UAVs: electronic warfare, assault, transport, surveillance, and suicide.

That the regular military will soon have a UAV unit is important to note. After all, the Islamic Republic has parallel militaries—the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the regular military (sometimes called *Artesh*, the Persian word for army). The IRGC is the more elite of the two. Its job is to defend the revolution, meaning enemies can be domestic or foreign, while the regular military is charged with territorial defense and securing Iran's borders. The IRGC always has the first crack at cutting-edge technologies and new military platforms, while the regular military usually takes second fiddle. If the regular military is now integrating a UAV unit, that suggests both that the IRGC already has enough and that all Iranian strategists welcome the qualitative importance UAVs can bring to the nation's defense.

That the article mentions that UAVs now continuously monitor Iran's western border also signals the increasing difficulty Iran may have securing its border with Iraq, especially given the Kurdish insurgency and Arab unrest it faces across that frontier. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

**Source:** “Guruh-e Pehpad-e Havaniruz Tashkil Mishavad (An UAV unit for the Islamic Republic of Iran Army Aviation is formed),” *Islamic Republic News Agency*, 17 December 2018. <http://www.irna.ir/fa/News/83137088>

*Brigadier General Yousef Ghorbani stated in an interview with the IRNA defense correspondent, with regard to the issue of the formation of a drone unit, the formation of a drone group for Army Aviation is on the agenda and it will soon be formed. He added, “Army Aviation had earlier conducted reconnaissance operations with helicopters, but today we will begin to transition to UAVs in this arena.*

*The commander of Army Aviation said, the military had previously used drones for “some missions.” According to IRNA, the Islamic Republic of Iran Army Ground Forces has one of the most powerful UAVs in the area and, so far, it has exhibited various UAV types like electronic warfare, assault, transport, surveillance, and suicide. Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari, commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army Ground Forces, gave an interview with IRNA a while back [on 12 October 2018] in which he stated that this year, a new drone would be revealed, and he said, the new drone would carry out missions with new flight links. According to local army commanders, the Ground Forces are continuously monitoring the Western borders of this country with UAVs.*

*In another part of the conversation, Gen. Ghorbani, commander of the Army's air force, said Iran had great self-sufficiency in the manufacture of helicopter parts, and he said, “We use indigenous parts to maintain our helicopters and for our weapons, and in this context, not even the smallest part is manufactured abroad, and this military organization maintains the massive fleet of the Islamic Republic's helicopters....*







## Turkey to Sell ATAK Helicopters to the Philippines

**OE Watch Commentary:** Turkey and the Philippines signed an agreement extending the Turkish defense industry's reach into South East Asia. A memorandum of understanding was signed by Ismail Demir, the head of Turkey's Defense Industries Presidency (SSB), and Delfin Lorenzana, the Defense Secretary of the Philippines on 18 December 2018. The accompanying excerpted article from the Turkish newspaper *Haber Turk* argues that this agreement will pave the way to more defense cooperation between Turkey and the Philippines.

The article notes that at the signing ceremony, Demir said Turkey currently sells firearms, ammunition and night-vision systems to the Philippines and that this memorandum puts the sales of the Turkish Aerospace Industries' (TAI) T-129 ATAK combat helicopter as well as unmanned aircraft (possibly TAI's Anka) on the agenda. The Philippine Air Force was initially going to purchase 24 T-129 ATAK helicopters, but due to the lack of funds, the number was reduced to eight for now.

Turkey previously signed an agreement with Pakistan for the sale of 30 T-129 ATAK combat helicopters (see: "Turkey to Sell T-129 Helicopters and Four Corvettes to Pakistan" *OE Watch*, September 2018). The agreement with Pakistan has been postponed for six months because of issues surrounding the engine license. Exporting T-129 ATAK helicopters is subjected to the permission of the United States because of the rights over the use of LHTEC T800-4A turboshaft engine and Turkish officials are now reportedly in search of T-129 ATAK helicopter engines in Europe and China. While Turkey continues to increase its defense exports and to strengthen its position through diversifying industrial collaboration efforts with more countries, it still heavily relies on the industry's leading countries for critical parts of military hardware. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gunduz)**

*"Turkey and the Philippines have signed a Memorandum of Understanding in defense industry cooperation...Turkey's ATAK helicopter's new address will be in the Philippines..."*

**Source:** "Atak helikopterine Filipinler yolu açıldı (A way opens for ATAK helicopters to the Philippines)," *Haber Turk*, 18 December 2018. <https://www.haberturk.com/atak-helikopterine-filipinler-yolu-acildi-2265016-ekonomi>

*Turkey and the Philippines have signed a Memorandum of Understanding in defense industry cooperation...Turkey's ATAK helicopter's new address will be in the Philippines...*

*The deal was signed by Ismail Demir, the head of Turkey's Defense Industries Presidency (SSB), and Delfin Lorenzana, the Defense Secretary of the Philippines.*

*Demir said [Turkey] is currently selling guns, ammo and night-vision glasses to the Philippines, Turkey now has its indigenous ATAK battle helicopter, unmanned aircraft and vessels on its agenda to sell to the Philippines...*

*Demir [continued] cooperation in technology and local talent development are key to the bilateral relations with the Philippines...*

*Demir pointed out to Turkey's experience in these matters [and] said "Our defense industry policies are attractive because these countries want to know the models Turkey is implementing and they wonder how Turkey has achieved this up until now."*

*The Philippines at first will purchase about 10 [helicopters]. There is a possibility of [purchasing] more than 10.*

*TAI previously signed an agreement with Pakistan for the sale of 30 ATAK helicopters.*



Turkish Land Forces T-129 ATAK attack helicopter of Turkish Aerospace Industries at IDEF 2015.

Source: CeeGee [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tai1DEF2015\\_\(111\).JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tai1DEF2015_(111).JPG).





## Chinese Military and Commercial Cooperation with Tunisia

**OE Watch Commentary:** Chinese investments in Tunisia appear to be on the rise, particularly after the Tunisian government signed up for China's One Belt One Road Initiative in July 2018. Furthermore, the Chinese military is looking to deepen relations with its Tunisian counterpart in the next year, as detailed in the accompanying passages from local media sources.

In the spring of 2018, the Tunisian government put out a tender for bids to extract phosphate ore from the Sra Ouertane deposits, located in the country's economically depressed central province of El Kef. As noted in the first accompanying passage, from Tunisia's official press agency, the sole offer came from China. The government appears intent on opening the mine to generate valuable employment and revenue opportunities, though environmental and profitability concerns may yet prevent the project from going forward.

A more ambitious Chinese investment proposal, detailed in the second accompanying excerpt from *Sputnik*, involves Tunisia's Mediterranean port city of Zarzis (Jarjis), located in the southern province of Medenine near the border with Libya. A September 2018 Memorandum of Understanding calls for Chinese investment to expand the city's existing industrial zone, along with the construction of a 2.5-kilometer bridge connecting it to the nearby island of Djerba and a 140-kilometer railway connecting it to the main land route linking Tunisia and Libya. These projects, according to a Tunisian minister, would "change the face" of southern Tunisia.

China is also strengthening its linkages with Tunisia's military. The third accompanying excerpt, from a 31 December 2018 Tunisian Defense Ministry press release, notes that China recently pledged to provide Tunisia with unspecified military equipment, "according to the needs of the military." Military collaboration between the two is expected to grow in 2019, with a newly established "joint Tunisian-Chinese military committee" to be the main vehicle for this cooperation. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**



Tunisia Administrative Map.

Source: User:(WT-shared) Burmesedays, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection Tunisia Maps, OpenStreetMap [CC BY 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tunisia\\_Regions\\_map.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tunisia_Regions_map.png).

*“...the creation of a joint Tunisian-Chinese military committee, which will hold its first round in China in 2019, and which will represent a good framework for supporting this cooperation.”*

### Source:

من أكبر المناجم في العالم : تونس تتلقى عرضا وحيدا من الصين لاستغلال منجم سراوورتان بالكاف  
“One of the largest deposits in the world: Tunisia receives a single bid from China to mine the Sra Ouertane deposit in El Kef,” *Agence Tunis Afrique Presse* via *Jawhara FM*, 27 December 2018. <https://goo.gl/KYY3Eg>

*The only bid for exploiting the Sra Ouertane Phosphate mine, in the south of El Kef Province, is currently being studied. It was made by China and aims at extracting the surface phosphate ore deposits, which according to initial estimates total 10 billion tons, making it one of the largest deposits in the world and which can be mined for many consecutive decades.*

### Source:

وقعت الحكومة التونسية والصين على اتفاقيات لتنفيذ مشاريع بنى تحتية وإنشاء منطقة صناعية جنوبي تونس  
“Tunisian and Chinese governments sign agreement on infrastructure and industrial zone projects in southern Tunisia,” *Sputnik*, 5 September 2018. <https://goo.gl/UdpPqM>

*In press statements, the Tunisian minister of state and real estate affairs said that these projects will change the face of the south and benefit all of Tunisia. “China and Tunisia have been quietly working on these intended projects for two years. Other similar projects are being worked on in the center and northwest areas”... this China-Tunisia agreement aims to build a close partnership, especially given Tunisia's joining the One Belt One Road Initiative in July 2018. These projects are particularly important given their proximity to the Tunisia-Libya border along the Mediterranean Sea, which will contribute to strengthening trade and economic flows between the countries, provided the situation stabilizes in Libya.*

### Source:

إمضاء اتفاقية هبة صينية لفائدة المؤسسة العسكرية  
“Agreement signed for Chinese gift to the military,” *National Defense Ministry Press Office*, 31 December 2018. <http://www.press.defense.tn/?p=1256>

*During the meeting between Tunisian Defense Minister Abdel Karim al-Zubaidi and Chinese Ambassador Wang Wenbin at the defense ministry headquarters this afternoon, an agreement was signed for China to donate equipment to Tunisia, according to the needs of the military. The defense minister praised Chinese support for Tunisia in all domains, including military cooperation, which has in recent years grown and which the military has used to improve its capabilities. He noted that the creation of a joint Tunisian-Chinese military committee, which will hold its first round in China in 2019, and which will represent a good framework for supporting this cooperation.*





## Anger in Sudan: Large Protests Against al-Bashir Regime

**OE Watch Commentary:** There is anger in Sudan fueling a demand for change in the government, and as the accompanying excerpted article from *Deutsche Welle* explains, that anger is not because the price of bread tripled, but rather it is a response to the rule of President Omar al-Bashir. President al-Bashir came to power in a 1989 military coup and has stayed in office through three allegedly corrupt elections; however, he continues to insist that these incidents of people taking to the streets are “bread protests” orchestrated by opposition infiltrators, including some backed by Israel, and all of whom want to overthrow his regime.

The president and his security forces are responding forcefully, using tear gas, stun grenades and even shooting protesters. Those who survive regroup and return to launch new protests. Meanwhile, he is arresting opposition leaders. A group of Darfuri University students also were rounded up; accused of launching an arson attack on offices of al-Bashir’s ruling National Congress, they later “confessed” on national television to being a sabotage cell. The quotation marks around confessed were in the original article, reflecting the regime’s abysmal human rights record. Al-Bashir was even indicted by the International Criminal Court, which stated he bore responsibility for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes committed in Darfur.

This is not the first time the people have protested, nor is it the first time the protesters were met with violence. In 2013, 300 of them were shot dead. While previous protests ended with the regime still firmly in place, at least some say this time they are not going to give up. Although time will eventually tell if that is indeed the case, the article cites the fact that these are the largest protests since Sudan’s 1964 October Revolution, which returned the country to civilian rule.

As the article explains, there is some disagreement as to whether or not this movement can be considered part of, or similar to, the Arab Spring. Indeed the chant of some of the Sudanese, “The people want to bring down the regime,” was used by protesters during the Arab Spring. However, the argument against it being an Arab Spring is that unlike the 2010 revolution which spread throughout parts of North Africa and the Middle East, this is a homegrown and spontaneous uprising. The idea of whether or not this uprising is an Arab Spring is open to debate; however, not open to debate, as detailed in the article, is the anger of the people against the regime. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

*“The protest wave sweeping across Sudan was never about bread; it is a nation fed up with a decades-old military dictatorship, say human rights activists and experts.”*



“Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir is facing massive protests against his regime.”  
Source: Meeting with President of Sudan Omar al-Bashir (2018), <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57998>, CC 4.0.

**Source:** Benita van Eyssen, “Anger over dictatorship, not bread, fueling Sudan uprising,” *Deutsche Welle*, 29 December 2018. <https://www.dw.com/en/anger-over-dictatorship-not-bread-fueling-sudan-uprising/a-46894036>

*The protest wave sweeping across Sudan was never about bread; it is a nation fed up with a decades-old military dictatorship, say human rights activists and experts.*

*“There is something novel and interesting about this wave of protests: The didn’t start in Khartoum but in provincial towns because the price of bread tripled in these towns, as compared to the capital,” says Magdi El Gizouli, a Sudanese academic and fellow of the Rift Valley Institute in Germany.*

*“One reason for them to be particularly angry is that this comes against the background of severe economic deterioration in the country.”*

*It is definitely time for Al Bashir to step down, according to El Gizouli. “It has been time for some years already. He is not out of government, of course, but I think Sudan has gone beyond him. He is almost a relic of another era.*



## Africa: Trouble Spots to Watch in 2019

**OE Watch Commentary:** With parts of Africa bracing for potentially significant violence in 2019, the accompanying excerpted article from *The East African* provides the perspective of an actual African publication as to where the continent's trouble spots might be, in contrast to perspectives from numerous non-African sources. While different African journalists may or may not include some of the six nations listed here, the article presents strong evidence as to why each one was chosen. Below are brief descriptions of the six.

Nigeria, as the article describes, is a front-runner for potential violence as the country goes to the polls in February to possibly replace President Buhari, who at 75 is in ill-health but remains in the race. Meanwhile, delays in funding for the electoral commission and security agencies are hindering election preparations. Major issues facing the country include corruption, unemployment, and nepotistic political appointments, while previous bouts of political violence, such as attacks on minorities following the 2011 elections, have people nervous that such acts could be repeated.

Elections are an issue in Comoros as well. President Azali Assoumani's forced referendum overturning an agreement that provides for the presidency to be rotated among the three islands has led to the deterioration of the political environment.

Sudan also comes up as a trouble spot. Since mid-December, people have taken to the streets to both protest high food prices and to pressure Omar al-Bashir, who has been President for 30 years, to step down. There are concerns that Bashir could ratchet up the repression even more.

South Sudan, the world's newest nation, saw a peace treaty signed in 2018 by some of the warring parties. While there has been a decline in fighting, there are worries that difficulties in implementing the agreement could see violence flare once more.

In Somalia the central government has reached an impasse with the regional ones, making political progress and stability uncertain. Meanwhile, the battle against al-Shabaab continues.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo also makes the list as election results are taking longer than expected. Additionally, militia groups have threatened to resist any government should the results suggest the outcome was rigged in favor of Emmanuel Ramazani Shady.

Some may disagree with the inclusions and omissions on this list from a major African news outlet. However, in declaring what potential trouble spots there are on its own continent, this article provides an African perspective as to what to pay particular attention to in 2019. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

*“A number of African countries have been mapped as possible trouble spots on which the African Union and the United Nations should keep a close watch this year, either due to elections or internal conflict.”*



With concerns that South Sudan, one of the trouble spots mentioned in the accompanying excerpted article, could have trouble implementing its 2018 peace treaty, soldiers assigned to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), such as these from the UK, will still be present in 2019.

Source: Isaac Billy/UNMISS/Flickr, <https://goo.gl/Yx2phs>, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

**Source:** Fred Oluoch, “Africa’s top trouble spots in 2019 mapped,” *The East African*, 6 January 2019. <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Africa-top-trouble-spots-in-2019-mapped/4552908-4923110-2sit6rz/index.html>

*A number of African countries have been mapped as possible trouble spots on which the African Union and the United Nations should keep a close watch this year, either due to elections or internal conflict.*

*President Assouman [of Comoros] is planning to call early elections this year, which could help him remain in power beyond 2021, when he was supposed to exit...He has forced some opposition leaders into exile.*

*But the deal [in South Sudan] is a work in progress and worrying, because it envisages elections in 2022, perpetuating the Kiir-Machar rivalry until then, paving the way for another showdown.*





## Can Businessmen Bring Peace in Gao, Mali?

**OE Watch Commentary:** On 9 December the Bamako, Mali-based French-language publication *Nord Sud Journal* published the accompanying excerpted article about men in Gao who are attempting to use mutual business interests and their status as “notables” as a way to reconcile the existing conflicts in the city. According to the article, the owner of a transport company called Sonef Group led an initiative that brought together the leader of an Arab militant movement called Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA) and a Tuareg militant movement called Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) for three days starting in late November. While no specifics were mentioned about the deal they reached in the article, it did state they agreed to set up a consultation framework that focuses on sustainable economic development. There are also notables brought in from the Songhay community that have become part of the framework.

The article indicates that a final agreement to settle all the issues between the different communities has not yet been made, nor have all of the youths who have left home to fight returned. However, at least among the business representatives and notables there is newfound optimism. It is therefore worthy of mention that the article does not point to any role from either the Malian government or international organizations in this effort: only members of the business community and respected elders representing their ethnic groups were involved. This reflects the sometimes overlooked power of grassroots bottom-up initiatives compared to a top-down approach when engaging in peacemaking.

Thus far, this reconciliation process exists only in Gao and therefore it has not yet proven to be transferable to other cities. Nevertheless, by setting up an office, they now have a forum to convene for future meetings. Gao was occupied by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in 2012 and has not seen peace since then, even though AQIM has largely been pushed out of the city. Now, apparently the city has new prospects for a thaw in violence. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

*“Everyone is in this union for peace, reconciliation, for economic and social development.”*

**Source:** “Gao: la paix des braves entre Hanoun et Ould Laweinate (Gao: the brave peace between Hanoun and Ould Laweinate),” *Nord Sud Journal*, 9 December 2018. <https://www.nordsudjournal.com/gao-la-paix-des-braves-entre-hanoun-et-ould-laweinate/>

*The leaders of the Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA) Hanoun Ould Ali and Mohamed Ould Laweinate engaged in a reconciliation earlier this month at a meeting in Tinfanda, Gao region. From 30 November to 2 December, a community meeting was held in Tinfanda, 110 kilometers north of Gao, in which Hanoun Ould Ali, leader of the MAA, and Mohamed Ould Laweinate, the leader affiliated with the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), reconciled. This reconciliation, which was initiated by the entrepreneur Nema Ould Sidi Amar, owner of the Sonef Group, put an end to several years of war.*

*During this meeting, an office bringing together Arab leaders from the region was also set up before being presented to the Gao Consultation Framework, which brings together the city’s notables. “Today, there is no problem. Everyone is in this union for peace, reconciliation, for economic and social development. That’s why we, Hanoun Mohamed Ould Aweinate and Mohamed Ould Idriss, have set up an office that we presented to the Gao Consultation Framework.” they said.*



Eleveurs Peuls.

Source: KaTeznik [CC BY-SA 2.0 fr (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/fr/deed.en>)], from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eleveurs\\_Peuls.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eleveurs_Peuls.jpg).





## Chinese Weapons in Rwanda

**OE Watch Commentary:** While Rwanda has sourced much of its military equipment from a variety of countries, including Russia, France, South Africa, the United States, and Israel, as the accompanying excerpted article from the South African website *DefenceWeb* relates, the country's armed forces are increasingly turning to China for military hardware. The latest items, including Red Arrow 9A anti-tank missiles and at least one PCL-09 self-propelled howitzer, were first displayed on 11 December 2018 at Rwanda's annual combined arms exercise, labeled Hard Punch III, that took place at the Gabiro Combat Training Center.

The PCL-09, built by Poly Technologies, mounts a Soviet D-30 122 mm howitzer on a Shaanxi 6x6 truck. Only a single PCL-09 (export designation CS/SH1, not to be confused with the Norinco SH1 155 mm self-propelled artillery system) was seen at the exercise and while the article does not mention if Rwanda purchased others, it does say that alongside it was an SH3 122 mm tracked self-propelled howitzer. The SH3 122 mm is built by China and was first seen in Rwanda during the 2017 iteration of the exercise.

Also making an appearance at Hard Punch III was an Otokar Cobra armored vehicle. Fitted to the Cobra were Red Arrow 9A (HJ-9A) anti-tank missiles. According to the article, the Red Arrow 9A has a range of 5,500 meters and carries a high explosive anti-tank warhead able to penetrate 1200 mm of armor. Additionally, the article relates that Rwanda might be the first export user for this type of missile, which is already in service with the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

Several other pieces of Chinese military hardware in use by the Rwandan military were also mentioned in the article. While there is some uncertainty as to exactly what artillery platforms China has previously exported to Rwanda, there is no uncertainty that China continues to be a big supplier to this small country. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

*“Rwanda’s military is now operating Chinese PCL-09 self-propelled howitzers and Red Arrow 9A anti-tank missiles.”*

**Source:** “Rwanda unveils new Chinese weaponry,” *DefenceWeb*, 14 December 2018. <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/land/land-land/rwanda-unveils-new-chinese-weaponry/>

*Rwanda’s military is now operating Chinese PCL-09 self-propelled howitzers and Red Arrow 9A anti-tank missiles.*

*The CS/SH1 can fire projectiles out to a range of around 27 km with a rate of fire of eight rounds per minute. A total of 40 rounds are carried. The vehicle can be fitted with a 12.7 mm machinegun on the crew cabin for self-protection – the cab has seating for five persons. The vehicle weights around 16 500 kg and can reach a top speed of 85 km/h with a range of 600 km.*

*The Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) also operate 2S1 self-propelled howitzers armed with 122 mm D-30-derived guns.*



“Rwandan soldiers during a deployment in 2014. Increasingly the Rwandan military is purchasing Chinese weapons.”

Source: Rwanda Government/Flickr, <https://goo.gl/EVKYot>, CC BY-ND 2.0.





# Political Uncertainty Persists Following Coup Attempt in Gabon

**OE Watch Commentary:** The attempted coup in Gabon by a small group of soldiers on 7 January 2019 was swiftly brought to an end. Lieutenant Ondo Obiang Kelly, deputy commander of the Republican Guard and the self-declared head of the Patriotic Youth Movement of the Gabonese Defense and Security Forces, was the last of five perpetrators arrested, with two others having been killed by government forces. Although the coup attempt is over, as the accompanying excerpted article from the *East African* relates, many Gabonese are still wondering who is in charge as President Ali Bongo has been out of the country since suffering a stroke in October while visiting Saudi Arabia. He later went to Morocco where his New Year's Eve speech, characterized by slurred words and a squint, has raised even more questions about his health and possible return to power. Meanwhile, complicating matters back in Gabon is the fact that there is no Prime Minister, a position appointed by the head of state.

Having such political uncertainty in Gabon is rare. For nearly 42 years the country was ruled by Omar Bongo, the current president's father. When Omar Bongo died in 2009, his son won the election, and has ruled the country since. Thus, except for the country's first president, who ruled for seven years, and two interim presidents who served during the time between the death of the father and the election of his son, the country has been ruled by a member of the Bongo family.

As the article describes, life in Gabon quickly returned to normal following the failed attempt to grab power, with shops reopening, the roads reopened to traffic, and the internet restored, which had been cut off. While the impact of the attempted coup faded, the concern of who is running the country, which dates back before the coup to when Bongo had a stroke, has not. One opposition newspaper described the situation in November as Gabon dangerously being on automatic pilot. The opposition even tried to have the Constitutional Court declare a power vacuum, but instead the court president announced a new clause in the law to clarify the situation.

The message from the authorities following the coup attempt is that Gabon is doing fine and that Bongo will soon return; however, as the coup demonstrated and the article describes, there is uncertainty with regards to the country's political situation. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

**Source:** "Gabon coup bid highlights country in grip of uncertainty," *The East African*, 8 January 2019. <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/africa/Gabon-coup-bid-highlights-country-in-grip-of-uncertainty/4552902-4926542-10302b8/index.html>

*The brief attempt on power has prompted many to ponder the flux gripping a country where political change has been negligible for more than half a century.*

*In his lengthening absence, a small group of soldiers stormed the state broadcasting headquarters in the capital on Monday and went on the air urging the Gabonese people to "rise up."*

*The coup attempt turned out to be short lived. Security forces attacked the building and arrested the leader, killed two and freed radio technicians and journalists who had been held hostage.*

*In a country based on an executive president, Bongo's absence has been felt in many ways, from institutional fog to press speculation of tensions between Bongo's cabinet director, Brice Laccruche Alihanga, and the head of the intelligence services, Frederic Bongo.*

*"The brief attempt on power has prompted many to ponder the flux gripping a country where political change has been negligible for more than half a century."*



Gabon in Africa (TOP), Topographic map of Gabon (BOTTOM).

Source: TOP: TUBS [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) or GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>)], from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gabon\\_in\\_Africa.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gabon_in_Africa.svg).  
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## Will Cameroon Grant Clemency to Anglophone Separatists?

**OE Watch Commentary:** Since the start of the Ambazonia crisis in Cameroon in 2017, Anglophone speakers have protested against perceived favoritism towards French speakers in the country. This has led to rising levels of organized violence between the state and the separatists. The accompanying excerpted French-language article from *La Afrique Tribune* discusses a possible measure of leniency from the government towards the arrested separatist leaders, which would represent a change from the government's generally harsh stance towards the separatists and could lead to a possible resolution to the crisis.

According to the article, the legal proceedings of 289 separatists are soon to take place and 210 separatists have already been released by a military court. The article notes these releases have been the result of presidential clemency that was expedited before the Christmas holiday. However, the article notes that the leader of the separatists, Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe, who declared himself to be the president of Ambazonia, has not been mentioned as part of the clemency program. He was arrested in Nigeria in 2017, along with his declared ministers, and extradited to Cameroon.

The article states that releasing Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe could lead to an opening for peace negotiations with the separatists. However, according to the article, his applications for release have been consistently turned down. The article also quotes the director of a human rights group who supports his release from prison for the purpose of reconciliation, but also suggests that it would be an unprecedented gesture before the new year. Although Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe was not released from prison during the holiday season and still stands trial, the article expresses optimism that there can be a non-violent resolution to the Ambazonia crisis if the government takes conciliatory measures towards the separatists, including beginning dialogue with the imprisoned leaders.

**End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

*“A gesture for the new year could pave the way for a dialogue and be the element that would undo this crisis that has claimed many lives.”*



Southern cameroon map.

Source: CIA World Factbook, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Southern\\_cameroon\\_map.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Southern_cameroon_map.JPG), Public Domain.

**Source:** “Grâce présidentielle pour le “président autoproclamé” de l’Ambazonie? (Presidential pardon for the “self-proclaimed president” of Ambazonia?),” *La Afrique Tribune*, 16 December 2018. <https://afrique.latribune.fr/politique/2018-12-16/cameroun-grace-presidentielle-pour-le-president-autoproclame-de-l-ambazonie-801265.html>

*The presidential clemency is a gesture of appeasement but does not affect the self-proclaimed “president” of Ambazonia. Since the special hearing under the Presidential Ordinance, releases have increased. This is an early Christmas present that is interpreted as at least a gesture of clemency. But this “grace” has not benefited leaders of the movement including Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe, leader of the Southern Cameroon National Congress (SCNC), the radical branch of the Liberation Movement of Southern Cameroon (LMSC), who proclaimed himself “president” of Ambazonia.*

*Arrested in January 2017 in Nigeria with 46 of his “ministers”, he was extradited to Cameroon and then jailed at Kondengui Central Prison in Yaoundé. Several times postponed, his trial is still before the court, which has refused all his applications for provisional release or final release. Some separatists believe that his release could perhaps allow a resolution of the crisis that has erupted in the two English-speaking regions of Cameroon. One might be surprised to think of a presidential pardon for the separatist leaders as a gift during the end-of-year speech of Paul Biya. A gesture for the new year could pave the way for a dialogue and be the element that would undo this crisis that has claimed many lives.*





## Kenya Now Has a Coast Guard

**OE Watch Commentary:** Although it has had a navy for decades, Kenya never had a coast guard, that is, until now. As reported in the accompanying excerpted article from *DefenceWeb*, on 19 November 2018 at the Liwatoni Fisheries Complex in Mombasa, President Uhuru Kenyatta launched the Kenya Coast Guard. It is perhaps most fitting that the ceremony was held at the fisheries complex, because combating the estimated \$100 million per year illegal fishing trade will be one of its main objectives.

The Coast Guard will be comprised of personnel from the police, army and intelligence services and civilian professionals seconded from the Public Service Commission, although the article does not describe its relationship to the country's other military branches or how it will coordinate its activities with the navy. Heading up this newly formed service is Brigadier Victor Naisho Loonena.

During the inauguration ceremony, President Kenyatta also commissioned the Coast Guard's first vessel, the *MV Doria*. The ship, which had been ordered by Denmark's JGH Marine on Kenya's behalf, was handed over to Kenya by Bangladeshi shipbuilder Western Marine Shipyard. Armed with a single 20 mm Oerlikon cannon, the *MV Doria* is reportedly 54.7 meters long and when empty displaces 350 tons. It has a cruising speed of 20 to 25 knots, a top speed of 35 knots, and a range of 1,500 nautical miles. It is designed for a crew of 12 and can hold 60 passengers. A helicopter deck adds to its capabilities.

Beyond protecting the country's marine resources, particularly its fishing grounds, the Kenyan Coast Guard will also have as its mission combating drug and human trafficking. No additional information was available in the article to say if this newly launched Coast Guard, with only one ship that has only one cannon, has plans to grow to meet the heavy tasks placed upon it. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

*“...the Coast Guard will ensure that our ocean will not be used for drug and human trafficking, and illegal fishing. It will guard against exploitation of our natural resources by foreign countries and ensure that no foreign vessel will steal our fish.”*

**Source:** “Kenya Launches Coast Guard,” *DefenceWeb*, 22 November 2018. [http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=53822:kenya-launches-coast-guard&catid=108:maritime-security&Itemid=233](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53822:kenya-launches-coast-guard&catid=108:maritime-security&Itemid=233)

*The Coast Guard was inaugurated during a ceremony on 19 November at the Liwatoni Fisheries Complex in Mombasa. Kenyatta said that “the Coast Guard will ensure that our ocean will not be used for drug and human trafficking, and illegal fishing. It will guard against exploitation of our natural resources by foreign countries and ensure that no foreign vessel will steal our fish.”*

*Kenyatta officially commissioned the *MV Doria* vessel, which will be used to patrol Kenyan waters as the country steps up efforts in protecting, and effectively harnessing its maritime resources.*

*“Kenya has great potential for growing the Blue Economy, which would immensely contribute to our GDP, as well as create more jobs. This can only be achieved if we put in the work, invest appropriately and fully harness our maritime resources,” Kenyatta said.*

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## Nigerian NGO Targets Amnesty International

**OE Watch Commentary:** In December, the Nigerian army made headlines when it announced it was suspending the operations of Amnesty International in the country. The office of the presidency soon followed with a statement of support for the army; however, after international condemnation of the army's decision, it then reversed course and allowed Amnesty to continue to operate in the country.

*“We want to make it categorically clear that only the enemies of Nigeria collaborate with Amnesty international.”*

Nevertheless, according to the accompanying excerpted article from *Vanguard*, on 20 December a pro-government NGO called Save Humanity Advocacy Centre (SHAC) has reiterated the army's statements about Amnesty International. SHAC has discouraged Nigerian NGOs from cooperating with Amnesty International on grounds that it has a dangerous agenda that will destroy the country. SHAC went so far as to claim that any NGO that cooperated with Amnesty International was an enemy of the country itself.

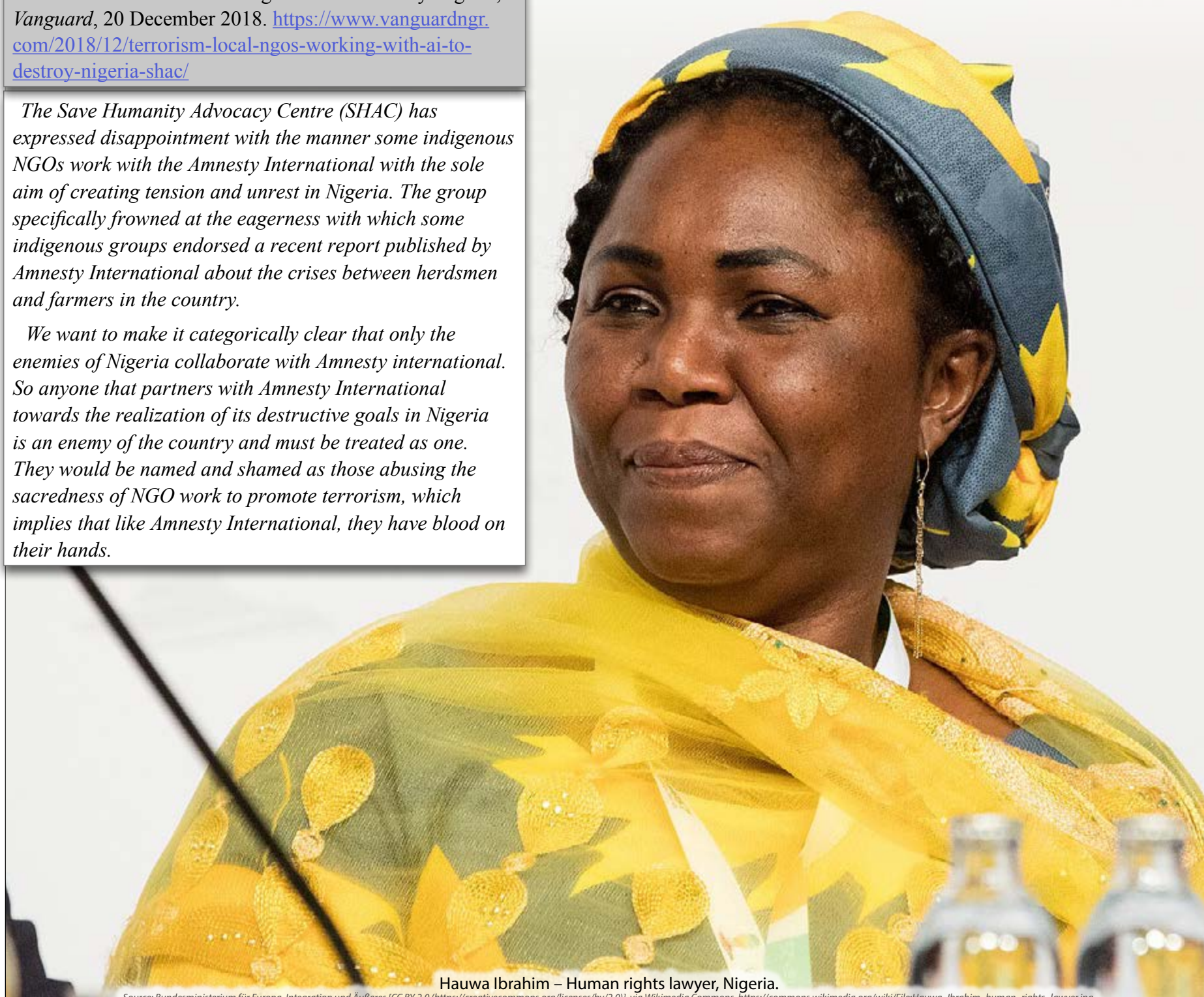
The article notes that SHAC's dissatisfaction with Amnesty International was related not to Amnesty's often critical coverage of the war against Boko Haram, but appeared to be related to a December 2018 documentary about violence between herders and farmers in Nigeria that state the violence led to 3,600 deaths. The article also indicates that it was popular because it was endorsed by Nigerian NGOs.

SHAC's claims about Amnesty International echo the previous army and government sentiment and reflect the pressure the country is facing from multiple conflicts. At the same time, as evidenced by the international backlash against Nigeria for its prior condemnation of Amnesty International, the country has not handled criticism well. It seems to now be allowing or even encouraging an organization like SHAC to make remarks that previously would have come from the government or army. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

**Source:** “Local NGOs working with AI to destroy Nigeria,” *Vanguard*, 20 December 2018. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/12/terrorism-local-ngos-working-with-ai-to-destroy-nigeria-shac/>

*The Save Humanity Advocacy Centre (SHAC) has expressed disappointment with the manner some indigenous NGOs work with the Amnesty International with the sole aim of creating tension and unrest in Nigeria. The group specifically frowned at the eagerness with which some indigenous groups endorsed a recent report published by Amnesty International about the crises between herdsman and farmers in the country.*

*We want to make it categorically clear that only the enemies of Nigeria collaborate with Amnesty international. So anyone that partners with Amnesty International towards the realization of its destructive goals in Nigeria is an enemy of the country and must be treated as one. They would be named and shamed as those abusing the sacredness of NGO work to promote terrorism, which implies that like Amnesty International, they have blood on their hands.*



Hauwa Ibrahim – Human rights lawyer, Nigeria.

Source: Bundesministerium für Europa, Integration und Außenbeziehungen [CC BY 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hauwa\\_Ibrahim\\_human\\_rights\\_lawyer.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hauwa_Ibrahim_human_rights_lawyer.jpg).





## DRC Ebola Outbreak Now Second Worst in History

**OE Watch Commentary:** When Ebola broke out in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in October 2018, there were hopes that it could quickly be brought under control, but also a number of concerns it might prove difficult to do so. Unfortunately, the concerns were justified. The outbreak continues and as the accompanying excerpted article from *CAJ News* reports, this Ebola eruption has now been declared the second largest outbreak of the disease in history. With at least 245 recorded fatalities, it has surpassed the previous second place record holder, the 2000-2001 outbreak in Uganda, by 20 deaths. Perhaps the only bright spot is that it is still way behind the first place world record holder, which is the 2014 West Africa outbreak that took the lives of over 11,000 people.

That the disease is proving hard to control is not surprising to the people who were tracking it. As noted by previous reports, the outbreak is partially centered in the conflict-ridden areas of North Kivu. More than 50 armed groups are operating in that province, making disease surveillance and treatment extremely difficult. The article mentions Ebola is projected to continue for six more months, but does not describe how the disease will be eradicated in a region so dangerous that health care workers risk their lives should they decide to enter it. Further complicating the situation is the presence of approximately one million displaced persons uprooted by the violence. Besides the problems related to insecurity, the deterioration of the country's health services is also allowing Ebola to spread. Additionally, tensions surrounding the country's recent election have made for a difficult backdrop against which to organize resources to combat the disease.

Numerous lessons were learned from previous Ebola outbreaks; however, this one is different in that so much of it is in a conflict zone, making implementation of many of those lessons quite difficult. As a result, the number of deaths is projected to rise, perhaps, as the article relates, by the hundreds. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

**Source:** Jean Kassongo, "DRC Ebola eruption second deadliest in history," *CAJ News*, 4 January 2019. <http://cajnewsafrika.com/2018/12/03/drc-ebola-eruption-second-deadliest-in-history/>

*The ongoing Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is now the second worst such eruption in history.*

*Spikes in violence have forced the suspension of efforts to contain the spread of the disease. Some 1 million people are displaced in North Kivu, complicating matters further.*

*"The international community must continue to pay attention to this crisis or it will likely spiral, costing further lives and possibly spreading over national borders."*

*"The international community must continue to pay attention to this crisis or it will likely spiral, costing further lives and possibly spreading over national borders."*

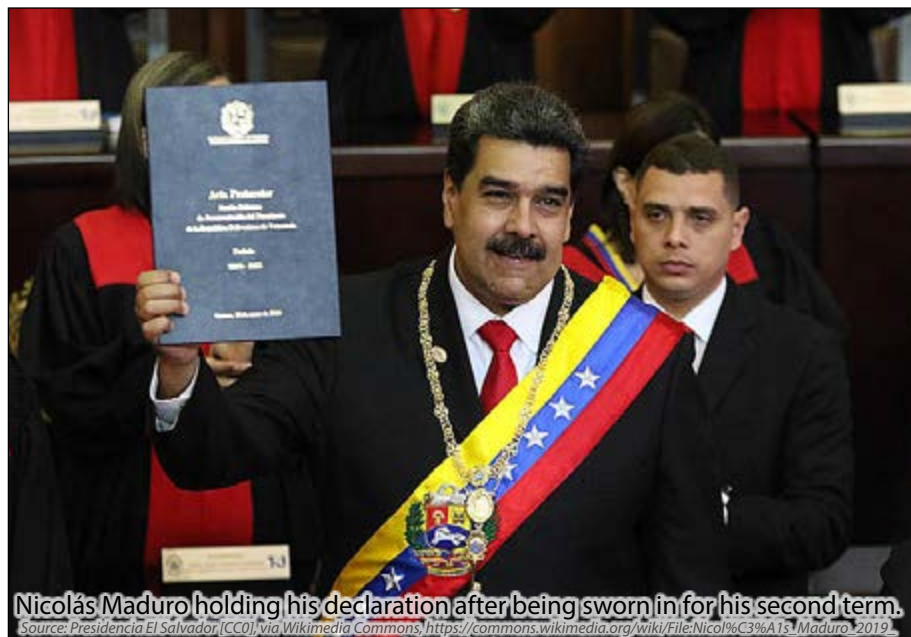


*"Arrival of medical supplies to help fight an Ebola outbreak in the DRC that because of its location in conflict-ridden areas is proving difficult to stop."*

Source: MONUSCO/Flickr, <https://goo.gl/qQcCRx>, CC BY-SA 2.0.

## Who's Who at Maduro's Inauguration

**OE Watch Commentary:** 10 January was inauguration day for what is Nicolás Maduro's new period as the head of the Bolivarian government in Caracas. The event provided an opportunity for a snapshot measure of the regime's foreign support. As reported in the first accompanying reference, from *RCN Radio*, a number of Latin American governments calling themselves the Lima Group had already announced they would not recognize Maduro as president, stating that the electoral exercise held in Venezuela last May lacked democratic guarantees and free participation. Maduro's inauguration went off without a hitch, nevertheless, with at least five foreign chief executives in attendance: Evo Morales of Bolivia, Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua, Timothy Harris of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Miguel Díaz-Canel of Cuba, and Salvador Sánchez Cerén of El Salvador. According to Maduro in his inaugural speech, 94 foreign countries were represented. Russia, China and Turkey sent delegations, according to the accompanying reference from *El País*. Brazil, the most important of Venezuela's neighbors, did not send a delegation, and during his speech, Maduro took a stab at new Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, calling the latter a "fascist." Paraguay's President Mario Abdo Benítez, meanwhile, took the opportunity to announce that he was cutting diplomatic ties with the Maduro regime and closing the Paraguayan embassy in Caracas, as reported by the excerpted article from *Infobae*. More significant among absent government delegations was that of Ecuador. Ecuador's government under former president Rafael Correa had been a central member of the Bolivarian alliance. The accompanying reference from *El Español* notes the presence of a Turkish representative, representation from OPEC, and the presence of a few foreign communist party leaders. During his speech, Maduro characterized himself as the leader of a vanguard in a world war [against] North American imperialism. All in all, it is hard to say if it was a good or a bad day for the Bolivarian regime. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



*“...Venezuela is the center of a world war...”*

**Source:** “El Grupo de Lima no reconoce a Maduro como presidente de Venezuela (The Lima Group does not recognize Maduro as president of Venezuela),” *RCN Radio*, 4 January 2019. <https://www.rcnradio.com/internacional/grupo-de-lima-no-reconoce-nicolas-maduro-como-presidente-de-venezuela>

*“...the Group of Lima does not recognize Nicolás Maduro as president of Venezuela. This determination is taken after the meeting that was carried out this Friday in the capital of Peru...they exhort Maduro to not take possession for the new presidential period this coming January 10...”*

**Source:** “Nicolás Maduro desafía a Occidente aferrado a China y Rusia y busca el apoyo de México (Nicolas Maduro defies the West, hanging onto China and Russia and seeking the support of Mexico),” *El País*, 10 January 2019. [https://elpais.com/internacional/2019/01/10/america/1547150403\\_382340.html](https://elpais.com/internacional/2019/01/10/america/1547150403_382340.html)

*“Listening to him were, among others, the Vice President of Turkey, Fuat Oktay; the Chinese Minister of Agriculture, Han Changfu and the Vice President of the Russian high Chamber, Ilyas Umakhanov....Maduro inaugurated the new period without the presence of any representative from the United States, the European Union and the neighboring countries... He [Maduro]...launched a “long live Mexico...even though the Mexican government only sent the chargé d’affaires from the embassy.”*

**Source:** “Minuto a minuto: ante el repudio mundial, Nicolás Maduro juró como presidente ante el Tribunal Supremo de Justicia (Minute by minute: in the face of worldwide repudiation, Nicolás Maduro swore in in front of the Supreme Court),” *Infobae*, 10 January 2019, <https://www.infobae.com/america/venezuela/2019/01/10/en-vivo-el-dictador-nicolas-maduro-asume-su-segundo-mandato-en-venezuela/>

*“Minute by minute: facing world repudiation, Nicolás Maduro swore in as president in front of the Supreme Court...The Chavista leader began another period of six years, considered illegitimate by a great part of the international community, with a country in ruins and increasingly isolated...[during his speech] He left a strong message against the European Union: ‘Enough aggression against Venezuela, old oligarchic Europe.’...The Venezuelan right has infected the Latin American right with its fascism. We see the case of Brazil with the ascendance of a fascist like Jair Bolsonaro...There is a world on its feet, Venezuela is in the front line of the battle, we are in a position of vanguard. The world is much bigger than the North American threats...It is clear, public, notorious and known that Venezuela is the center of a world war of North American imperialism, and of its satellites...”*

*...the president of Paraguay, Mario Abdo Benítez, announced the rupture of diplomatic relations with Venezuela. He will close their embassy and retire their diplomats.”*

**Source:** “Cuba, Bolivia y Osetia del Sur, los principales presidentes que irán a la jura de Maduro (Cuba, Bolivia and South Ossetia, the principle presidents that went to the inauguration of Maduro),” *El Español*, 10 January 2019. [https://www.elespanol.com/mundo/20190110/cuba-bolivia-osetia-sur-principales-acompanaran-maduro/367464154\\_0.html](https://www.elespanol.com/mundo/20190110/cuba-bolivia-osetia-sur-principales-acompanaran-maduro/367464154_0.html)

*“The list of high-level International representatives also includes the Secretary General of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)...AVN informed of the arrival of representative from Antigua and Barbuda, The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique, as well as communist leaders from South Africa and Lebanon...”*



# Russia Provides Financial, Military and Political Support to Venezuela

**OE Watch Commentary:** President Nicolas Maduro’s visit to Moscow in early December 2018 resulted in discussions to finalize economic, military and political assistance to the South American nation. In terms of finance, Venezuela has been struggling to pay billions of dollars in debt to Russia. According to the first excerpt, Russia has overlooked this debt and accepted a new deal proposed by Maduro allowing the country to drill for oil and mine for gold in exchange for subsequent exportation to Russia.

In terms of military cooperation, during Maduro’s trip to Moscow, Russia also agreed to send two Tu-160s to Venezuela, according to the second excerpt. The Russian bombers stayed in Venezuela for less than a week, but while there they flew for over 10 hours in the Caribbean. Venezuelan Air Force F-16A/B Viper and Su-30MKV Flanker-C fighter jets also flew with the bombers during certain points of the mission, according to Russia. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu stated in early December that Russia will continue to send its military aircraft and warships to visit Venezuela as part of bilateral military cooperation, in addition to providing economic and political support to the country. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

“These bombers stayed in the country for less than a week, but did fly with the Venezuelan Air Force during their time in country.”

<p><b>Source:</b> “Rusia invertirá 6 mil millones de dólares en Venezuela (Russia to Invest \$6 billion to Venezuela),” <i>El Colombiano</i>, 6 December 2018. <a href="http://www.elcolombiano.com/internacional/venezuela/como-apoya-rusia-a-venezuela-YD9775133">http://www.elcolombiano.com/internacional/venezuela/como-apoya-rusia-a-venezuela-YD9775133</a></p> <p><i>President Nicolas Maduro stated in early December that Venezuela signed deals securing a \$6 billion investment from Russia in the South American country’s oil and gold sectors. This deal was made following a three-day trip to Moscow by Maduro.</i></p>	<p><b>Source:</b> “Qué busca Rusia con su “renovada” alianza económica y militar con Venezuela (What is Russia Looking for with its Renewed Economic and Military Support to Venezuela?)” <i>BBC</i>, December 12, 2018. <a href="https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-46529876">https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-46529876</a></p> <p><i>Meetings between Presidents Vladimir Putin and Nicolás Maduro resulted in procurement of investment, but also focused on Russia offering military support by sending (2) TU-160s bombers. These bombers stayed in the country for less than a week, but did fly with the Venezuelan Air Force during their time in country.</i></p>
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Russian long-range aircraft make a flight to international airport of Venezuela.  
Source: Russian Defense Ministry, <http://eng.mil.ru/en/multimedia/photo/gallery.htm?id=62208@cmsPhotoGallery>, CC 4.0.





## Brazil on a New Course

**OE Watch Commentary:** For over fifteen years, Brazil has been led by a leftist party, the Workers Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*). The accompanying excerpted reference from *El Tiempo* proffers the key highlights of President Bolsonaro's inauguration speech, which the article's author opines will mark the new azimuth. The author does not appear to be a Bolsonaro fan, however. According to the article, President Bolsonaro intends to move the Brazilian Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, pull out of the United Nations migration pact and perhaps out of the Paris climate change agreement. The article also indicates that Bolsonaro will be taking a confrontational posture against the Marxist Maduro regime in Caracas. The suggested positions of the new Brazilian president appear to be more overtly in line with United States policies than any time in recent decades.

The second accompanying reference is from the Spanish language British Broadcasting Company news service, *BBC News Mundo*. It reports on the deployment of Brazilian Army troops to Fortaleza, a major city on Brazil's northern coast. Violence there seems to be the first test of Bolsonaro's presidency, but it is somewhat early to determine either the true nature of the violence or the effectiveness of the new president's response. Interestingly, the English language version of the same BBC article ("Brazil deploys troops to stop violence in Fortaleza") carries pieces of notably different language with a distinct editorial perspective, not about the events, but about the president. For instance, the English language version includes the sentence "He is seen as a deeply divisive figure whose racist, homophobic and misogynistic remarks have angered many." That sentence is not included in the Spanish language version. No Portuguese language version was found. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

**Source:** "Claves del discurso de posesión de Bolsonaro como presidente de Brasil (Key points in Bolsonaro's inaugural speech as president of Brazil)," *El Tiempo*, 2 January 2019. <https://www.eltiempo.com/mundo/latinoamerica/claves-del-discurso-de-posesion-de-bolsonaro-como-presidente-de-brasil-310600>

*"In his inaugural speech this Tuesday, President of Brazil Jair Bolsonaro launched a crusade of conservative values against criminality, corruption and leftist ideologies...He affirmed that his arrival marked the day in which the people began to liberate themselves from socialism, to liberate themselves from the inversion of values, from state gigantism, and from political correctness...Bolsonaro thanked God for having survived the knife wound to his abdomen during the campaign...Bolsonaro promised to move the Brazilian embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem...He also announced the withdrawal of Brazil from the United Nations' World Migration Accord and threatened to do the same with the Paris Accord against climate change..."*

**Source:** Editors, "Brasil: Bolsonaro envía tropas a Fortaleza para frenar la ola de violencia (Brazil: Bolsonaro sends troops to stop the wave of violence)," *BBC News Mundo*, 6 January 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-46775173>

*"Some 300 military troops were sent to the northeast of the Brazilian city of Fortaleza to combat a wave of violence, authorities of that Latin-American country said this Saturday...The disturbances originated after a series of protests against new laws in local prisons, [which are] mostly controlled by criminal gangs...[President] Bolsonaro praised the decision of [Justice Minister] Moro to send the army..."*



*"Bolsonaro launched a crusade of conservative values against criminality corruption and leftist ideologies."*

Seashore of Fortaleza (2012).

Source: Arthur Fonseca [CC BY 3.0 br (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/br/deed.en>)], via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fortaleza,\\_Brazil\\_\(3\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fortaleza,_Brazil_(3).jpg).





## New Brazilian President Declares Reset with Indigenous People and Lands

**OE Watch Commentary:** It only takes a cursory look at the Brazilian press to see that President Bolsonaro has begun his term with controversy. Among his decrees and actions in his first week of office was to initiate significant changes regarding the governing of the indigenous peoples and their lands—largely those in the Amazon, but applying to all indigenous peoples and lands in Brazil. The National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), which since the 1970s has had responsibility for indigenous lands and people, will be stripped of that role according to President Bolsonaro. Instead, the Ministry of Agriculture will now have the job to oversee indigenous territories.

This was a shot across the bow for those dedicated to protecting the Amazon, the last great indigenous territory left in Brazil. The indigenous people themselves, NGOs, environmentalists, the UN and even the Catholic Church have publicly condemned the move as the accompanying excerpted articles demonstrate.

Historically and to greater or lesser degrees, the Amazon has been under assault from farmers, ranchers, loggers and many other sectors of the Brazilian economy. In fact, while the encroachment into indigenous land has at times slowed down, it has never stopped or reversed. The Amazon, and its native peoples, have continued to shrink since the first Europeans entered the territory hundreds of years ago. As industrialization and large scale agribusiness have proliferated in Brazil, more and more pressure to tap the Amazon of its resources pits indigenous people and their allies against powerful agribusiness interests and other elements of Brazilian society.

It was rubber in the late 19th and early 20th century. In fact, it was Brazilian rubber that helped the US war machine operate during World War II. Today, it is gold, timber, and exotic animals to name a few of the resources at stake in the Amazon; however, farming and ranching threaten vast tracks of otherwise protected land.

On 4 January 2019, the Missionary Indigenous Council (CIMI) published an open letter on *CNBB* condemning the “transfer to the Ministry of Agriculture, commanded by farmers who opposed the rights of the peoples, to carry out the identification, delimitation, demarcation and registration of areas required by indigenous peoples. In short, the government decreed...the annihilation of the rights guaranteed in Articles 231 and 232 of the Federal Constitution.” Indigenous leaders themselves were quick to respond to the presidential announcement and in one of many public letters, stated, according to the article from *Folha De. S.Paulo*, “Those who are not indigenous cannot suggest or dictate rules of how we should behave in our territory and in our country. We have the capacity and autonomy to speak for ourselves.”

The statement reveals another point of contention in Brazil regarding the native inhabitants of the Amazon. The remaining indigenous people of Brazil, and particularly of the Amazon, have held special territorial status via the 1988 post-military dictatorship constitution. So much so, some argue, that too much territory is being held hostage by so few. Indeed, estimates vary but all sources agree there are far less than a million native inhabitants occupying the Amazon. From that perspective, there will continue to be pressure to push into and exploit the vast region. President Bolsonaro just upped the ante. **End OE Watch Commentary (Billingsley)**



Upper Rio Negro near the Amazonian town of São Gabriel da Cachoeira in the Amazon.  
Source: Dodge Billingsley





Continued: New Brazilian President Declares Reset with Indigenous People and Lands

“...one signal that seeks to remind the world that Russia has interests in Venezuela...”

**Source:** “Em nota CIMI aponta medidas inconstitucionais do governo Bolsonaro que afronta direitos indigenas (In note CIMI points to unconstitutional measures of the Bolsonaro government that faces indigenous rights),” CNBB, 9 January 2019. [http://www.cnbb.org.br/em-nota-cimi-aponta-medidas-inconstitucionais-do-governo-bolsonaro-que-afronta-direitos-indigenas/?fbclid=IwAR19I9O4Y0PMudnETUBM3gRRu9bUrmXWHvk-eORAH0\\_wflgsicPA1jYPF\\_o](http://www.cnbb.org.br/em-nota-cimi-aponta-medidas-inconstitucionais-do-governo-bolsonaro-que-afronta-direitos-indigenas/?fbclid=IwAR19I9O4Y0PMudnETUBM3gRRu9bUrmXWHvk-eORAH0_wflgsicPA1jYPF_o)

*The Missionary Indigenous Council (CIMI), an organization linked to the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB), published a note on January 4 in which it repudiates measures intended to develop the country for purposes that disqualify individual and collectives of communities and traditional peoples, attacking leaders who fight for rights, threatening and criminalizing defenders of the environment, indigenists, entities and civil society organizations. Get to know, below, the entire document...*

*...“transfer to the Ministry of Agriculture, commanded by farmers who opposed the rights of the peoples, to carry out the identification, delimitation, demarcation and registration of areas required by indigenous peoples. In short, the government decreed...the annihilation of the rights guaranteed in Articles 231 and 232 of the Federal Constitution...”*

**Source:** “Em carta a Bolsonaro, lideranças indígenas pedem diálogo e criticam medidas (In a letter to Bolsonaro, indigenous leaders ask for dialogue and criticize measures),” Folha De S.Paulo, 4 January 2019. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2019/01/em-carta-a-bolsonaro-liderancas-indigenas-pedem-dialogo-e-criticam-medidas.shtml>

*“Those who are not indigenous cannot suggest or dictate rules of how we should behave or act in our territory and in our country.” We have the capacity and autonomy to speak for ourselves,” write indigenous leaders in a letter to President Jair Bolsonaro.*

*...It is a reference to Bolsonaro’s speech that the Indians should not live in isolation, as if they were in a zoo. However, revising the policy of non-contact adopted by FUNAI today worries indigenous experts “We do not accept integration policy anymore, we do not want to be decimated by new government actions...We want to continue being indigenous, with right to our ethnic identity, just as we are Brazilian.”...*



Yanomani woman in Maturaca near the Venezuela border region of the Amazon.  
Source: Dodge Billingsley.



## Five Wars in Colombia?

**OE Watch Commentary:** The accompanying reference is a curious, excellent commentary about a legalistic, international interpretation of what might be going on in Colombia. Several groups are fighting with and among each other, including drug gangs, former FARC units that did not adhere to the FARC-Santos agreement, other Marxist guerrillas including the ELN and a series of et cetera. The International Red Cross apparently has weighed in to confuse matters, in part perhaps because of internal decisions regarding what their role should be, on what legal basis they can lend conflict assistance, and to whom. An IRC report finds five armed conflicts going on inside Colombia. The author of the article does a careful and respectful, but skeptical job of trying to sort out the definitional puzzle and what it might mean. What can the Colombian government do within international law (and where), what assistance can it request or receive (or even not refuse) and what liabilities do its agents face? These questions are all implicated in the definitional soup pondered in the *Radio Santafé* essay. For anyone interested in unraveling or teaching the complexities of current international law as it might be applied to wars of other than an international character, this could serve as highly useful prompt. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

“But ‘what is meant by armed conflict?’”

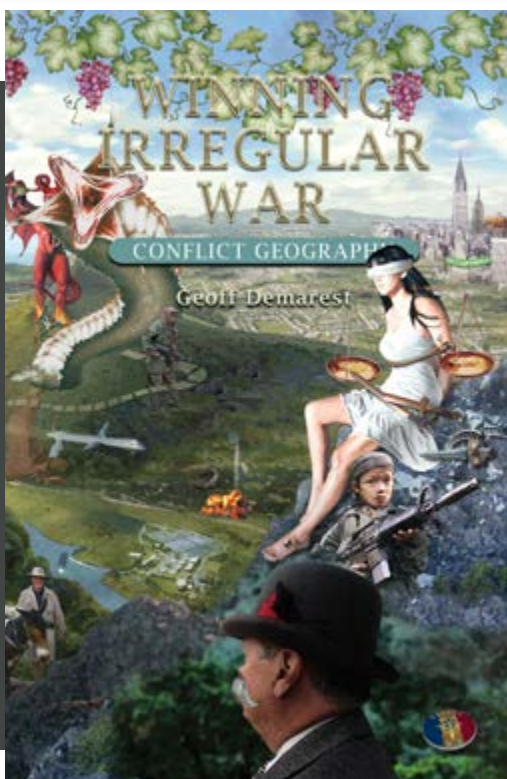


Armed domestic conflict in Colombia.

Source: Bettyreategui [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Conflicto\\_interno\\_armado\\_en\\_Colombia.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Conflicto_interno_armado_en_Colombia.png).

**Source:** Ariel Cabrera, “En Colombia no hay un conflicto armado, hay cinco ¿Qué está pasando?: CICR (In Colombia there is not an armed conflict, there are five. What is going on?: ICRC),” *Radio Santafé*, 27 December 2018. <http://www.radiosantafe.com/2018/12/27/en-colombia-no-hay-un-conflicto-armado-hay-cinco-que-esta-pasando-comite-internacional-de-la-cruz-roja/>

“With the signing of the Peace Accord, Colombia has lived a complex panorama. In several zones in the country armed confrontations among diverse actors continue and at some points they have intensified, says the International Red Cross, IRC, which underlines that, therefore, one should not talk of an armed conflict, but rather, five...The first prerequisite for working in favor of those who suffer the effects of the violence is to know the applicable juridical framework, which means in turn, the bases for dialog prone to protecting the population that suffers its effects...The ICR has as a mandate ‘to protect and assist victims of armed conflicts and other violent situations’. But ‘what is meant by armed conflict?’ and what would these ‘other violent situations be?’...The non-governmental groups that are participating in acts of violence are sufficiently organized. The indicative criteria to establish this condition would be the existence of a hierarchical structure and chain of command, capacity to plan coordinate and carry out military action, capacity to recruit and train weapons carriers, the existence of rules of internal discipline, capacity of the commanders to control members of the group and to control territory...”



**Geoff Demarest’s *Winning Irregular War* is about a broader set of conflicts than just ‘insurgency.’ In its 144 sections, Geoff Demarest uses a distinct, reconciled, more effective strategic grammar that draws on the disciplines of law and geography over political science. As Geoff Demarest puts it: “I hope that some of the ideas in it will be contagious.”**

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-books/195392/download>



## Argentina and Paraguay Collaborate Locally and Internationally to Target Hezbollah Money Laundering

**OE Watch Commentary:** The Tri-Border Area (TBA) of Latin America lies between the borders of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. More specifically, this region is comprised of the following cities in each country: Puerto Iguazú in Argentina, Foz do Iguacu in Brazil and Ciudad del Este in Paraguay.

For decades, the TBA has been recognized as a lawless region as illegal activity is rampant within it. From an international security standpoint, the TBA it is also significant because Hezbollah uses the area as an operation base in Latin America to finance its activities abroad through illicit activities, to include money laundering and drug trafficking.

Hezbollah is active in the TBA, but until recently the region's countries had taken little action to thwart the group's illegal activities or arrest key leaders. The first excerpt points out that over the course of 2018, both Paraguay and Argentina began targeting specific individuals known to work as financial backers for Hezbollah in the TBA. This same source discusses the arrest of Assad Ahmad Barakat in Brazil and identifies him as a key Hezbollah financier and leader in the TBA. With the help of Brazil, Paraguay was able to extradite Barakat to the United States.

Following the arrest of Ahmad Barakat in mid-April 2018, both Argentina and Paraguay continued to target financial cells of Hezbollah operating in the TBA. The second excerpt highlights this activity and discusses how Argentina's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) froze assets of members of the Barakat clan operating in the TBA following operations that began in July 2018. The arrested individuals allegedly generated more than \$10 million in proceeds for Hezbollah since 2012 by laundering money through a casino owned by the group in Iguazú, Argentina. Meanwhile, Paraguay provided much of the intelligence for the arrests in this operation.

The third excerpt discusses additional actions Paraguay is taking to combat Hezbollah activities by working with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF, known as GAFI in Spanish) to discuss Paraguay's plan in 2019 and 2020. Furthermore, both Argentina and Paraguay have created collaborative information sharing plans to thwart Hezbollah money laundering/illegal activities, with international support. This idea is discussed in the fourth excerpt, which also highlights how Paraguayan National Police are currently exchanging information regarding Hezbollah with Argentina, Brazil, the United States and various countries in the Middle East. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

*“...Paraguay is also working to thwart the same type of activity through internal investigations and via enhanced cooperation and intelligence sharing with Argentina.”*

**Source:** “Qué es Hezbollah y qué vínculo tiene con Argentina (What is Hezbollah and What are it's Ties to Argentina?),” *Perfil*, 15 November 2018. <https://www.perfil.com/noticias/internacional/que-es-hezbollah-y-que-vinculo-tiene-con-argentina.phtml>

*In September, Assad Ahmad Barakat was apprehended in the TBA. He is accused of being Hezbollah's link in the Southern Cone and the presumed head of an extensive Hezbollah money-laundering network in Latin America.*

**Source:** “Triple frontera: detuvieron a Assad Ahmad Barakat, líder de una organización vinculada a Hezbollah (TBA: Assad Ahmed Barakat, leader of a Hezbollah-linked organization, is detained),” *La Nacion*, 21 September 2018. <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/2174245-triple-frontera-detuvieron-assad-ahmad-barakat-lider>

*Last July, pursuant to a Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) resolution, the Argentine government froze the assets of the Barakat clan, after they established an operation to launder 10 million dollars in a casino in Iguazu.*

**Source:** “Hugo Velázquez: El Gobierno tiene ‘voluntad política’ para combatir el lavado de dinero (Hugo Velázquez: The Government has a Political Obligation to Combat Money Laundering Activities,)”, *Telam*, 20 January, 2019. <http://www.telam.com.ar/notas/201901/324798-paraguay-vicepresidente-lavado-dinero.html>

*Paraguayan authorities also met with the International Financial Action Task Force (GAFI) to discuss Hezbollah activity in Paraguay and simultaneously allowed this organization to look at their 2019/2020 plan which aims to combat financial crimes, movement of contraband and corruption in the TBA.*

**Source:** Juan Villamayor, “Estamos cortando la pata financiera de Hezbollah y de las mafias en la Triple Frontera (Juan Villamayor: We are Cutting Off Hezbollah's Financial Supporters in the Tri-Border Region),” *La Nacion*, 6 December 2018. <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/2199922-juan-villamayor-estamos-cortando-pata-financiera-hezbollah>

*[Paraguay's] National Police is sharing intelligence with Argentina, Brazil, the United States and several countries in the Middle East... Barakat was arrested in Brazil thanks to information provided by Paraguay.*