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ON THE COVER:

An Armed Bayraktar TB2

Source: Bayhaluk via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Armed_Bayraktar_TB2.jpg, CC BY-SA 4.0

OEWATCH

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Regional Analysts and Expert Contributors

Eurasia

Chuck Bartles
Jörgen Elfving
Ray Finch
Les Grau
Matthew Stein
Tom Wilhelm

Indo-Pacific

Les Grau
Andrew Hartnett
Cindy Hurst
Matthew Stein
Peter Wood
Jacob Zenn

Middle East, North Africa

Zachary Fesen
Ihsan Gündüz
Karen Kaya
Michael Rubin
Lucas Winter

Africa

Dodge Billingsley
Robert Feldman
Jacob Zenn

Latin America

Geoff Demarest
Brenda Fiegel

Editor-in-Chief

Editor

Design Editor

Tom Wilhelm

Karen Kaya

Thomas Tolare



Advancing Hybrid Warfare in Russian Doctrine Discussions

OE Watch Commentary: The images of Russia's "Polite, Green Men" during the takeover of Crimea in 2014 are globally recognized icons of Russian hybrid warfare. Yet according to Russian official-dom, and especially the military, this is not the case, as hybrid war is almost exclusively a Western weapon aimed against Russia. Along these lines, the term "hybrid war" has not been accepted into Russian military doctrine, causing them to make only propagandistic references and indirect self-assessments on the topic in their doctrinal debates. In fact, the Russian general staff, which is built for deliberative processes with enduring doctrinal outcomes, has had to contort itself in its writings to avoid describing their own employment of hybrid warfare. It could be that non-military events and unanticipated conditions have temporarily overwhelmed and outpaced the military's capacity to turn this into the broader, more open requirements of doctrine development. Whatever the reason, things may be changing. As articles from *Voennaya Mysl'* (*Military Thought*) and in *Vestnik* (*The Bulletin of the Academy of Military Science*) seem to indicate, there is broader advocacy supporting change to hybrid warfare's status.

In the first article, A.A. Bartosh, a senior source of strategic foresight, lays out an argument to model hybrid warfare. In it, he uses the acronym "HW" as a kind of surrogate for the missing doctrinal term. His advocacy takes an approach inherent in Russian military science that allows relevant factors to ultimately be framed in calculable terms. Bartosh's work, therefore, is a bridge from the first parts of Russian military science—forecasting, historical, and trends analyses—to the other disciplines, such as development of forms and methods as well as calculations of correlation of forces. His article's authority comes from its dogmatic extension from previous general staff work by restating things like "political means have gradually pushed war to the margins of the historical process" and "the essence and content of wars in today's conditions are undergoing substantial change: they are assuming a hybrid nature." However, Bartosh wants to connect non-military factors more solidly into military decision-making. He tells us that "One of the methods that can somewhat dispel the fog of HW [hybrid warfare], lifting the uncertainty in making forecasts, estimating resources, developing strategies and counterstrategies... is the employment of modern instrumental means of decision-support, modeling included." His article's purpose, it turns out, is a plea for a more sophisticated approach for the military's calculations of social, economic, political, cultural, and psychological factors in addition to military factors related to hybrid warfare. This insight reveals that the general staff has been challenged by its own practice of hybrid war, no doubt because so many events, conditions, and factors have been beyond the established resource and control of the Russian Armed Forces. His argument to have an HW model is not just for counter-strategies but also for Russia to develop strategies. This signals a departure from the position that HW is something that only happens to Russia and to a position in military science that allows them to build the doctrine to institute the art.

In the accompanying *Vestnik* article, the authors, I.A. Chiharev, D.C. Poluyak, B.U. Brovko, also discuss the challenge of hybrid warfare to Russian military planners. They note, "The irregularity of hybrid warfare disavows established military strategies," and warn "It is clear that the security institutions, as well as government strategies, find themselves largely unprepared for this type of conflict [hybrid warfare]." As part of their argument, the authors' note that the unintended effects and impacts of private, non-state actions on nation-state affairs can even instigate unanticipated conflicts. This is chaos and anathema to the Russian security mindset; it is the "uncertainty" that Bartosh warns against. To remedy and mitigate this unpredictable and unacceptable factor, the authors advocate a "return" to state control of international affairs, including by means of enhanced technology such as state-run surveillance, network control, and use of information resources and other influencing activities. At this point in the article, they are not describing hybrid warfare as a weapon used against them but something that the Russian Armed Forces must master for themselves in doctrine.

In the third article, the authors A.S. Brychkov, V.L. Dorokhov, G.A. Nikonorov, are more direct in their urging for the doctrinal development of Russian hybrid warfare by stating "It is expedient...to pay particular attention to creating within our military structure flexible, multi-purpose forces capable of acting in the unique circumstances of any particular conflict, including a hybrid war."

While reflecting on the challenge of the Russian military's integration with aspects of non-military Russian actions and actors in hybrid warfare, what these three articles indicate more than anything is that there is growing advocacy for Russian military doctrine to catch up with its practice. The goal will be to make hybrid warfare more calculable for the military — more capable to defend against it or better plan it. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wilhelm)**



Emblem of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces.

Source: w:Генеральный штаб Вооружённых сил Российской Федерации via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Great_emblem_of_the_General_Staff_of_the_Russian_Armed_Forces.svg, Public Domain



Continued: Advancing Hybrid Warfare in Russian Doctrine Discussions

“The irregularity of hybrid warfare disavows established military strategies...”

Source: А.А. Бартош, “Модель гибридной войны,” *Военная Мысль*, No. 5. 2019, с. 6-23. (A.A. Bartosh, “A Model of Hybrid Warfare,” *Military Thought*, No. 5, 2019, pp. 6-23)

One of the methods that can somewhat dispel the fog of HW [hybrid warfare], lifting the uncertainty in making forecasts, estimating resources, developing strategies and counterstrategies... is the employment of modern instrumental means of decision-support, modeling included.

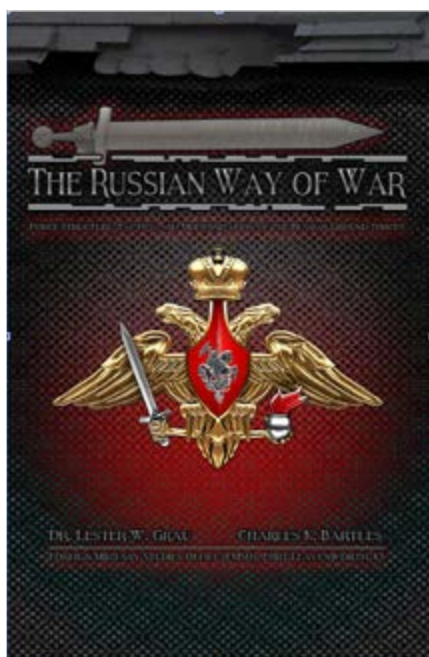
Source: И.А. Чихарев, Д.С. Полулях, В.Ю. Бровко, “Гибридная война: реконструкция против деконструкции,” *Вестник Академии Военных Наук*, 4 (65) 2018, с. 58-66. (I.A. Chiharev, D.C. Poluyak, B.U. Brovko, “Hybrid war: reconstructivism vs. deconstructivism,” *Vestnik (The Bulletin of the Academy of Military Science)*, 4 (65) 2018, pp. 58-66.)

The irregularity of hybrid warfare disavows established military strategies...

It is clear that the security institutions, as well as government strategies, find themselves largely unprepared for this type of conflict [hybrid warfare].

Source: A.S. Brychkov, V.L. Dorokhov, G.A. Nikonorov, “The Hybrid Nature of Future Wars and Armed Conflicts,” *Military Thought in English*, Vol.28, No. 2, 2019, pp.20-32.

It is expedient...to pay particular attention to creating within our military structure flexible, multi-purpose forces capable of acting in the unique circumstances of any particular conflict, including a hybrid war.



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.

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The Old/New Way of Waging Russian New Type War/Hybrid Warfare

OE Watch Commentary: In 2015, the Chief of the Russian General Staff's Main Operations Directorate, Gen-Lt A.V. Kartaplov, published an article in *Vestnik* that described "New Type War." His article, a work of trend analysis, solidified previous historical surveys (most famously done by Chikinov and Bagdonov, in their work that was understood by Western analysts as "Russian New Generation Warfare") and Chief of the Russian General Staff, General V. Gerasimov's own publication on foresight (the erstwhile "Gerasimov Doctrine"). Given his position at that time, Kartaplov's diagram served as a surrogate for understanding Russian thinking in regards to the nature of contemporary conflict which included hybrid warfare. Until now, the Russian approach to hybrid warfare has been to declare that it was an insidious expansion of Western conflict aimed against Russia and others. As far as their own practice of it, the Russian military institution has remained mute. Things could be changing in this regard, however.

As noted in contemporary editions of *Voennaya Mysl'* (*Military Thought*), Kartaplov's diagram is seen again. In the "Hybrid Nature of Future Wars and Armed Conflicts," the content of the original is virtually the same, however this time, it is labeled "Stages of Hybrid Wars." Meanwhile in "Military Conflicts of Today and Their Methods' Development Prospect. Direct and Indirect Actions in Armed Conflicts of the 21st Century," Kartaplov's diagram is featured unchanged but comes with the caption "Role of 'hybrid methods' in the conduct of contemporary war."

These faithful reiterations of the 2015 outline in the explicit context of hybrid warfare bears some significance in light of current discussions advocating the development of Russian hybrid warfare doctrine. (See previous article.) The Kartaplov diagram may be a useful indicator of the foundation the Russians will use in that development, and even perhaps a surrogate for their current strategy. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wilhelm)**



A FMSO translated version (*trans*: Harry Orenstein) of a 2015 diagram from a presentation by Chief of the Main Operations Directorate Gen-Lt Kartaplov at A.B. Картаполов, "Уроки военных конфликтов, перспективы развития средств испосов их ведения. Прямые и непрямые действия в свременных международных конфликтах," *Вестник Академии Военных Наук*, 2 (51) 2015, с. 28. (A.V. Kartaplov, "Lessons of Military Conflicts and Prospects for the Development of Means and Methods of Conducting Them, Direct and Indirect Actions in Contemporary International Conflicts," *Bulletin of the Academy of Military Science*, 2 (51) 2015, p. 28.)

Source: A.B. Картаполов, "Уроки военных конфликтов, перспективы развития средств испосов их ведения. Прямые и непрямые действия в свременных международных конфликтах," *Вестник Академии Военных Наук*, 2 (51) 2015, с. 28. (A.V. Kartaplov, "Lessons of Military Conflicts and Prospects for the Development of Means and Methods of Conducting Them, Direct and Indirect Actions in Contemporary International Conflicts," *Vestik (The Bulletin of the Academy of Military Science)*, 2 (51) 2015, p. 28.)

Source: A.S. Brychkov, V.L. Dorokhov, G.A. Nikonorov, "The Hybrid Nature of Future Wars and Armed Conflicts," *Military Thought in English*, Vol.28, No. 2 2019, p.30

Source: A.C. Фадеев, В.И. Ничипор, "Боенные конфликты современности, перспективы развития способ их ведения. Прямые и непрямые действия в вооруженных конфликтах XX1 века," *Военная Мысль*, Но. 9 2019, с. 36 (A.S. Fadeev, V.I. Nichipor, "Military Conflicts of Today and Their Methods' Development Prospect. Direct and Indirect Actions in Armed Conflicts of the 21st Century," *Military Thought*, No. 9 2019, p. 36.)



The Proliferation of Russian Reconnaissance UAVs

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying excerpted articles discuss the deployment of specialized reconnaissance UAVs and reconnaissance UAV units in the Russian Armed Forces. In the last 10 years, the Russian Armed Forces have made great efforts to increase UAV capabilities. In the Ground Forces, these efforts have included adding UAV companies to motorized rifle/tank brigades and divisions. The UAVs in these companies are intended to be multifunctional, by being equipped with modular payload systems so the UAVs may function as a reconnaissance, signal relay, or electronic warfare asset as needed. Multifunctional UAVs were deemed important as there were relatively few of these high-value assets, and commanders wanted the capability to prioritize their use. In the last few years, UAVs have become increasingly more common, and may now be found in other formations, such as artillery brigades. In order to better support more specialized roles, Russia is now developing dedicated reconnaissance UAVs. The accompanying excerpted *Izvestiya* article discusses the fielding of one such specialized reconnaissance UAV, the Orlan-30 [Орлан-30]. The Orlan-30 will reportedly increase the effectiveness of the firing of precision-guided munitions as well as aviation-delivered munitions.



Forpost UAV.

Source: Vitaly Kuzmin via Vitalykuzmin.net, <https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/InnovationDay2013/i-XbXGgKZ/A>, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

The primary role for UAVs in the Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) has been reconnaissance, and although certain ‘strike’ UAV variants are in development, reconnaissance will continue to be the primary role of VKS UAVs for the foreseeable future. The excerpted article from *Krasnaya Zvezda* discusses Russian plans for a longer range reconnaissance UAV, the Forpost-R (R -- Reconnaissance). The Forpost-R is designed for conducting persistent surveillance, target acquisition, and other intelligence-related tasks. It can operate within a radius of up to 250 km from the operator’s location, reach speeds of over 200 km per hour, operate with a flight ceiling of up to 6 km, and stay aloft for up to 18 hours. The final accompanying article from *Izvestiya* discusses how the Forpost-R will be part of the first long-range reconnaissance UAV unit in the Russian Armed Forces. Russia reportedly intends to eventually replace the Forpost-R with the ‘Altius’ UAV which is still in development. An Altius UAV system consists of two unmanned aerial vehicles and a ground control station. The Altius has twin engines, and is a reconnaissance-strike system that weighs a hefty 6 tons. Operationally, the Altius is projected to be capable of loitering for up to 48 hours, has a cruise speed of 150-250 km per hour, can carry an approximately one ton payload, and fly thousands of kilometers. If successfully fielded, the Altius is not only expected to replace the Forpost-R, but also the Su-24MR reconnaissance aircraft. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

“The appearance of the new drone in the troops will seriously increase the effectiveness of the firing of precision-guided munitions and also the accuracy of the strikes of guided aircraft bombs.”

“The first detachment of long-range reconnaissance unmanned aerial vehicles will soon appear in the Russian Armed Forces.”



Continued: The Proliferation of Russian Reconnaissance UAVs

Source: “«Орлан-30» найдет цели для артиллерии (The Orlan-30 Finds Targets for Artillery),” *Izvestiya Online*, 2 October 2019. <https://iz.ru/925283/aleksei-ramm-bogdan-stepovoi/dron-v-stroi-orlan-30-naidet-tseli-dlia-artillerii>

The Orlan-30 Finds Targets for Artillery

The unique “Orlan-30” unmanned aerial vehicle complex will arrive in the Russian Army inventory next year...The “Orlan-30” can conduct target reconnaissance and transmit their precise coordinates using the GLONASS and GPS global navigation systems. The laser “illumination” of targets will be used during the firing of guided artillery projectiles and also during the guidance of precision-guided aircraft bombs, Izvestiya’s interlocutors in the Ministry of Defense explained. In their words, the “Orlan-30” has proven itself both during its baptism by fire in Syria and also within the “Tsentr-2019” maneuvers...

At the beginning of August, the Military Department posted on its website a video recording, which was made in Syria. In it, a terrorist pickup that was hidden under a bridge is being destroyed by a mortar round. In the process, it is impossible to guess precisely which drone adjusted the artillery fire – the UAV’s designation is not specified in the credits, and the unmanned aerial vehicle itself did not end up in the frame. However, several Izvestiya sources immediately pointed out that the clip with the “Orlan-30’s” work (although also without identifying the new aircraft) has already been officially published on the Web.

The appearance of the new drone in the troops will seriously increase the effectiveness of the firing of precision-guided munitions and also the accuracy of the strikes of guided aircraft bombs, Military Expert Anton Lavrov thinks. “Laser ‘illumination’ of the targets will help to achieve the sniper accuracy of artillery”, the military expert told Izvestiya. “The ‘Orlan-30s’ will have to closely work with heavy artillery. For example, with the ‘Tyulpan’ 240-millimeter mortars, in the arsenal of which are ‘Smelchak’ guided mortars. And the 152-millimeter artillery systems use the ‘Krasnopol’ family of guided projectiles. The flight of these munitions is corrected using a laser mark of the target in the terminal trajectory”...The Orlan-30 is also indispensable in the event of the employment of guided aircraft bombs – they are cheaper than the missiles and munitions, which were extensively used in Syria.

Outwardly, the new drone resembles its predecessor, the “Orlan-10” UAV. However, its launch weight is approximately 30 kilograms, nearly two times more than the “Orlan-10”. This unmanned aerial vehicle can fly to a distance of up to 300 kilometers from the command and control point with a cruising speed of 150 kilometers per hour. The flight duration – is more than five hours. Those characteristics permit the conduct of effective reconnaissance far beyond the front line.

The implementation of the plug-in architecture of the drone’s development permits the change of the payloads and the variation of the composition of the airborne equipment. The unmanned aerial vehicle will be launched into flight using a catapult, which will help to use it from small clearings and to save fuel. Any UAV can operate as a communications relay for the remaining aircraft...

Source: Marina Shebakova, “Завершаются испытания нового беспилотного комплекса «Форпост-Р» (New Forpost-R UAV System Nears End of Testing),” *Krasnaya Zvezda Online*, 23 August 2019. <http://redstar.ru/zavershayutsya-ispytaniya-novogo-bespilotnogo-kompleksa-forpost-r/>

Russia’s New Forpost-R Reconnaissance Drone Nears End of Testing, Delivery Due in 2020

Serial delivery of the Forpost-R [Форпост-Р] to the forces will begin in 2020 under a contract between the Russian Ministry of Defense and Ural Works of Civil Aviation.

It is a total upgrade of the already tried and true Forpost system. Only the external contours remain the same. The aircraft is made of domestically produced structural materials and comes with up-to-date radioelectronics, communication lines, a ground-based control station, and Russian-made software. The Forpost-R also has the modern domestically produced APD-85 engine...

The system has acquired new capabilities thanks to advanced Russian developments that make possible round-the-clock intelligence gathering using not only optical but also radioelectronic and radar means, which is unique for a drone of this class. A new radio link enables the system’s operating range to be extended by 100 km and has enhanced protection against interference by foreign technologies...The Forpost-R weighs about 500 kg..



Continued: The Proliferation of Russian Reconnaissance UAVs

Source: Aleksey Ramm and Bogdan Stepovoy, “Тихий дрон: армия получит первый отряд беспилотных разведчиков (Silent Drone: Army to Get First Detachment of Reconnaissance Drones),” *Izvestiya Online*, 24 September 2019. <https://iz.ru/915258/aleksei-ramm-bogdan-stepovoi/tikhii-dron-armiia-poluchit-pervyi-otriad-bespilotnykh-razvedchikov>

Silent Drone: Army to Get First Detachment of Reconnaissance Drones

The first detachment of long-range reconnaissance unmanned aerial vehicles will soon appear in the Russian Armed Forces, sources in the Ministry of Defense told Izvestiya. The unit, which will be formed in the Western Military District, will be equipped with the latest Forpost-R UAVs, but will later be replaced by the prospective Altius UAVs. This will seriously increase the combat capabilities of Russian troops in the western strategic sector, according to experts interviewed by Izvestiya. The unmanned aerial vehicles will be able not only to conduct reconnaissance and strike with precision bombs and missiles, but also “light up” targets for Iskanders or Kalibrs.

The unit, armed with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), will be deployed in Shatalovo, Smolensk Oblast...Shatalovo airfield is located at an important geographical point, from where it is possible to control all transport lines of communications leading to Moscow and central Russia from the west, according to military expert Anton Lavrov.

“Altius drones, which will have a virtually unlimited range, will be able to patrol the most important section of the western border,” he told Izvestiya. “They will not only control the border with Belarus without problems, but will be able to fly along the cordon all the way to the Baltic Sea in the north. In the south, the entire northern border of modern-day Ukraine will be under their supervision. The fact that the first detachment of new reconnaissance drones will be stationed in Smolensk indicates that the Armed Forces are paying close attention to the western strategic sector.

The new equipment will strengthen the grouping of the Army in the west of the country, the expert believes. Domestic drones can be integrated into a single information loop together with strike systems located on the ground, in the sky, and on the water. Such capabilities allow for the integrated use of weapons up to Kalibr or Iskander missiles. Their crews will be able to use real-time information coming from reconnaissance drones. Strikes using precision bombs and missiles, which are on board the unmanned aerial vehicle, will be carried out on the operator’s command.

The UAVs are not only capable of acting in the interests of the Ground Forces, but also of the country’s Aerospace Forces. And over time, Altius unmanned aerial vehicles will be able to replace Su-24MR reconnaissance planes, which have practically exhausted their service life, but are still in service, the military expert said...The device’s specifications will allow it to accommodate the most state-of-the-art weapons systems, including cruise missiles or guided bombs.



Orlan-30 UAV.

Source: Vitaly Kuzmin via VitalyKuzmin.net, <https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/ISSE-2013/i-fsGMFVC/A>, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0



Russian Ground Forces to Acquire 20 Tornado-S 300mm MLRSs

OE Watch Commentary: The 9K58 / BM-30 Smerch is a 300mm Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) usually found in the MLRS brigades directly subordinate to the military districts. The standard MLRS brigade consists of 12 launchers (typically, each MLRS brigade consists of three battalions, with each battalion having two launch batteries, with each launch battery having two launchers). The Smerch is a long-range MLRS designed for engaging multiple targets on distant approaches; personnel in the open, as well as fortifications; unarmored, lightly armored, and armored vehicles of motorized infantry and tank units; artillery units; tactical missiles; air defense systems; airfields; command posts; communications centers; and facilities of the military-industrial importance. The accompanying passages from *Krasnaya Zvezda* and *Kommersant* discuss Russian plans to purchase a replacement for the Smerch, the 9K515 Tornado-S MLRS. The Tornado-S is a modified version of the Smerch MLRS, and underwent state trials in 2015. Aside from an increased range (90km vs 120km) and GPS/GLONASS guided rockets, the Tornado-S is also reported to boast a modular pod-mount loading system that more quickly facilitates reloading operations than its predecessor. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

“The main advantage of the Tornado-S MLRS is the use of fundamentally new 300mm guided rocket projectiles with fragmentation and shaped-charge fragmentation submunitions and a range of fire up to 120 kilometers.”
- Vladimir Lepin, Tekhmash General Director

Source: Vladislav Savin, “Новые реактивные системы залпового огня повышают боевую эффективность (New Multiple Launch Rocket Systems Increase Combat Effectiveness),” *Krasnaya Zvezda* Online, 23 September 2019. <http://redstar.ru/novye-reaktivnye-sistemy-zalpovogo-ognya-povyshayut-boevuyu-effektivnost>

New Multiple Launch Rocket Systems Increase Combat Effectiveness

Machinebuilding Technologies Concern (Tekhmash) of State Corporation for Assistance to the Development, Production, and Export of Advanced-Technology Industrial Products (Rostekh) is continuing the development of new advanced models of Russian arms, including modernized multiple-launch rocket systems, which surpass international analogues in terms of their combat characteristics.

...the new Tornado-S (9K515) MLRS with 300mm guided rocket projectiles is the result of in-depth modernization of the 9K58 Smerch MLRS. It has improved specifications and performance characteristics compared with the predecessor, and particularly a substantially increased range and accuracy. This advanced Tornado-S MLRS recently received an advertising certificate and is ready to enter the international arms market...The 9K515 Tornado-S (S -- Smerch) system includes a modernized fighting vehicle equipped with an automated guidance and fire control system (ASUNO), new 300-mm guided rocket projectiles, as well as the 9M542 guided rocket projectile with separable fragmentation-high explosive and cluster warhead.

The main advantage of the Tornado-S MLRS, according to Tekhmash Concern General Director Vladimir Lepin, is the use of fundamentally new 300mm guided rocket projectiles with fragmentation and shaped-charge fragmentation submunitions and a range of fire up to 120 kilometers...These new guided projectiles have been created on the basis of Smerch MLRS 300mm rocket projectiles through the inclusion in the unit design of a control system built on a strapdown inertial navigation system supported by onboard satellite navigation gear. The new modernized system envisages the capability of communicating individual flight mission data to each projectile.

The Tornado-S MLRS is designed for delivering fire against personnel, equipment, and fixed and moving single and multiple targets. The MLRS can be employed against artillery and missile subunits, including precision-guided munition systems, in concentration areas, on the march, and at firing and launch positions. The system also is capable of engaging motorized infantry and tank subunits, command and control facilities, air and missile defense weapons, electronic warfare weapons, and aircraft and helicopters on runways...Tekhmash currently is working on a further improvement of MLRS munitions...



Continued: Russian Ground Forces to Acquire 20 Tornado-S 300mm MLRSs

Source: Dmitry Astakhov, “«Мотовилихинские заводы» загрузят залпом Группа заключила крупный контракт на РСЗО «Торнадо-С» (‘Motovikhinskiye Factories’ Design Bureau Gets Big ‘Tornado-S’ Order),” *Kommersant* Online, 24 September 2019. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4102655>

‘Motovikhinskiye Factories’ Design Bureau Gets Big ‘Tornado-S’ Order

As *Kommersant* has learned, the Closed Joint-Stock Company “Special Design Bureau” (ZAO SKB), [Закрытое Акционерное Общество “Специальное Конструкторское Бюро” (ЗАО СКБ)] at which military production was concentrated after Motovikhinskiye Factories’ bankruptcy, has received its first big military order. We are talking about deliveries of the Tornado-S multiple rocket launcher system. According to the sources, the value of the contract could be worth 6-7 billion rubles, which would be enough to produce about 20 machines. According to experts, the fact that Motovikhinskiye Factories itself is still in bankruptcy proceedings will not affect the contract’s fulfillment...

Gennadiy Kuzmitskiy, the former general director of the Perm Gunpowder Plant, believes that the army will continue to order special products at Motovikhinskiye Factories enterprises despite the parent company’s bankruptcy – there is nowhere else to make such products. According to Mr. Kuzmitskiy, the parent company’s bankruptcy does not threaten the subsidiary fulfilling the defense contract with problems; the funds for its execution are held in special accounts, against which the tax service and creditors cannot not impose interim measures.



9A52-2 launch vehicle of 9K58 / BM-30 Smerch MLRS.

Source: Vitaly Kuzmin via Vitalykuzmin.net, <https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/IDELF-2008/i-sLZrq3x>, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0



Airborne Operations in the Tsentr-2019 Exercise

OE Watch Commentary: The first accompanying passage from *Krasnaya Zvezda* discusses Russian Airborne operations in support of the Tsentr-2019 Strategic Command and Staff Exercise (SKShU). Tsentr-2019 involved military elements from Russia, India, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Despite the exercise purportedly being ‘antiterrorist’ in nature, it is clear from the forces and equipment involved that the opposing force in the exercise was a state actor, or more likely, group of state actors. As with Russia’s other major exercises, the Russian Airborne (VDV) is featured prominently. Of particular interest in Tsentr-2019 was Russia’s execution of a regimental-level air drop of 2,000 paratroopers and over 200 pieces equipment on unfamiliar landing zones, in less than 20 minutes by 71 Il-76MD transport aircraft. Although the article describes the regiment as an “operational-level assault force,” in Soviet/Russian doctrinal terms, a regiment is a tactical echelon, and in context, this phrase suggests that the regiment is the spearhead of an operational-level assault (meaning that the regiment will almost certainly be relieved by more heavily armed follow-on forces).



Tactical exercises of the airborne brigade in the Volgograd region.

Source: Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, <https://мультимедиа.минобороны.рф/multimedia/photo/gallery.htm?id=69535@cmsPhotoGallery>, CC BY 4.0

This airdrop was reportedly the first regimental-level drop conducted in the post-Soviet era. The airdrop of the 217th parachute-infantry regiment of the 98th Airborne Division (Ivanovo) was not without incident. As the passage from *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* reports, two Airborne Fighting Vehicles (BMDs) [Боевая Машина Десанта (БМД)] were destroyed during a botched airdrop when their parachutes failed to deploy properly.

Another significant VDV operation of Tsentr-2019 was the 31st Air Assault Brigade (Ulyanovsk) conducting an air assault involving 128 helicopters, 1,500 paratroopers, and some equipment, including towed howitzers. Despite the destruction of two vehicles during inherently risky airborne operations, these airborne and air assault operations are impressive, even though they required a significant proportion of the Russian Aerospace Forces’ Military Transport Aviation (MTA) and Army Aviation (AA) assets to execute. (Also see: “Center 2019: More than a Military Exercise,” *OE Watch*, October 2019) **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

“The drop of an airborne regiment in full strength with organic weapons and military equipment as an operational-level assault force has been accomplished for the first time in the history of the Russian Armed Forces as part of Exercise Tsentr-2019.”



Continued: Airborne Operations in the Tsent-2019 Exercise

Source: Aleksandr Pinchuk, “Масштабно, эффективно, слаженно (On a Large Scale, Effectively, and in Unison),” *Krasnaya Zvezda Online*, 23 September 2019. <http://redstar.ru/masshtabno-effektivno-slazhenno>

On a Large Scale, Effectively, and in Unison

Strategic Command and Staff Exercise (SKShU) Tsent-2019 has ended...The experience of local wars and armed conflicts (above all in Syria) as well as new forms of employment and methods of operation of troops and forces that had been tried out in the course of combat training activities were made the basis for execution of combat training missions during the SKShU...

A feature of SKShU Tsent-2019 was the establishment of a coalition antiterrorist grouping of troops consisting of formations and military units of the armed forces of India, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and Russia...units of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan performed missions jointly on a separate axis...According to the SKShU scenario, the “South” -- an army grouping of troops and attack force elements of international terrorist organizations -- had wedged into “North” territory to a depth of up to 150 kilometers. The aggressor had lost offensive capabilities as a result of combat operations and was attempting to take favorable lines for committing reserves to the engagement. In repelling “South’s” aggression, the “North” activated a coalition antiterrorist grouping of troops (forces) on the Orenburg axis for preventing the spread of international terrorism...

Personnel, arms, and military equipment are being landed on the left flank. By decision of the commander of the antiterrorist coalition grouping of troops (forces), Airborne Troops formations are being employed in the form of an air assault operation with the objective of assisting the grouping of troops on the Central Asiatic Strategic Axis in a crushing defeat of the “enemy” and capture of important areas (lines). The 98th Guards Airborne Division is being employed as an operational-level assault force and the 31st Separate Air Assault Brigade is conducting air assault operations. That form of employing Airborne Troops (VDV) formations permits significantly increasing the gamut of missions accomplished in the enemy rear...Simultaneously with the Russian servicemen, a CPLA airborne company consisting of 12 airborne fighting vehicles and 96 persons is being landed on the right flank from four Il-76MD aircraft and a Y-9 aircraft...

The drop of an airborne regiment in full strength with organic weapons and military equipment as an operational-level assault force has been accomplished for the first time in the history of the Russian Armed Forces as part of Exercise Tsent-2019...Preparation of the operational-level assault force had been organized and conducted in an assault airlift staging area more than 1,500 kilometers from the area of upcoming combat operations at airfields in Ivanov, Ryazan, Ulyanovsk, and Saratovsk oblasts.

The drop of more than 2,000 airborne troopers and over 200 pieces of military equipment on previously unfamiliar landing zones had been carried out in less than 20 minutes by 71 Il-76MD aircraft of a Military Transport Aviation composite regiment at a speed of 360 kilometers per hour...The airborne troopers landed in the rear of the simulated enemy, performed missions of seizing a field strip, and supported high rates of advance by the main body of the troop grouping.

Work on an experiment to activate VDV formations of a “new type” had continued during Exercise Tsent-2019. As part of this experiment, a Spetsnaz team of the armed forces of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan together with Russian airborne troopers of the 31st Separate Air Assault Brigade rehearsed combat training missions in a tactical assault landing in 128 army aviation helicopters on Donguz Range.

A total of around 1,500 airborne troopers of the Ulyanovsk Air Assault Formation took part in the tactical landing. Mi-8 helicopters were used for the first time to airlift personnel and deliver D-30 howitzers on the helicopter sling arrangement as part of the experiment in the airmobile reserve landing phase. Using that method of delivery considerably increased maneuverability of the artillery subunits.

A total of around 5,000 personnel and more than a thousand pieces of military equipment of two Airborne Troops formations -- 98th Airborne Division and 31st Separate Air Assault Brigade -- were in action in SKShU Tsent-2019.

Source: “На учениях “Центр-2019” при десантировании разбились две БМД (During ‘Tsent-2019’ Exercise Two BMDs Were Destroyed While Landing),” *Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online*, 22 September 2019. <https://rg.ru/2019/09/22/reg-pfo/na-ucheniiah-centr-2019-pri-desantirovanii-razbilis-dva-bmd.html>

During ‘Tsent-2019’ Exercise Two BMDs Were Destroyed While Landing

In the Orenburg Oblast, at the Tsent--2019 exercises, the parachute systems of two airborne combat vehicles (BMDs) failed while being deployed from a Il-76 aircraft. As a result of the incident, the BMDs were severely damaged.

According to the Russian Ministry of Defense, the incident happened on September 20.

The fighting vehicles, as reported by TASS, landed without personnel and, and therefore, there were no casualties. The circumstances and causes of the incident are being determined by the Airborne Forces Commission together with industry representatives...



Arctic Portion of Tsentr-2019

OE Watch Commentary: As promised, the Northern Sea Fleet added an Arctic portion to the major Tsentr 2019 exercise far to the south. As the first accompanying passage discusses, this was the first time that an exercise of this kind was held on Bolshevik Island, located by the entrance to the Vilkitsky Strait, the waterway used by ships sailing on the Northern Sea Route. According to the passage, they conducted an amphibious landing, which involved Navy divers, helicopter aviation, and landing craft and vehicles. Earlier, this force was involved in a larger riverine landing from the north-flowing Arctic Yenisei River. Although remote to the much larger Tsentr 2019 exercise, it secured the northern flank of Central Russia and tested communications and command and control over a very extensive area. The landing was part of the summer training program. It was staged here because the landing area is on the periphery of a potential chokepoint on the Northern Sea Route—the Vilkitsky Strait. As the second passage reports, Russia is spending some serious money (\$19 million) to construct a radar installation south of the landing site to help control the area. (Also see: “Center 2019: More than a Military Exercise,” *OE Watch*, October 2019) **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**



Bolshevik Island.

Source: Kennorv via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Severnaya_Zemlya.svg, Public domain

“More than 500 soldiers were involved in the exercise that... took place on the Bolshevik island, the piece of land that separates the Kara Sea and Laptev Sea. The training came shortly before Russia launched this year’s biggest drills, the Tsentr-2019.”

Source: Atle Staalesen, “As Russia launches war games Tsentr-2019, Arctic troops advance on Bolshevik Island,” *Barents Sea Independent Observer*, 16 September 2019. <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2019/09/revanchist-forces-advance-bolshevik-island>

A team of armed divers first made it to the Arctic shore and was soon followed by two high-speed light boats and two Ka-27 helicopters. Large landing vessels Aleksandr Otrakovsky and Kondopoga subsequently put 10 BTR-82A amphibious vehicles and troops ashore. The large anti-submarine vessel Vice-Admiral Kulakov was nearby on station.

Reportedly this is the first time that an exercise of this kind was held on the 11,300 square kilometer large island located by the entrance to the Vilkitsky Strait, the waterway used by ships sailing on the Northern Sea Route. The Bolshevik island is located at 78 degrees North and constitutes the southern part of archipelago Severnaya Zemlya.

The exercise was held as part of an ongoing major voyage of the Northern Fleet vessels. The ships set out from the Kola Peninsula in early August and several exercises have subsequently followed including the [Riverine landing on the] Taymyr Peninsula.

Following the drills in the Bolshevik Island, the troops proceeded towards the island of Uyedineniya in the Kara Sea.

Source: Atle Staalesen, “New Major Radar to be built a Russia’s northernmost point,” *Barents Sea Independent Observer*, 17 September 2019. <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/arctic-security/2019/09/new-major-radar-be-built-russias-northernmost-point>

The facility is to be built in 33 months. A tender on its development was recently announced by Rosgranstroy, the federal border development authority. The project is officially called “Radio-technical point Chelyuskin” and includes a cost frame of 1.2 billion rubles (€17 million). The radar installation is classified as a military project and few details are known about the contract. Cape Chelyuskin is the northernmost point on the Russian mainland. It is located on the coast of the Taymyr Peninsula, where the Vilkitsky Strait separates the mainland with the archipelago of Severnaya Zemlya. Practically all shipping along the Northern Sea Route runs through the Strait and it is consequently considered a strategically key point in Russian Arctic development.



Egyptian Paratroopers on Russian Soil: 'Defenders of Friendship 2019'

by Jörgen Elfving

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For the full article, see: <https://jamestown.org/program/egyptian-paratroopers-on-russian-soil-defenders-of-friendship-2019/>

OE Watch Commentary: On August 19–29, Russia hosted the multinational exercise Defenders of Friendship 2019, which involved the joint participation of Russian and Egyptian paratroopers as well as Belarusian special forces. The exercise was the fourth of its kind in four years.

Its first iteration took place in Egypt in October 2016, near Alexandria, and consisted of an anti-terrorist scenario, while featuring 500 paratroopers (of which 200 were from Russia), 10 combat vehicles (BMD-2s and BTR-Ds) and 10 military aircraft. The Russian participants came from the 106th Guards Airborne Division, in Tula. Whether the participating Egyptian personnel were ordinary paratroopers is somewhat uncertain—at least one source identified them as special forces. The actual airdrop exercise was accomplished with Russian paratroopers jumping from an Il-76 aircraft, while Egyptian paratroopers parachuted out of a CASA plane. Observers from 30 countries attended the maneuvers.

The next Defenders of Friendship exercise occurred in September 2017, at the Raevskoye range, near Novorossiysk. Like the previous year's drills, the number of participants was 500 paratroopers, of whom only 65 were from Egypt; the rest mainly consisted of Russian soldiers from the 7th Air Assault Division. In accordance with Russian requests, the Egyptians did not bring any weapons or equipment with them; these were, instead, provided by their Russian hosts, and included the advanced personal equipment system Ratnik. The actual rehearsed scenario is not mentioned in official reports on the exercise; it can be assumed, however, that anti-terrorism missions were again the primary focus.

The preparations for Defenders of Friendship 2018 began already in December 2017. This time, however, only about half of the overall participating personnel were Russian—specifically, 200 paratroopers from the 247th Air Assault Regiment of the 7th Air Assault Division. It should be noted that one source, cited by a pair of defense ministry articles, identifies two participating Russian officers as Spetsnaz (special forces) members, thus casting confusion over the actual source of the Russian contribution to the exercises in Egypt. What is clear, however, is that the total number of participants was 400 paratroopers, with the Russians under the command of Major General Aleksei Naumtsa, the deputy chief of staff of the Russian Airborne Forces and former commander of the 247th Air Assault Regiment. The exercise, held near Cairo, lasted from October 13 to 26, with the active phase occurring during October 24–26. The timing of the exercise during October was likely a change of plans: one source mentions that, according to initial planning, Defenders of Friendship 2018 had been scheduled for November. Like in 2016 (and presumably 2017), the exercise featured an anti-terrorist scenario and was also monitored by foreign observers—though this time, from only 13 countries. An interesting detail was the reported first-ever use of 12.7-millimeter sniper rifles during these maneuvers.

Defenders of Friendship 2019, in turn, has been the most comprehensive since this series of exercises began. It included 1,000 paratroopers: 650 Russians, 150 Egyptians and, for the first time, 250 Belarusians. The Belarusian contribution to this latest exercise belonged to the 38th Air Assault Brigade, based in Brest—a unit that is part of the Belarusian special forces. The Russian paratroopers came from the 137th Airborne Regiment, subordinated to the 106th Airborne Division. The commander of the 106th Airborne, Major General Pavel Kirsi, served as exercise director. And, as in 2017, the Egyptians arrived in Russia without weapons or personal equipment, relying instead on their Russian hosts. The active phase of the exercise lasted two days, August 27–28, and began with the joint paratrooper force, under the command of Russian Colonel Dmitry Zavgorodniy, being dropped at the Noviki range, in Ryazan Oblast. As in earlier years, this exercise focused on an anti-terrorist scenario: the joint force was tasked with retaking an airfield seized by non-state militants and preventing further terrorist activities. Defenders of Friendship 2019 concluded with a live-fire exercise.

Looking at all four Defenders of Friendship exercises as a whole, they follow a similar pattern and all feature a similar anti-terrorist scenario. All exercises included a preparatory phase, during which the participants could become acquainted with each other and the equipment to be used during the drills, followed by an active (combat) phase. To judge from the exercise this year, it seems that the events to take place during the active phase are rehearsed during the preparatory phase. In this way, organizers ensure that the active phase is carried out without any mishaps and the actions of the participating units can be given an excellent grade. The number of participants has, with the exception of 2019, been rather limited; but Russian paratroopers have tended to form a majority of attendees in almost all years.

It is reasonable to assume that Defenders of Friendship came about as a result of a meeting in November 2013 between the Russian and Egyptian ministers of defense and of foreign affairs. This was the first such meeting of its kind since Soviet times. During the bilateral ministerial, the Egyptian foreign minister explicitly stated that his country wished for relations with Russia to be boosted to where they had been during Soviet times. Defenders of Friendship is thus likely a way for Moscow to show that it is also interested in reestablishing and maintaining military relations with Cairo; and it may also be a way of promoting sales of Russian military equipment. This series of exercises will therefore likely continue. It remains to be seen whether the participation of Belarusian paratroopers will be repeated next year. But Mink's recent announcement that it is investing in the Suez Canal Economic Zone, alongside Russia, may be telling. (Also see: "Egypt and Russia Deepening Military Cooperation," *OE Watch*, October 2019) **End OE Watch Commentary (Elfving)**



Russian Logistics: Supplying the Bases of the Northern Fleet

OE Watch Commentary: Razor blades, toilet paper, food, batteries, fuel.... the list of expendables goes on and on. In some Arctic bases, there is one big shipment a year and hopefully the logistician and the loader included everything. The packed ice is getting thinner, but there are places in the Arctic that are still only accessible during the limited summer. Ice breakers are helpful, but it is considerably easier to let the seasons assist the effort. Moving the goods ship-to-shore is also difficult, as is moving them shore-to-ship. The ships don't sail away empty. The garbage and containers don't stay on the island-- flattened fuel drums and all the detritus is returned to Murmansk for further processing. It's not a glamorous mission, but it is essential to maintaining control in the Arctic.

As the accompanying passage reports, a firm named Oboronlogistika [Defense Logistics] now has the contract for supplying the bases of the Northern Fleet. According to the passage, Oboronlogistika was established in 2011, is completely owned by the Russian Ministry of Defense; and has an exclusive delivery agreement with them. They have more than doubled the tonnage delivery of last year. The world's only nuclear-powered container ship, Sevmorput, was part of this effort. Previously (through 2018) the Northern Fleet supply ships had the job and delivered 38,000 tons to fewer bases. The Northern Fleet was still building new bases and much of this tonnage was construction equipment and material plus fuel. (Also see: "The One Time in the Year We Get Bananas," *OE Watch*, June 2018) **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

“State military shipping company Oboronlogistika has this year delivered 30,000 tons of goods to Russia’s new Navy bases in the High Arctic.”

Source: Atle Staalesen, “Deliveries to Arctic Bases up 200%,” *Barents Sea Independent Observer*, 1 October 2019. <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2019/10/deliveries-arctic-military-bases-200>

Deliveries to Arctic Bases up 200%

During January-September, the company that has an exclusive delivery agreement with the Russian Ministry of Defense made 11 shipments to the Novaya Zemlya Archipelago and other places in the Arctic. About 30,000 tons of goods were delivered... In 2018, the total volumes of the deliveries amounted to 11,000 tons.

Various goods were delivered, among them construction materials for social infrastructure projects.

The shipments were made from the ports of Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, Vladivostok, Vanino, and Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky and the goods were delivered to sites without developed infrastructure [wharfs, piers and cranes].

Oboronlogistika also took part in the removal of scrap metal from the region. A total of 3,000 tons of metal waste and worn-out machinery was taken from Novaya Zemlya and the island of Kotelnny in the New Siberian Islands.

Oboronlogistika was established in 2011 and is 100 percent owned by the Russian Ministry of Defense.

Fangs of the Lone Wolf

Chechen Tactics in the Russian-Chechen Wars 1994-2009

Dodge Billingsley
with Lester Grau

Fangs of the Lone Wolf is about combat experience in urban, mountain and fairly open terrain. It is not a comprehensive history of conflict. This book is a series of snapshots — of vignettes — describing the difficulty, the hardship, the victories and the defeats of the participants. It is an examination of the raw data of combat in a foreign land, and is aimed to advance the professional military study of conflict.

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



Cracking Down on Draft-Dodgers

OE Watch Commentary: The Autumn 2019 conscription drive is in full swing, and from 1 October to 31 December, the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) plans to draft 132,000 young Russian men into military service. Despite the massive public relations campaign over the past decade to improve the reputation of fulfilling conscript duty, a fair portion of young Russian men still try to avoid their mandatory one-year military obligation. The accompanying excerpts describe how the MoD is trying to crack down on those who try to dodge the draft.

The first excerpt from the popular daily *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, describes how defense officials are starting to target and prosecute the hundreds of online “services that provide ‘legal advice’” to help young Russian men avoid military service. To discourage young men from using these services, the article warns that many of these “websites... are engaged in fraud, receiving money for services that they obviously cannot provide,” and that law enforcement agencies are working to shut them down.

The second excerpt from the pro-Kremlin site *Izvestiya*, describes proposed legislation (due to be implemented by the end of the year) which will eliminate one of the more common draft-evasion ploys. Under the current legislation, as long as a young Russian male can avoid being served his draft notice (often by moving to another city), he can claim that he never received the conscription summons. Under the proposed amendment, “military commissars will register all young people in their area of responsibility... including those whose residence on the territory of the commissariat is not recorded in their passport.” This will allow military officials to draft those young men who have moved to avoid military service.

Finally, the third passage from the moderate news source *Novaya Izvestiya*, describes how during the recent unsanctioned protests in Moscow, law enforcement officials detained 300 draft-age young men who did not have a valid draft deferment. The article asserts that possible prosecution for draft-evasion “will be removed if the draftee reports to the military commissariat and completes all established recruiting measures.” If the young man is found to be fit, “he will be drafted and sent to the place of military service.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“...In the fall, 132 thousand young people are expected to be called up for military service....”

Source: Artemy Sharapov, “Прокуратура рассказала о борьбе с нелегальными «военными юристами», помогающими «откосить» (The prosecutor’s office spoke about the fight against illegal ‘military lawyers’ helping to ‘dodge the draft’),” *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, 30 September 2019. <https://www.mk.ru/politics/2019/09/30/prokuratura-rasskazala-o-borbe-s-nelegalnymi-voennymi-yuristami-pomogayushhimi-otkosit.html>

...In the fall, 132 thousand young people are expected to be called up for military service.... The number of draft dodgers is declining, according to the Ministry of Defense. However, over the past period, the military prosecutor’s office initiated proceedings against 1,000 people, mainly draft-dodgers...

...The fight, as the representative of the Main Military Prosecutor’s Office (GWP) said, is taking place on several fronts at once. One of them, virtual, has moved into the IT sphere. So, the representative of the GWP, Colonel of Justice Dmitry Kostin, said that there has been an increase in the popularity of services that provide ‘legal advice’ to conscripts. In fact, they are engaged in fraud, receiving money for services that they obviously cannot provide.

As part of the fight against this kind of fraud, he said, military investigators work together with law enforcement agencies. They are constantly searching for fraud websites in order to block them....

Source: Roman Kretsul, Alexey Ramm, Alexey Kozachenko, “Определенное место жительства: в армию призовут даже без прописки (A specific place of residence: they will be drafted into the army even without registration),” *Izvestiya*, 20 September 2019. <https://iz.ru/923157/roman-kretcul-aleksei-ramm-aleksei-kozachenko/opredelennoe-mesto-zhitelstva-v-armiiu-prizovut-dazhe-bez-propiski>

...Military commissars will register all young people in their area of responsibility. Including those whose residence on the territory of the commissariat is not recorded in their passport.... They are expected to enter into force at the end of this year, three sources in the military department said....

...These rules related to registration were actively used by young people who wanted to avoid military service — they simply changed their place of residence without informing anyone of this. As a result, the summons regularly sent by the military enlistment office did not find the addressee....

Source: “Либо уголовка, либо служи! Выбор для призывников, задержанных на протестных акциях (Either prison, or serve! Choice for draftees detained in protests),” *Novaya Izvestiya*, 26 September 2019. <https://newizv.ru/news/politics/26-09-2019/libo-ugolovka-libo-sluzhi-vybor-dlya-prizyvnikov-zaderzhannyh-na-protestnyh-aktsiyah/rrr>

...About 300 detainees from the unsanctioned protests in Moscow are conscript-age young men who do not have a right to a deferment; materials are being drawn up against them for prosecution for evading conscription....

...It is noted that the issue of prosecution will be removed if the draftee reports to the military commissariat and completes all established recruiting measures... following which he will be drafted and sent to the place of military service.



Russia-China: Potential Allies or Adversaries?

OE Watch Commentary: The Chinese and Russian militaries continue to strengthen their joint capabilities. While the term “alliance” may be too strong to describe their relationship, the leadership in both countries share good personal relations and a number of similar strategic objectives. The first excerpt from the weekly *Voенно-Promyshlenny Kurier (VPK)*, provides an overview of what they define as a “comprehensive partnership and strategic interaction” within the military realm.

The article begins by describing how “in early September,” senior Chinese and Russian defense officials “signed an Agreement on further deepening cooperation.” It then goes on to list the major joint military exercises the two countries have conducted over the past several years, whether “on land, in the air and at sea,” asserting that their “military cooperation is not directed against third countries.” The article reminds readers that in 2014, the Chinese leader said “that the PRC would not join the military bloc with either Russia or anyone else,” but that by “relying on its ‘soft power’” would rather “form a network of partnerships around the world.”

Not all Russian observers, however, view their country’s growing relationship with the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in a positive light. The second excerpt from another article in the same issue of *VPK*, argues that modern China will pursue its own interests—even at the expense of Russia. The author reminds readers that during the Afghan war, “the PRC became the most important member of the anti-Soviet coalition in Afghanistan,” and asserts that “at least half of the Soviet troops were killed by Chinese weapons.” The bulk of the author’s argument against a closer alignment with China stems from the Chinese “demographic [and economic] expansion into Central Asia.” The author describes how Chinese officials have offered loans to Central Asian countries, and when they can’t settle these debts, these countries “have to pay with mineral resources, enterprises, and in some cases, apparently, territories.” For instance, the article states that in exchange for a \$1.5 billion debt, Tajikistan “paid China with territory, moreover, we are talking about no less than a thousand square kilometers.”

Relations today between Russia and China, particularly in the military realm, are as good as they have ever been. However, these relations may become strained if China continues to expand its economic prowess into regions where the Kremlin hopes to retain a privileged sphere of influence. (Also see: “Russian Analysis of China’s Military,” “Chinese Regions to Begin Working Directly with Russian Ones,” “Growing Sino-Russia Ties: How Real are They?” *OE Watch*, August 2019; and “China Upgrades Relations with Russia,” *OE Watch*, July 2019) **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“Most loans come naturally from China, which is not going to forgive anything even to its most important strategic ally, and only enslaves it even more.”

Source: Vladimir Vinokurov, “Глобальное совместное патрулирование (Global Joint-Patrol),” *Voенно-Promyshlenny Kurier*, 30 September 2019. <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/52737>

...Today, China and Russia have raised bilateral ties to the level of comprehensive partnership and strategic interaction. This was fully confirmed by the results of the state visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Russia on June 5–7 and the signed documents: “Joint statement of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China on the development of comprehensive partnership and strategic interaction entering a new era.”

...In early September, Deputy Chairman of the Central Military Council of the People’s Republic of China Zhang Yusha and Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu signed an Agreement on further deepening cooperation....

...The White Paper on Defense, published by Beijing on July 24, states that military cooperation with Russia is developing at a high level and plays a significant role in maintaining global strategic stability. It is emphasized that military cooperation is not directed against third countries and will increase on land, in the air and at sea. Since 2012, officers of the two armies held seven rounds of strategic consultations. In 2017, Russia and China organized the first joint naval maneuvers in the Baltic Sea. In 2018, PLA formations took part in the Vostok strategic exercises. In April-May of this year, “Naval Interaction” took place in the Qingdao area.... To participate in the Center-2019 large-scale Russian military exercises held on September 16–21, China deployed 3,500 troops, 900 heavy weapons, and 30 PLA Northern Command units....

...If you rely on the official statements of the Chinese top leaders, they adhere to a non-aligned policy, exclude military alliances with anyone, oppose the use of force, and the peaceful resolution of disputed issues. So, speaking at the end of 2014 to the members of the standing committee of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPC and high-ranking officials with a lengthy speech on the country’s foreign policy, Xi Jinping said that the PRC would not join the military bloc with either Russia or anyone else. It would only tie Beijing’s hands. China will strengthen its influence in the world by forming a network of friends on all continents, relying on its “soft power.” The Chinese leader stressed the need to stay away from military blocs, in other words, pursue a non-aligned course. Blocs are not needed; instead, China will form a network of partnerships around the world.



Continued: Russia-China: Potential Allies or Adversaries?

Source: Alexander Khramchikhin, “Острые углы Шелкового пути (Sharp corners of the Silk Road),” *Voenno-Promyshlenny Kurier*, 30 September 2019. <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/52736>

...In the 80s, the PRC became the most important member of the anti-Soviet coalition in Afghanistan. At least half of the OKSV troops were killed by Chinese weapons.... With the collapse of the USSR, the situation in the region has changed markedly. Economic reforms were in full swing in the PRC, which made it possible to quickly begin commodity, and at the same time, demographic expansion into Central Asia.

...The PRC is increasingly dependent on supplies of raw materials from Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia.... Most loans come naturally from China, which is not going to forgive anything even to its most important strategic ally, and only enslaves it even more. This is Beijing's style; there are never exceptions for anyone.

...A very similar situation is developing in Central Asia - the countries of this region are already in debt... and have to pay China with mineral resources, enterprises, and in some cases, apparently, territories.

...In Tajikistan, Chinese companies, in payment for the construction of thermal power plants and roads, received the right to develop several gold deposits, and the conditions for the Chinese were much more favorable than if the parties signed an equal commercial contract. The total debt of Tajikistan with China is approaching one and a half billion dollars - a huge amount for a weak economy... There is evidence that Dushanbe has already paid with China and territory, moreover, we are talking about no less than a thousand square kilometers.

...It is only natural that Beijing's economic influence in the region develops into a military-political one.... This means the actual transformation of China into a world power with global geopolitical ambitions. Apparently, a step has already been taken, and the PLA contingent is deployed in Tajikistan. Officially, neither Beijing nor Dushanbe announced this, but the proof is there.

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Russian Military Journalism and Bad News

OE Watch Commentary: While there is no question that the combat capabilities of the Russian armed forces have improved over the past decade, it is not clear how much of this improvement is genuine and how much can be attributed to the Kremlin's quasi-control over the media. Not only has the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) enacted policies that restrict reporting on casualties and the use of social media within the ranks, but the MoD has developed their own extensive media holding (e.g. Zvezda TV) to highlight every military accomplishment. Not surprisingly, since military readiness has become a major Kremlin achievement, negative military reporting has become rare. Nevertheless, as the two brief accompanying excerpts suggest, critical military reporting still exists.

The first excerpt from the pro-business daily *RBC*, describes how a military journalist for *Izvestiya* was removed from his job after he wrote a column “with a critical assessment of the activities of Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.” The article, which was later posted on the journalist’s social media account, did not contain anything scandalous about the Defense Minister, but merely suggested “that the key decisions regarding the restructuring of the Armed Forces and their management were not made by Shoigu, but under [the former minister] Anatoly Serdyukov.” Such an assessment, however, according to officials at *Izvestiya*, was a “violation of corporate work standards,” and grounds for removal of the journalist.

The second excerpt from the somewhat independent *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozreniye*, examines defense spending in the “draft federal budget for 2020–2022,” and suggests, “the budget for next year contains significant resources for the purchase of military equipment and weapons, but, as before, funds for solving the social problems of the military are excluded or extremely limited.” The article focuses particularly upon recent military veterans who were injured while on active duty and have difficulty obtaining necessary medical and social care. The author quotes a leader of a veteran’s organization, who complains that “former military personnel who have been injured or became ill during their military service and who haven’t been in service for 20 years, experience significant problems with treatment in military medical institutions.”

The Kremlin leadership has worked hard to improve the combat capabilities and pride in the country’s armed forces over the past several years. A key component in this restoration has been a focus upon positive military reporting. However, it remains to be seen whether precluding non-critical military journalism ultimately supports that trend. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“...So it turns out that many young officers and contract soldiers who were injured in Syria or other hot spots and were discharged from the army may find themselves in a situation where they are denied treatment in military hospitals...”

Source: “Известия не продлили контракт с автором колонки о Шойгу и Сердюкове (Izvestia did not renew the contract with the author of the column on Shoigu and Serdyukov),” *RBC*, 26 September 2019. <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/26/09/2019/5d8ca2cf9a7947586bc2497e>

Izvestia journalist, Ilya Kramnik, whose column contained a critical assessment of the activities of Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu (which was removed from the publication’s website), did not have his contract renewed. The press service of the *Izvestia* International Information Center explained to *RBC*, that the refusal to continue cooperation with Kramnik is connected with a ‘violation of corporate work standards.’

On Sunday, September 22, the *Moskovsky Komsomolets* newspaper published an interview with Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu. Kramnik analyzed the interview and wrote in the author’s column that the key decisions regarding the restructuring of the Armed Forces and their management were not made by Shoigu, but under Anatoly Serdyukov...

Five hours after publication, the article was deleted from the *Izvestiya* website, Kramnik said. The next day, *Izvestia*’s management announced to Kramnik that they would not renew their contract with him.

Source: Vladimir Mukhin, “Для решения социальных проблем военнослужащих в казне денег нет (There is no money in the treasury to solve the social problems of servicemen),” *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozreniye*, 26 September 2019. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2019-09-26/1_2_7687_army.html

The government has published a draft federal budget for 2020–2022. It is already clear that radical changes in the field of defense financing are not expected in the next three years....

...A year ago, Viktor Bondarev, head of the Federation Council’s Defense and Security Committee, said that 112 Russian troops were killed during a military operation in Syria. In the same year, the Ministry of Defense reported the deaths of several more military personnel. However, official statistics on wounded officers and soldiers are not publicly available. The increase in budget expenditures to help such people indicates that their number is increasing.

The problem is not only in increasing financial compensation for them, but also in receiving other social assistance. “Former military personnel who have been injured, injured, and sick during their military service and who haven’t been in service for 20 years, experience significant problems with treatment in military medical institutions (VLU),” the chairman of the Central Committee of the All-Russian Military Labor Union (OPSV) told NG) Captain 1st Rank Oleg Shvedkov.... “So it turns out that many young officers and contract soldiers who were injured and injured in Syria or other hot spots and were discharged from the army may find themselves in a situation where they are denied treatment in military hospitals,” says Shvedkov....

...Thus, the draft defense budget for next year contains significant resources for the purchase of military equipment and weapons, but, as before, funds for solving the social problems of the military are excluded or extremely limited.



Constructing the Temple of Victory for the Russian Armed Forces

OE Watch Commentary: With the official inauguration of the Russian Armed Forces' new cathedral less than six months away (9 May 2020), the construction pace at Patriot Park has gone into overdrive. In a recent and detailed article, a reporter from the liberal weekly *Novaya Gazeta* visited the building site and described the immense scale and pace, the projected cost, the construction challenges, as well as some of the unique characteristics of what is now being termed "the Temple of Victory." The article begins by pointing out that construction only began "on September 19, 2018, [when] President Vladimir Putin, Minister of Defense Sergey Shoigu, and Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill took part in the blessing ceremony for the foundation stone." Since then, construction has been non-stop, with "a thousand workers working on the territory," building what "will become the third highest of all Orthodox churches in the world."



Visit by President Putin and Defense Minister Shoigu to examine a model of the Main Temple of the Armed Forces in Patriot Park, 19 September 2018.
Source: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58595/photos>, CC-BY 4.0

Since the cathedral commemorates those who died in the "Great Patriotic War" (WW II), the builders have incorporated a number of important military symbols into the project. For instance, the road that connects the sites on the complex is "about 1.5 kilometers," which corresponds to "1418 steps - the number of days and nights of the war." The article also briefly examines the funding for this project, pointing out that besides the voluntary contributions (approximately 3 billion rubles or \$47 million), many Russian companies are providing free materials and equipment. While the final cost for the project is still unknown, one source quoted in the article suggests that it "may cost about 6-8 billion rubles (approximately \$100 million) due to the expensive interior decoration."

The article addresses the high maintenance costs for this new project and questions the rationale in building such a huge cathedral (it will accommodate over six thousand parishioners) given its "location and difficult transport accessibility." Patriot Park is located some 40 miles outside of Moscow, and one expert quoted said that the new church "will be empty almost all the time." The article quotes a Russian religious scholar who claims that the militaristic design of this new edifice is "radically different... from the tradition of Orthodox churches," and that "it seems more of a 'temple to Mars, and not Christ.'" The construction spokesperson replied, however, that "all descendants of the Great Patriotic War will want to become visitors," and that the new cathedral will ensure "that the memory of that victory will be preserved from generation to generation." **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

"...We are building a temple to commemorate the victory in World War II, so that the memory of that victory will be preserved from generation to generation..."

Source: Alexandra Georgievich, "Торжество военного православия (The triumph of military Orthodoxy)," *Novaya Gazeta*, 30 September 2019. <https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2019/09/30/82141-hram-minoborony>

May 9, 2020, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War, the main temple of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation or, as it is also called, the Temple of Victory, will be inaugurated in the Patriot Park near Moscow. It will become the third highest of all Orthodox churches in the world... The *Novaya Gazeta* special correspondent went to Patriot Park to see how the construction is going, talked with Deputy Minister of Defense Timur Ivanov and found out how much the triumph of military Orthodoxy would cost.

...From afar, it seems even small, but then the look falls on temporary buildings, construction waste, trucks, people, and it becomes clear that the building is simply huge.

...On September 19, 2018, President Vladimir Putin, Minister of Defense Sergey Shoigu, and Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill took part in the blessing ceremony for the foundation stone of the Russian Armed Forces church in Patriot Park, not far from Kubinka, Moscow Region.... In September 2019, a thousand workers working on the territory and more than a hundred units of equipment are involved: cranes, concrete pumps, loaders...

...Bricks (1,100,000 pieces) as a voluntary donation was provided by the Kalashnikov concern.

Donations to the temple can be made in six different ways. One of them is assistance with construction equipment and materials.... According to the assurance of military builders, the concern is actively helping in the construction, but it provides materials, not cash. Indeed, you can donate not only money. On the website of the Resurrection Fund, it is indicated that all, whether individuals or legal entities, can make a donation in six different ways, including the item "construction equipment and materials." Many companies prefer to do just that.

...In summer, military builders began landscaping near the cathedral, laying external engineering networks, erecting two buildings: a multifunctional training center and the circular memorial gallery 'Memory Road' - a special pride of military builders. Its length will be about 1.5 kilometers, the main territory of the museum is marked out at 1418 steps - according to the number of days and nights of the war....

..."Yes, indeed, donations from individuals and organizations are approaching a figure of 3 billion rubles, to be precise, the amount has been collected 2,992,051,908 rubles 54 kopecks," Deputy Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation Timur Ivanov told *Novaya Gazeta*.... The temple of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation may cost about 6-8 billion rubles due to expensive interior decoration.

...According to the source, the project size involves attending divine services on average by about six thousand parishioners. Given the location and difficult transport accessibility, the temple of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation will be empty almost all the time.

...Timur Ivanov is convinced that at least once in his life, everyone will want to visit the temple of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, and taking into account the museum complex "Memory Road," all descendants of the Great Patriotic War will want to become visitors.... "We are building a temple to commemorate the victory in World War II, so that the memory of that victory will be preserved from generation to generation," he told *Novaya Gazeta*.

...Religious scholar Alexander Soldatov notes that this edifice is radically different both from his own ideas about Christianity, and from the tradition of designing Orthodox churches. "It seems that it will be some kind of temple of Mars, not Christ, figuratively speaking," he said.



Conscription in Kazakhstan

OE Watch Commentary: The government of Kazakhstan has been working for a number of years to change the ranks of its armed forces from conscripts to contract soldiers, with the goal of eventually having a force made up almost entirely of contractors. The accompanying excerpted article reports on Kazakhstan's 2019 draft and provides insight into the government's efforts to reduce conscription.

The article, from the Russian-language website *Inform Buro*, discusses various aspects of the draft in Kazakhstan, including how “the armed forces are now made up of 70 percent contractor soldiers.” Kazakhstan's Ministry of Defense previously stated that its goal was to

have the armed forces made up of 99 percent contract soldiers by the end of 2016. While the statistic mentioned in the article shows that this has not yet been achieved, and the percentage of contract soldiers has been at around 70 percent for several years, one official interviewed stated that the “requirements for candidates are tightened every year.”

The article notes how the “draft is also influenced by how many contract soldiers have applied” and that if conscripts “have submitted a number of applications, then it reduces the number of soldiers needed” for the draft. The Kazakh Ministry of Defense has looked to entice conscripts into becoming contractors as one way to achieve its goal. While this may not be taking place at an increasing rate as planned, the article shows that the number of contract soldiers remains steady and that the government continues to utilize the draft to fill a portion of its ranks. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**



Flag of the Kazakhstan Armed Forces.

Source: Ministry of Defense of Kazakhstan via Wikimedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_Forces_of_the_Republic_of_Kazakhstan#/media/File:Kazakhstan_Armed_Forces_Flag.svg, Public Domain

“The fact is that the armed forces are now made up of 70 percent contractor soldiers.”

Source: Adi Turkeyev, “Призыв в армию – 2019. Всё, что нужно знать (Conscription in the army – 2019. Everything you need to know),” *Inform Buro*, 30 September 2019. <https://informburo.kz/cards/prizyv-v-armiyu-2019-vsyo-cto-nuzhno-znat.html>

Every year about 16 thousand young Kazakhstanis are conscripted for military service... The fact is that the armed forces are now made up of 70 percent contractor soldiers. Conscripts are a minority... “The requirements for candidates are tightened every year. The selection and distribution of conscripts to military units factors not only suitability, but also special skills acquire by them before the draft,” said the head of the department of defense affairs of Almaty, Amantai Userbayev...

The draft is also influenced by how many contract soldiers have applied. In most units, there is a mix: conscripts and contract soldiers. If the latter have submitted a number of applications, then it reduces the number of soldiers needed...

Young people from the ages 24 to 27 can go through alternative military service. This includes those who are fit for service or are partially fit for health reasons, as well as those who have a deferment from conscription. Training of these takes place in military-technical schools of the Ministry of Defense... Over the course of 35 days, recruits will be training in weapons specialties... “Every year we train 50 to 100 people at the military-technical schools...,” said Userbayev. At the end of training, recruits pass final exams and receive military tickets...



Armenia's Strategic Large-Scale Military Exercises



Armenian army sniper during a field exercise in 2019.

Source: BoNDex via Wikimedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_Forces_of_Armenia#/media/File:Armenian_Sniper.jpg, CC BY-SA 4.0

OE Watch Commentary: Earlier this year, Armenia's Defense Minister David Tonoyan stated that the country's armed forces would no longer remain on a strategic defensive position and would look to neutralize the ambitions of any enemy preemptively (see: "Armenia's "Offensive" Strategy?," *OE Watch*, April 2019). These statements came amid the announcement that the Armenian government would acquire Su-30SMs fighters from Russia within the next few years. The accompanying excerpted articles report on a large-scale exercise of Armenia's armed forces alongside civilian agencies, providing a measurement of how the Armenian government is following through with any change in its strategic posture.

The articles from *Lragir* and *Armenpress* report on the exercise, including how its scenario involved a "deployment of the armed forces, countering the aggression of the enemy," a "conditional martial law" and that a member of the Armenian General Staff even "called on citizens to not interfere with the movement of military equipment on the roads." It is also noted how "exercises of this scale have not been carried out in Armenia" and that it featured reservists receiving orders to mobilize, though "only 6 percent of participants will be involved in the exercises." The articles do not mention any detailed information on how Armenian forces might counter the aggression of the enemy and while the scale of the exercise was large, the scenario focused largely on reacting to an enemy's actions, not any preemptive operations. The recent exercise suggests that part of the country's active deterrence policy includes boosting the military's assault capabilities to be prepared to, if necessary, respond to any aggression militarily. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

"Only 6 percent of participants will be involved in the exercises for 3-5 days..."

Source: "В Армении объявлено условное военное положение: начались широкомасштабные военные учения ВС Армении (A conditional martial law has been declared in Armenia: the start of a large-scale military exercise in Armenia)," *Lragir*, 24 September 2019. <https://www.lragir.am/ru/2019/09/24/156692/>

A conditional martial law has been declared in Armenia...on 24 September, large-scale strategic exercises on the scenario of "Deployment of the armed forces, countering the aggression of the enemy" started in Armenia, which also involves state and local agencies...

The head of the information department of the General Staff of the Armenian Armed Forces called on citizens to not interfere with the movement of military equipment on the roads...The exercises will last until October 5.

Source: "В Армении пройдут беспрецедентные военные учения (An unprecedented military exercise will take place in Armenia)," *Armenpress*, 19 September 2019. <https://armenpress.am/rus/news/988621.html>

...The Defense Minister noted that exercises of this scale have not been carried out in Armenia..."The remaining 94 percent will just be called to mobilization points. Only 6 percent of participants will be involved in the exercises for 3-5 days..." said David Tonoyan...

China's Latest "Show of Force" Sparks Concern and Commentary

OE Watch Commentary: China recently held a military parade to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. The fifth parade that has passed before President Xi Jinping, it is being touted as "the largest in scale and richest in substance," according to the first article extract from *China Daily*. The parade has drawn global attention as observers strive to comprehend China's growing military capabilities. The three accompanying passages, published in *China Daily*, *South China Morning Post (SCMP)*, and *Agence France Press (AFP)*, discuss the highlights of the parade and provide insight into the significance and perceptions from both the Chinese and the foreign press.

Some of the more noteworthy weapons and military systems rolled out during the parade include several Dongfeng (DF), which translates as "East Wind" series missile systems. These included the DF-17 hypersonic ballistic missile and the DF-41 intercontinental ballistic missile, both of which made their debuts. The DF-17 is a short to medium-range missile that has a hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) and can deliver both nuclear and conventional payloads, although Chinese sources are highlighting it as a conventional weapon. The advantage of an HGV is its unpredictable trajectory, making it extremely difficult to counter. The DF-41 is believed to have the longest range - over 7,500 miles - and is described as "the mainstay of China's strategic nuclear strength." Both of these missiles demonstrate significant advances in military innovation for China.

China also showcased a host of other missiles, drones, and tanks and its main military branches, along with the newly established PLA Strategic Support Force and PLA Joint Logistic Support Force. According to *China Daily*, some people view the military parade as a "waste of money" or a "show of military muscle to the world." However, the author argues that the parade was held to "inspire both the PLA and the Chinese people to endeavor to achieve the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation." Cui Yiliang, editor-in-chief of a defense magazine explained that the goal of the nuclear weapons was to serve as a nuclear deterrent and also to be available to conduct a second strike in retaliation in the event of an attack by a third country.

China Daily refutes any claims of the country being a threat, but other sources see the show of force in a different light. According to *SCMP*, Rory Medcalf, head of the National Security College at Australian National University in Canberra expressed his opinion through a tweet that said, "rolling nuclear-capable missiles through the streets is the ultimate show of insecurity and cold war thinking." *AFP* described the parade as a "tightly choreographed procession across Tiananmen Square," which "underscored a level of material and technological innovation that is increasingly viewed by many as a threat to US dominance in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond." **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

"...Rolling nuclear-capable missiles through the streets is the ultimate show of insecurity and Cold War thinking."



DF-31 Ballistic Missiles.

Source: Tyg728 via Wikimedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dongfeng_\(missile\)#/media/File:DF-31_ballistic_missiles_20170919.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dongfeng_(missile)#/media/File:DF-31_ballistic_missiles_20170919.jpg), CC BY-SA 4.0



Continued: China's Latest "Show of Force" Sparks Concern and Commentary

Source: Li Daguang, "Commitment to Peace, Not to Conflicts," *China Daily*, 25 September 2019. <https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201909/25/WS5d8b1568a310cf3e3556d6e4.html>

Commitment to Peace, Not to Conflicts

The parade, the biggest ever, according to the organizers, apart from highlighting China's achievements in other fields, will also showcase some advanced weapons for the first time.

The parade will also showcase the achievements of the military reforms, particularly the military command system reform, and the optimization of size, structure and force composition, apart from highlighting the high level of the military's informatization and its capability in real combat.

The soldier formation will reflect the transformation of the command system and composition of the forces. Not only the main military branches — People's Liberation Army Ground Force, PLA Navy, PLA Air Force, PLA Rocket Force, the People's Armed Police Force — but also the newly established PLA Strategic Support Force and PLA Joint Logistic Support Force will participate in the parade.

Some have claimed the military parade is a "waste of money" or "show of military muscle to the world", but the parade is being held based on the principle of reasonable expenditure and to inspire both the PLA and the Chinese people to endeavor to achieve the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

And to those in other countries speculating about the purpose of the military parade suffice it to say there is nothing untoward in the display of China's military power, as it is not intended as a threat to any country.

Source: Minnie Chan and Liu Zhen, "China Rolls Out New Weapon Systems, Nuclear Capable Missiles in Military Parade," *South China Morning Post*, 1 October 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3031145/china-rolls-out-new-weapon-systems-nuclear-capable-missiles>

China Rolls Out New Weapon Systems, Nuclear Capable Missiles in Military Parade

Among them, the Dongfeng, or "East Wind", series of missile systems drew the most attention. They included the DF-17 hypersonic ballistic missile, DF-16 and DF-26 medium-range missiles, and the DF-31AG and DF-41 intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The DF-17 – which has a hypersonic glide vehicle that can deliver both nuclear and conventional payloads – was one of the systems making its debut. But the missile in the parade was equipped with a conventional warhead, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

Rory Medcalf, head of the National Security College at Australian National University in Canberra, noted its inclusion in the National Day parade, saying in a tweet that "rolling nuclear-capable missiles through the streets is the ultimate show of insecurity and cold war thinking."

Source: "Missiles, Drones and Tanks: China Shows Off Military Prowess," *Agence France Press*, 1 October 2019. <https://www.france24.com/en/20191001-missiles-drones-and-tanks-china-shows-off-military-prowess>

Missiles, Drones and Tanks: China Shows Off Military Prowess

China put its growing military might on full display Tuesday (Oct 1) with a parade of new ballistic missiles, supersonic drones and next-generation battlefield tanks that highlighted Beijing's accelerating race to match the firepower of its US rival.

The tightly choreographed procession across Tiananmen Square underscored a level of material and technological innovation that is increasingly viewed by many as a threat to US dominance in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

President Xi Jinping, who reviewed the troops before the parade marking 70 years of Communist Party rule, has pushed for the People's Liberation Army to become a "world-class" military by mid-century.

According to state news agency Xinhua, the Dongfeng-41 missiles are "the mainstay of China's strategic nuclear strength".

The short-to-medium-range DF-17 missile made its public debut. It is believed to be capable of releasing a "hypersonic glider" from the edge of space, with a tough-to-predict trajectory.

"This display of nuclear weapons doesn't signal a change in China's nuclear strategy," said Cui Yiliang, editor-in-chief of industry magazine "Modern warships".

"It will continue to have a small but effective nuclear arsenal. The goal is to have a nuclear deterrent and be able to conduct a second strike in retaliation in case of an attack by a third country," Cui said.



The People's Republic of China Celebrates 70 Years: Regional Perspectives

OE Watch Commentary: The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) celebrated the 70th anniversary of the People's Republic of China on 1 October with a large military parade in Beijing. State media reports allude to the CCP's desire to develop China's international relations through peaceful means while also developing military capabilities for the enhancement of national security. On 6 October, the Chinese state-owned *Xinhua News Agency* spoke highly of the parade and noted the strength of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). "The glory of the times is engraved in the hearts of every soldier. Our heroic army has the confidence and ability to create a new chapter for the military's cause, achieve the goal of 'two hundred years' of progress, and to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Dream big and let us make new and greater contributions for maintaining world peace!"

Following the line of the CCP's "peaceful rise" ethos, the Chinese government newspaper *People's Daily* published an article on 6 October with several appraisals from foreign experts. According to the article, a French historian believed "the grand military parade demonstrated China's military strength and the spirit of the Chinese military, adding that China's active participation in international affairs has contributed to safeguarding world peace and regional stability." The CCP has felt the need to reiterate its benign status before. For example, on 14 December 2010 State Councilor Dai Bingguo stated "China's strategic intention can be defined in two words: peaceful development, i.e. harmony and development at home and peace and cooperation abroad. This is what we must focus on and achieve - not just this generation but for generations to come. This is the policy that will not change in 100 years or 1,000 years."



Chinese President Xi Jinping, September 19, 2012.
Source: DoD photo by Erin A. Kirk-Cuomo via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Xi_Jinping_Sept._19._2012.jpg, Public domain

Two articles from Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* assert China's military parade will deter potential allies, a far-flung perception from the CCP's hopes of fostering a benign reputation. The first article published on 7 October noted China's increasingly aggressive claims and military posturing (such as that of the recent military parade) are unlikely to win international respect. "Billions of renminbi have been spent on militarizing the South China Sea, and many millions more are being spent on its maintenance. Meanwhile, hypersonic weaponry is being developed... China rages against any foreign power, corporation, or individual by whom it feels slighted today, yesterday, last year or in my grandpa's time." The article published on 13 October said "Beijing is walking a tightrope between its domestic and foreign audience. But the contrasting messages from its military parade will only undermine its efforts to improve relations with its neighbors and persuade Western nations to embrace a rising China, and all because it wanted to bolster the party's legitimacy by strengthening nationalism at home."

South Korean and Japanese news outlets noted the military parade's peculiar timing amidst the ongoing Hong Kong protests. On 30 September *The Japan Times* wrote "The anniversary is meant to showcase China's extraordinary rise from the ravages of war and famine to a modern, powerful nation state whose economic and military muscle is viewed by many with increasing concern. But the celebration comes [at] a very bad year for China's president... Months of unrest and pro-democracy protests in semi-autonomous Hong Kong also threaten to upstage Tuesday's celebrations, with fierce clashes between protesters and riot police erupting on Sunday."

The South Korean newspaper *The Korean Times* noted "... behind the projection of strength at the tightly-choreographed event, a clutch of challenges are testing Xi's ability to maintain economic and political stability at home and abroad... the major headache is Hong Kong, where pro-democracy protesters plan to grab the spotlight from Beijing on Tuesday with their own rally against what they see as the erosion of their special freedoms. The semi-autonomous city has been embroiled for months in the worst unrest since Britain returned the financial hub to China in 1997, with police and hardcore protesters trading tear gas for petrol bombs." The articles suggest CCP faces several domestic challenges in the coming months while trying to project power abroad. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hartnett)**

"Beijing is walking a tightrope between its domestic and foreign audience. But the contrasting messages from its military parade will only undermine its efforts to improve relations with its neighbors and persuade Western nations to embrace a rising China, and all because it wanted to bolster the party's legitimacy by strengthening nationalism at home."



Continued: The People's Republic of China Celebrates 70 Years: Regional Perspectives

Source: Li Xueyong, Li Xuanliang, Wang Shibin, & Liu Gang, "Horns from the military parade beckon a new era," *Xinhua News Agency*, 2 October 2019. http://www.mod.gov.cn/jmsd/2019-10/02/content_4852032.htm

The glory of the times is engraved in the hearts of every soldier. Our heroic army has the confidence and ability to create a new chapter for the military's cause, achieve the goal of "two hundred years" of progress, and to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Dream big and let us make new and greater contributions for maintaining world peace!

Source: "Xi's remarks celebrating PRC's 70th founding anniversary hailed by global experts," *People's Daily*, 6 October 2019. <http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/1006/c90000-9620450.html>

Bernard Brizay, French historian and author, told People's Daily that the grand military parade demonstrated China's military strength and the spirit of the Chinese military, adding that China's active participation in international affairs has contributed to safeguarding world peace and regional stability. "China has taken active part in and successfully completed UN peacekeeping operations and international rescues, showing the country's sense of responsibility as a major country," he said.

Source: Dai Bingguo, "Stick to the path of peaceful development," *China Daily*, 14 December 2010. ly.china-embassy.org/eng/zggk/t778150.htm

In fact, China's strategic intention can be defined in two words: peaceful development, i.e. harmony and development at home and peace and cooperation abroad. This is what we must focus on and achieve - not just this generation but for generations to come. This is the policy that will not change in 100 years or 1,000 years. To be specific, we need to achieve the goal by peaceful means, by continued reform and improvement of our own system, and through hard work, creativity and ingenuity of the Chinese people, and long-term friendly co-existence, equality and mutually beneficial cooperation with other countries.

Source: Cary Huang, "China's National Day show of military muscle risks backfiring," *South China Morning Post*, 13 October 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/opinion/article/3032544/chinas-national-day-show-military-muscle-risks-backfiring>

Fears of China's military are widespread and growing, as evinced by the alarm in news headlines that dominated global media after the parade. Some Western military observers warned that the parade was evidence of the serious threat China poses not only to its Asian neighbors, but also to the rest of the world. Beijing is walking a tightrope between its domestic and foreign audience. But the contrasting messages from its military parade will only undermine its efforts to improve relations with its neighbors and persuade Western nations to embrace a rising China, and all because it wanted to bolster the party's legitimacy by strengthening nationalism at home.

Source: Stuart McCarthy, "China's military posturing during its National Day parade won't win it any friends," *South China Morning Post*, 7 October 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/comment/letters/article/3031573/chinas-military-posturing-during-its-national-day-parade-wont-win>

Billions of renminbi have been spent on militarizing the South China Sea, and many millions more are being spent on its maintenance. Meanwhile, hypersonic weaponry is being developed.

... China rages against any foreign power, corporation, or individual by whom it feels slighted today, yesterday, last year or in my grandpa's time.

Source: "In rare move, Xi bows to Mao ahead of China's 70th anniversary," *The Japan Times*, 30 September 2019. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/09/30/asia-pacific/politics-diplomacy-asia-pacific/rare-move-xi-bows-mao-ahead-chinas-70th-anniversary/>

The anniversary is meant to showcase China's extraordinary rise from the ravages of war and famine to a modern, powerful nation state whose economic and military muscle is viewed by many with increasing concern. But the celebration comes in a very bad year for China's president.

Months of unrest and pro-democracy protests in semi-autonomous Hong Kong also threaten to upstage Tuesday's celebrations, with fierce clashes between protesters and riot police erupting on Sunday. Democracy activists in the financial hub have vowed to ramp up their nearly four month campaign ahead of National Day, which Hong Kong protesters have dubbed a "Day of Grief."

Source: "China celebrates 70 years as Hong Kong unrest looms large," *The Korea Times*, 1 October 2019. http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/world/2019/10/501_276434.html

But behind the projection of strength at the tightly-choreographed event, a clutch of challenges are testing Xi's ability to maintain economic and political stability at home and abroad.

But the major headache is Hong Kong, where pro-democracy protesters plan to grab the spotlight from Beijing on Tuesday with their own rally against what they see as the erosion of their special freedoms. The semi-autonomous city has been embroiled for months in the worst unrest since Britain returned the financial hub to China in 1997, with police and hardcore protesters trading tear gas for petrol bombs.



China's New Road-Mobile ICBM DF-41 Officially Unveiled

OE Watch Commentary: On 1 October, China held a large military parade in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic. The Chinese military used the occasion to show off a number of pieces of new equipment, including a new road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), the DF-41.

According to the accompanying article, the DF-41 is a “mainstay of China’s...nuclear deterrent.” While China maintains a small number of silo-based DF-5 ICBMs, it has historically pursued mobile launch systems for its ballistic missiles to improve their survivability in a conflict. Adoption of an off-road-capable transporter-erector-launcher (TEL) gives the missile a much greater range of launch and concealment positions.

Separate Chinese media reporting on the DF-41 noted that the missile has a range of 14,000 and can carry up to ten independently targetable nuclear warheads. However, there is a compromise between distance and “throw weight”—the number of warheads and penetration aids (decoys) that a missile can carry—and the missile likely carries considerably fewer when fired to maximum range.

Researchers using commercial imagery previously identified what appears to be a nuclear silo for the DF-41, likely used as part of testing the missile. Reporting in *China Daily* in 2017 claimed that it could be launched from trains and silos as well as the road-mobile configuration.

The DF-41 was accompanied by 16 DF-31AG missiles, an improved version of the DF-31 mobile ICBM. The smaller missile was until the development of the DF-41 China’s most capable and survivable land-based nuclear deterrent, with an estimated range of 11,200km and the ability to carry between 1-3 warheads.

Further highlighting the improvements to China’s strategic and nuclear deterrence was the appearance of the DF-17, a medium-range ballistic missile equipped with a hypersonic glide vehicle. While all ballistic missiles’ warheads are hypersonic, glide vehicles are more maneuverable, make use of specialized materials and shaping to travel further and follow a less predictable (and therefore easy to shoot down) trajectory.

For many decades the Chinese military has keenly felt the strategic imbalance between itself and the superpowers due to its much smaller nuclear arsenal. These new systems, in conjunction with expanding numbers of Type 094 ballistic missile submarines, are a step toward greater parity. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**

“Dongfeng-41 missiles are the mainstay of China’s strategic nuclear strength, play a vital role in strategic counterbalance, deterrent control and in winning decisive victory.”

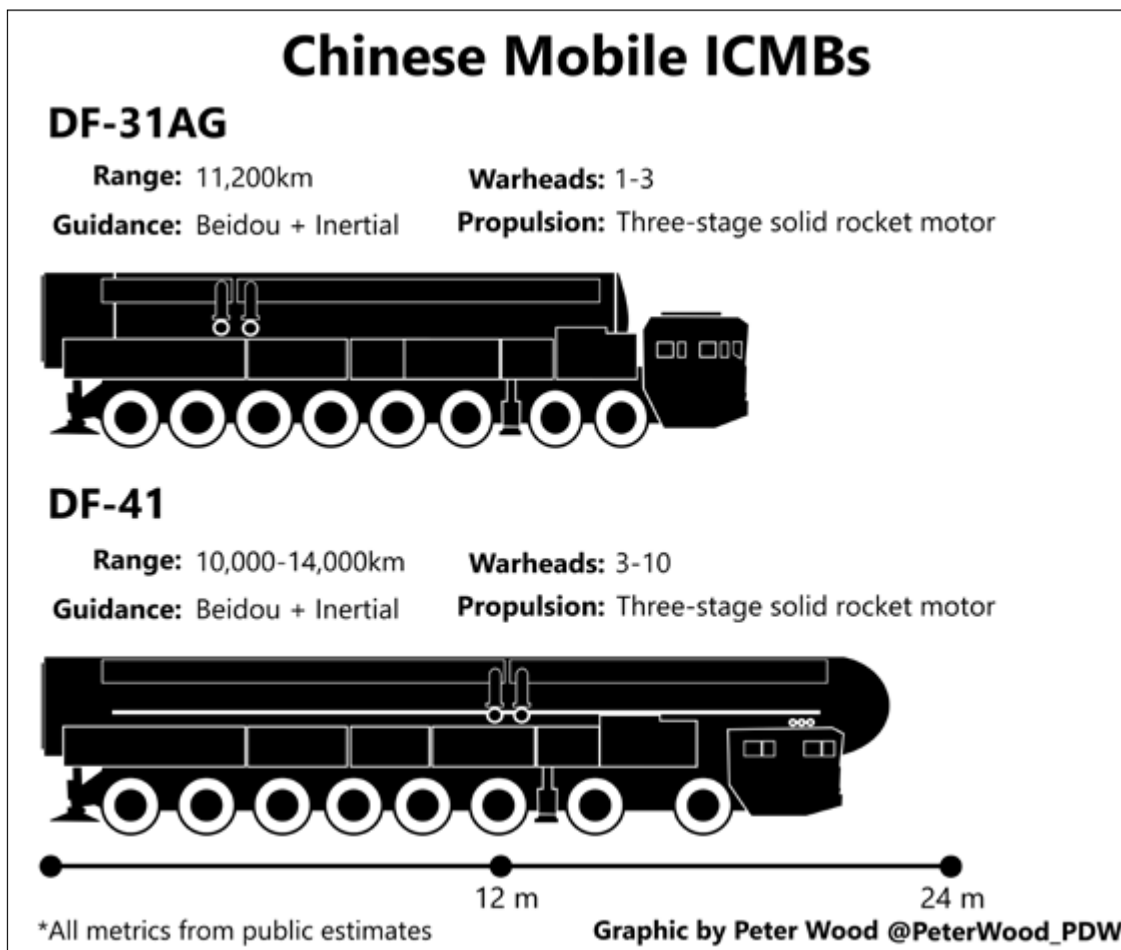
Source: “China unveils most advanced Dongfeng-41 intercontinental strategic nuclear missiles,” *China Military Online*, 1 October 2019. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-10/01/content_9642096.htm

China unveiled Dongfeng-41 intercontinental strategic nuclear missiles, the country’s most advanced and powerful deterrent, in a National Day military parade in central Beijing Tuesday.

A formation consisting of 16 new-type strategic nuclear missile launchers carrying Dongfeng-41 passed through Tian’anmen Square in the massive parade in celebration of the 70th founding anniversary of the People’s Republic of China.

Dongfeng-41 missiles are the mainstay of China’s strategic nuclear strength, play a vital role in strategic counterbalance, deterrent control and in winning decisive victory.

The formation is made up of two missile brigades from the rocket force.



Chinese Mobile ICBMs.
Image by Peter Wood



China's Cutting-Edge Military Unmanned Vehicles

OE Watch Commentary: Over the past decade, China has made dramatic progress in the research and development of unmanned vehicles. Some of the potential roles of unmanned vehicles include intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR); maritime surveillance; border surveillance; military communications relay; electronic warfare (EW); mine warfare/mine countermeasures; combat applications/strike missions; and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The accompanying three passages highlight three new powerful unmanned vehicles that were recently unveiled during the military parade that commemorated the 70th anniversary of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

According to the first article published by *Eastday.com*, a Shanghai-based news portal, the three unmanned vehicles on joint display consisted of two new types of unmanned aerial vehicles (a DR-8 and GJ-11 stealth drone) and one type of unmanned undersea vehicle (UUV). The two UAVs have the advantage of a “high takeoff speed, long flight duration, and high flight altitude.” They are therefore ideal for “seizing information control in network and electromagnetic warfare.” The UUV is primarily used for covert reconnaissance missions.

According to the next two articles, both published in Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post (SCMP)*, the DR-8 (or “Sharp Sword”), is expected to be deployed onboard China's first indigenously developed aircraft carrier, the Type 001A. It is a supersonic reconnaissance drone designed to defeat air and missile defenses. Some liken the DR-8 to the US military's D-21 supersonic reconnaissance drone, which had been introduced in the 1960s. The GJ-11 stealth capable combat drone possesses a wing shape that has been compared to the US B-2 Spirit bomber. *SCMP* points out that no country currently has an operational stealth combat UAV, which would make China the first. The third unmanned vehicle, the HSU-001 UUV is able to sail long distances to collect data and spy on enemy vessels.

According to the last article, unmanned equipment in China made their first public appearance in 2009, during the military parade marking the PRC's 60th anniversary. However, at that time China possessed neither a UAV that could “fight in the invisible electromagnetic domain,” nor an UUV. Ten years later, the country showcased both capabilities in the recent parade. It still has yet to be determined how China will incorporate them in their joint operations, but as the first article explains, the Chinese military “will actively explore new combat tactics and training methods in the context of joint operations, more quickly establish a system of systems consisting of unmanned combat forces of various categories, which serve multiple purposes in multiple battle domains...” **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

“...the PLA is prioritizing the development of the most cutting-edge technologies that will change the game of war...”

Source: Ouyang Hao, “无人作战第3方队 (The Third Unmanned Warfare Formation),” *21East.com*, 1 October 2019. <http://mil.021east.com/m/20191002/u1ai20041168.html>

The Third Unmanned Warfare Formation

Today, the third unmanned warfare formation consists of forces from an Army unit and a Navy base, making a joint appearance of the two services for the first time. The joint equipment formation comes into the field of vision, being reviewed by Chairman Xi and the Chinese people.

The formation leaders are Major General Xu Guifu and Major General Li Guangquan. Tai Tianpeng, chief of the formation, explained that the equipment on parade includes electronic countermeasures UAVs and a type of UUV independently developed by our nation. Being adopted is a pattern of mixed organization of the Army and the Navy to show the immense advantages of joint operations.

... At the grand military parade to mark the 60th anniversary of the PRC founding, unmanned equipment was on parade for the first time in front of the public, but there was no UAV that could fight in the invisible electromagnetic domain, still less UUV. Today, the three types of unmanned equipment on parade indicate that means of unmanned warfare in our military have been brought into all of the ground, sea, and air battle domains.

After departing from the venue of the military parade, the personnel of this formation will respectively face their new tests, continue to take part in new exercises and carry out training missions. In light of the new patterns of unmanned warfare in the future, they will actively explore new combat tactics and training methods in the context of joint operations, more quickly establish a system of systems consisting of unmanned combat forces of various categories, which serve multiple purposes in

Source: Liu Zhen, “China Stakes Claim on Unmanned Warfare with National Day Show of Drone Force,” *South China Morning Post*, 3 October 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3031462/china-stakes-claim-unmanned-warfare-national-day-show-drone>

China Stakes Claim on Unmanned Warfare with National Day Show of Drone Force

“This suggests the PLA is prioritizing the development of the most cutting-edge technologies that will change the game of war,” Shanghai military commentator Ni Lexiong said.

One of the drones, a DR-8, was described by the PLA as a “high-altitude, high-speed reconnaissance UAV”, which analysts said suggested it could fly at supersonic speed. Its stealth capability would enable it to penetrate enemy airspace in the Western Pacific region and take high-definition photographs of targets such as aircraft carrier groups.

Also in the parade was the GJ-11 stealth drone, with a flying wing shape that has drawn comparisons to the US' B-2 Spirit bomber and the X47B, a US Navy carrier-based long-range combat drone.

No country has an operational stealth combat UAV.

Source: Minnie Chan, “China to Deploy Sharp Sword Stealth Drone for New Type 001A Aircraft Carrier,” *South China Morning Post*, 17 September 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3027739/china-deploy-sharp-sword-stealth-drone-new-aircraft-carrier>

China to Deploy Sharp Sword Stealth Drone for New Type 001A Aircraft Carrier

The insider said the new aircraft carrier, the Type 001A, would be equipped with a reconnaissance version of the Sharp Sword drone when it entered service.

A second military source, from the Chinese navy, also confirmed that the stealth drone would be deployed for the aircraft carrier and said it was significant since it would help to close the technology gap with the US Navy.

“The use of drones for aircraft carriers and warships is the trend [for navies] around the world,” the Chinese navy source said. “China is no exception.”



China: Type 075 Amphibious Assault Ship Launched

OE Watch Commentary: According to the accompanying article from China's *Xinhua* state news agency, in late September, China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation launched the first of a new class of amphibious assault ship, the Type 075. The new class is equipped with a flat deck meant for helicopter operations as opposed to an angled deck, catapults or "ski jump" ramps used for launching and recovering aircraft. Images show what appears to be a large "well deck" that can be flooded to allow at least two landing craft air cushion (LCACs) or a larger complement of amphibious armored vehicles to exit. The Type 075 will join China's existing Type 071 and Type 072 amphibious assault and amphibious landing ships as a key part of executing "three-dimensional landing operations" [立体登陆作战].

The Type 075 complements observable trends in China's expansion of its amphibious forces. In November 2018, Chinese state television interviewed the commander of a PLA Navy Marine aviation brigade, which appears to be a new unit. With current plans for an eventual expansion to seven PLA Marine Brigades, additional units are likely in the future and would be responsible for transporting and providing close air support to landing marines. China's two dedicated attack helicopters—the Z-10 and Z-19—can be expected to be aboard the new amphibious assault ship. The Type 075 can also be expected to carry Airborne Early Warning (AEW) and Anti-submarine Warfare (ASW) variants of the Z-18.

New medium helicopters are being fielded by the PLA. China's new Z-20 helicopter—a reverse-engineered S-70C Blackhawk—made its first official appearance during the military parade commemorating the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China held on October 1st. Photos have also recently emerged of a naval variant called the Z-20F. The new helicopter features a five rotor design and what appears to be a belly-mounted radar and chin-mounted optical search system. A mockup was previously seen aboard China's Type 055 guided-missile cruiser. These helicopters might eventually help fill a role as more capable transports, armed combatants or specialized helicopters that the lighter Z-9s.

Chinese media has previously suggested that the Type 075 could carry a complement of ten Z-10s and twenty Z-18 heavy transport helicopters. As can be seen in the accompanying chart, this represents a significant increase in air transport capacity compared to the existing Type 071 ships. Chinese media have speculated that if used as part of a formation [编队] with two Type 071 amphibious transport docks, the entire amphibious assault operational formation would have 28 transport helicopters (including four aboard each of the Type 071s) and roughly 10 armed helicopters to send into battle. While there has been very little reporting from official media outlets or the shipyard building it, the new ship clearly fills an important gap in China's maritime power projection capabilities. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**

“The ship is the first amphibious attack ship independently developed by China, with strong amphibious combat capabilities and capable of carrying out a diverse range of missions.”

Source: “我国两栖攻击舰首舰下水 (China's First Amphibious Assault Ship Launched),” *Xinhua*, 25 September 2019. www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-09/25/c_1125037364.htm

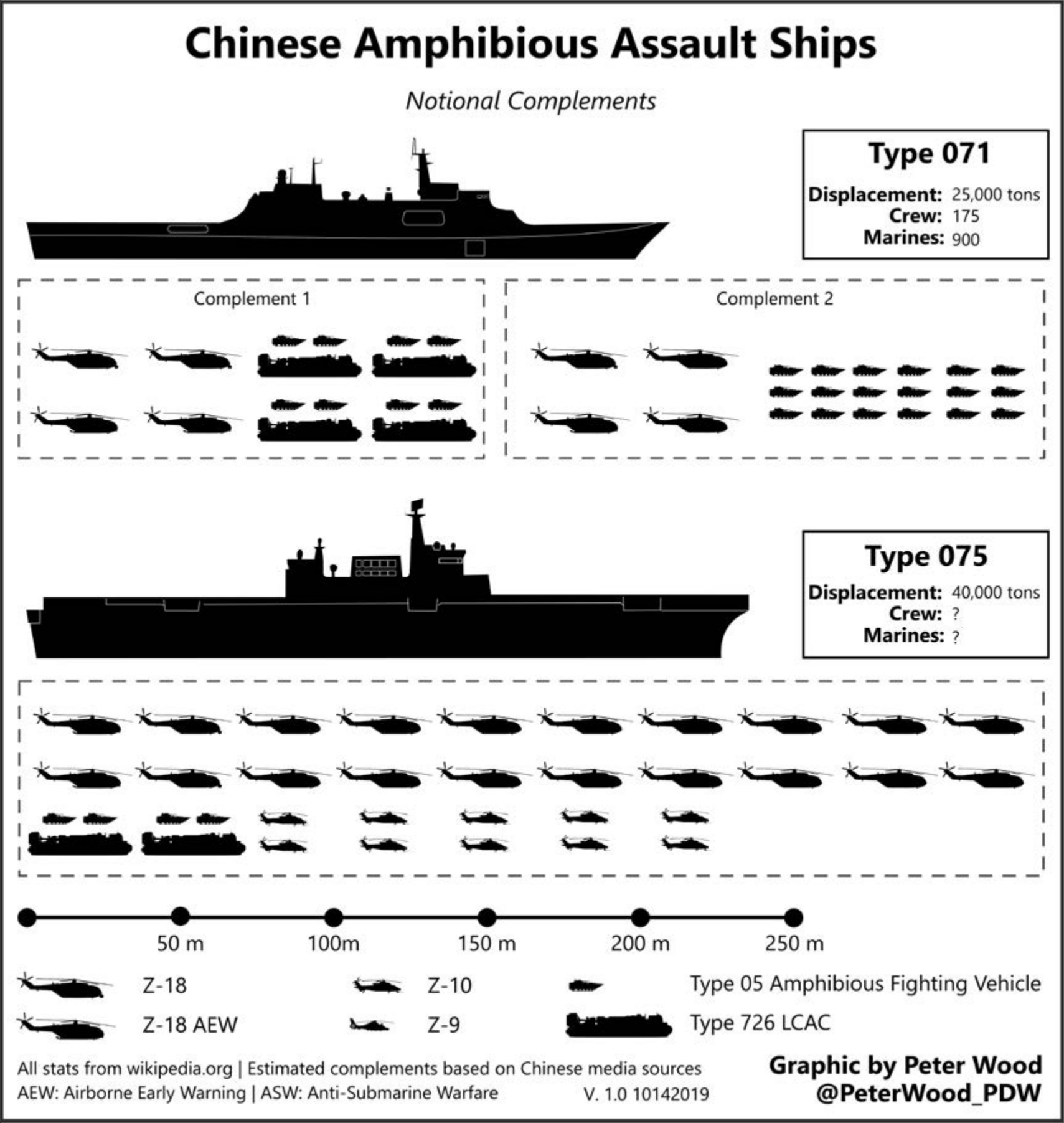
On the morning of September 25, the Chinese navy's first amphibious assault ship was launched in Shanghai. At about 9:20 a.m., the ceremony began with the solemn national anthem, and military leaders jointly cut ribbons for the inaugural amphibious assault ship. After the ribbon-cutting, a champagne bottle was smashed against the port side, the ship's whistle sounded and ribbons and colored balls flew into the air spraying the flight deck. At the same time, to the sound of applause, the drydock doors were opened and water poured into the dock.

The ship is the first amphibious attack ship developed independently in China, with strong amphibious combat capabilities and capable of carrying out a diverse range of missions. The ship will now carry out a series of moored navigation tests and other work.

Leaders from relevant ministries including the State Council, the Central Military Commission's Equipment Development Department, the Navy and Shanghai Municipality, China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation, attended the ceremony, as well as scientific research and construction personnel.



Continued: China: Type 075 Amphibious Assault Ship



Chinese Amphibious Assault Ships.
Image by Peter Wood

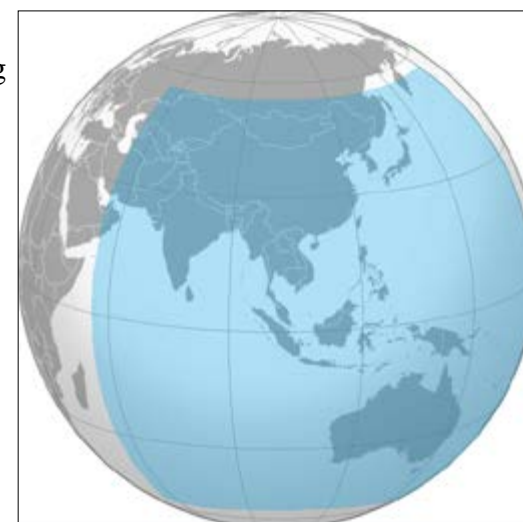


Beidou Navigation System on Track for Completion by 2020

OE Watch Commentary: According to its lead designer, China's Beidou satellite navigation system is rapidly nearing completion. In September, the chief designer of the system, Yang Changfeng [杨长风] stated that it would be completed in 2020.

The accompanying passage in China's *Guangming Daily* features remarks by Yu Xiancheng [于贤成], president of the China Satellite Navigation and Positioning Association, who said that phase three of the system is seeing rapid growth with launches of 19 of the newest version of the satellites. According to public catalogs of satellites in orbit, 25 Beidou satellites have been launched since the beginning of 2017, and overall 52 remain in orbit. With the launching of newer Beidou-3 satellites augmented by ground stations around the globe, the positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT) system is now capable of "meter-, sub-meter, decimeter-, and even centimeter-level positioning" with significant implications for defense and civilian applications.

The passage also provides some important insights into China's strategy for the system. Beidou is already acting as a major vehicle for job creation and growth. According to the article, there are some 10,000 companies and institutions related to satellite navigation and location services in China, which employ 500,000 people. Moreover, in 2018, the value of China's satellite navigation and service industry reached 301.6 billion yuan (\$42.6 billion USD). The beginning of global services in December 2018 is also meant to help China expand business opportunities abroad, particularly under the framework of the Belt and Road initiative. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**



Coverage Polygon of BeiDou Navigation Satellite System since 2012.

Source: Derivative work by Daveduv via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Beidou_Navigation_Satellite_System_2012.png, CC BY-SA 3.0

“In 2018, the total output value of China's satellite navigation and location service industry reached 301.6 billion yuan (42.6 billion USD), of which Beidou contributed 80 percent...”

Source: “我国北斗系统在轨卫星已达39颗 明年全面完成建设 (China's Beidou system now has 39 satellites in orbit, System Will Be Completed Next Year),” *Guangming Daily* [光明日报], 12 September 2019. http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-09/12/c_1124988764.htm

Beidou System Begins Global Service

On September 10, Yang Changfeng [杨长风], chief designer of Beidou satellite navigation system, gave remarks at the 8th Annual Meeting of China Satellite Navigation and Location Services and China Beidou Application Conference held in Zhengzhou, Henan Province. In his speech, he said “In 2020, China will complete the comprehensive construction of the global Beidou system on schedule, and application of the system will also be accelerated...”

The theme of this years' conference is “Beidou serving the world, integrating innovative applications”. On December 27, 2018, Beidou 3's basic system began providing global services. Since the beginning of this year, Beidou has made great global achievements, especially in providing service along the “Belt and Road”.

The reporter learned from the conference that in November 2017, the first Beidou-3 satellite was successfully launched. Since then, the construction of the Beidou-3 system has entered a high launch tempo. Between November 5, 2017, and November 19, 2018, China launched 19 Beidou-3 satellites...Of the 39 Beidou satellites in orbit, 21 are Beidou-3 satellites. 18 are in medium-earth orbits, one in a geostationary orbit and two in an inclined geosynchronous orbit.

According to Yang, “Currently, the Beidou project is progressing smoothly. Between five and seven Beidou satellites will be launched this year, and another two to four Beidou satellites will be launched next year. By then, the Beidou global system will be complete. Beidou will serve as China's navigation, positioning and timing system. As the core, in the integration of new technologies, Beidou will be deeply integrated with the Internet, Internet of Things, 5G, big data, etc.”

Yu Xiancheng [于贤成], president of the China Satellite Navigation and Positioning Association [中国卫星导航定位协会], explained that with the Beidou Base Augmentation System, the navigation system can provide meter-, sub-meter, decimeter-, and even centimeter-level positioning. This will put the positioning accuracy of the Beidou navigation system on par with the United States' GPS system.

Beidou is Widely Used in Countries and Regions Along the “Belt and Road”

The construction of the Beidou No. 3 basic system and the provision of global services have marked Beidou's two-year advance into the global era and its role in serving the world, especially in the countries and regions along the “Belt and Road”.

“The demand for satellite navigation in the countries along the “Belt and Road” is relatively large. We will use various measures to tap the potential of using Beidou satellite navigation in the countries along the route. On the one hand, we will empower these industries or products to promote local economic development. Expanding the global market of Beidou.” According to Yu Xiancheng, the Beidou system has covered nearly 30 “Belt and Road” countries including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Myanmar. The agricultural, industrial and service industries in these countries are gradually adopting Beidou high-precision products....

At the conference, the reporter learned that Beidou is now not only a business card of China, but applications for Beidou have also become a strategic emerging industry with a global market. In 2018, the total output value of China's satellite navigation and location service industry reached 301.6 billion yuan (42.6 billion USD), of which Beidou contributed 80 percent to the core output value of the industry. The value created by satellite navigation has reached 194.7 billion yuan (27.5 billion USD). There are roughly 10,000 companies and institutions related to satellite navigation and location services in China and they employ about 500,000 people.

Yu Xiancheng noted that the application of Beidou system has become a driver of economic growth for strategic emerging industries. Beidou beginning global service and the Beidou 3's becoming fully operational n opportunity, represents an opportunity for China to continue promotion of the integration and innovation of Beidou satellite navigation system. Beidou will also usher in a golden period of expanding applications. According to the current growth rate, it is estimated that by 2020, the scale of China's satellite navigation industry will exceed 400 billion yuan (56.6 billion USD).



China Expands Gaofen Earth Observing Satellite Constellation

OE Watch Commentary: In early October, China launched the Gaofen-10 earth observing satellite, as part of the Gaofen [高分; lit. “high-resolution”] constellation. The recently launched Gaofen-10 joins 12 other Gaofen satellites in orbit. While Gaofen-10 is capable of sub-meter resolution series, satellites follow different configurations, typically with a mix of multi-spectral optical and radar sensors. Some have synthetic-aperture radar (SAR) imaging capability.

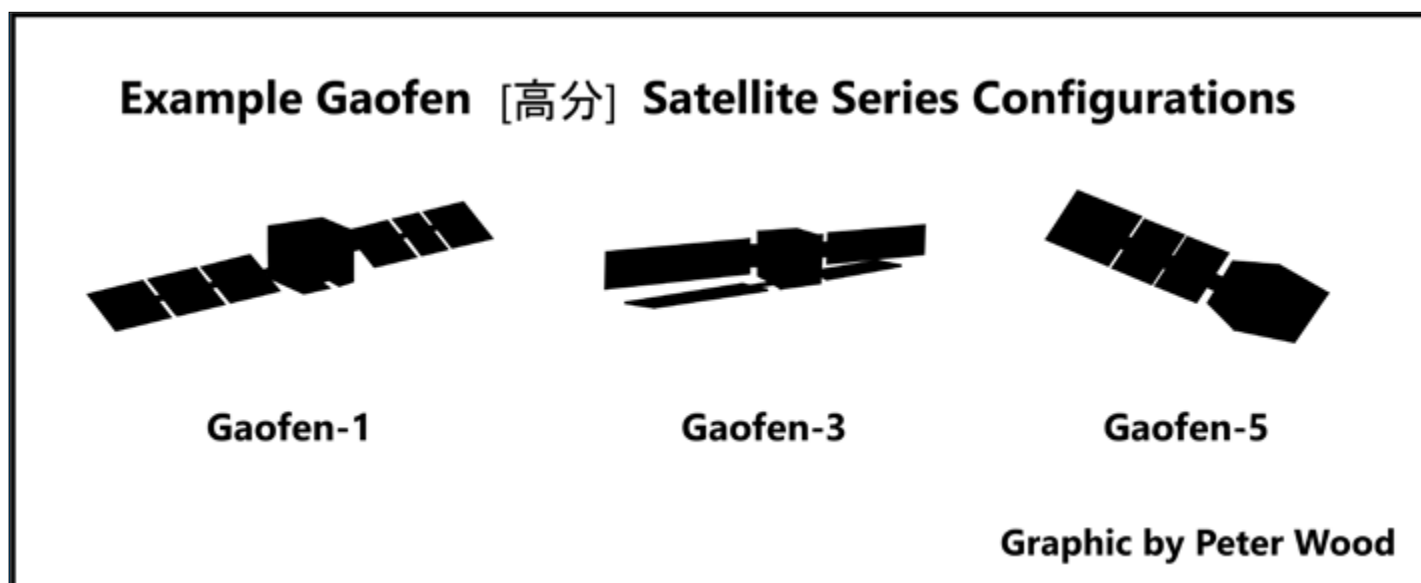
Gaofen satellites are part of the China High-resolution Earth Observation System (CHEOS) and one of the major programs under China’s national medium- and long-term science and technology development plan (2006-2020). The Gaofen program is administered under China’s State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense [SASTIND; 国家国防科技工业局]—the government body in charge of China’s defense companies—and China’s National Space Administration (CNSA).

Imagery and data collected by the constellation are intended to eventually function like the USGS Landsat program, providing a significant boost to a host of commercial sectors. According to the accompanying article, Gaofen data “can be applied in monitoring natural and agricultural disasters, estimating crop yields and surveys of forest and wetland resources.” However, as noted by the article, the system is also intended to provide data support to defense modernization of Belt and Road countries—those that are part of China’s trans-Eurasian Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

China has other similar satellite constellations including the Yaogan [遥感; lit. “remote sensing”], which public sources suggest include military application earth-observing and electronic signals intelligence (ELINT) satellites. Online catalogs of satellites currently in orbit list 59 of this series.

The rapid growth and modernization of these satellite constellations—as well as the supporting positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT) and communication satellite networks, are testament to the priority China gives to improving its space infrastructure. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**

“The system can be used by “Belt and Road” countries to provide data support for major national strategies and national defense modernization.”



Gaofen Satellites.
Image by Peter Wood

Source: “我国成功发射高分十号卫星 (China Successfully Launches Gaofen-10 Satellite),” *Xinhua*, 5 October 2019. www.xinhuanet.com/mil/2019-10/05/c_1210301460.htm

On 5 October, at 2:51 a.m., China successfully launched the Gaofen 10 satellite using a Long March IVC carrier rocket from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center [太原卫星发射中心]. The satellite successfully entered its intended orbit and the mission was judged a complete success. The Gaofen 10 is a high-resolution Earth Observation system and microwave remote sensing satellite national scientific and technological major special arrangements of, It has sub-meter resolution and will mainly be used in land census, urban planning, property rights, road network design, crop estimation, disaster prevention, and mitigation and other fields. The system can be used by “Belt and Road” countries to provide data support for major national strategies and national defense modernization. Both the Long March IV C carrier rocket and the Gaofen 10 satellite were developed by the Shanghai Academy of Spaceflight Technology (SAST) Shanghai Aerospace Technology Research Institute [上海航天技术研究院], part of China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC) [中国航天科技集团公司].

The mission marked the Long March launch vehicle series’ 314th flight.



China Launches Arctic Satellite

OE Watch Commentary: According to the accompanying passage from *Xinhuanet*, China has her first polar satellite. The article reports that the BNU-1 has successfully obtained data on polar regions and is conducting full-coverage observation of the Antarctic and the Arctic every day. Developed by the Beijing Normal University and Shenzhen Aerospace Dongfanghong Development Ltd., the satellite will promote research of polar regions and support China's upcoming 36th Antarctic expedition by enhancing its navigation capability in the polar ice zone.

The Soviet Union/Russia launched a series of *Molniya* military communications satellites over the polar regions from 1965 to 2004. They used a high elliptical orbit to attain a long dwell time over the high latitude areas. These orbits are suited for Arctic and Antarctic communications similar to the geostationary satellites used over the equator. Russia now uses the updated *Meridian* satellite series over the polar regions. (Also see: "China Developing More High Latitude Equipment," in this issue of *OE Watch*) **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

“China’s first polar observation satellite, the BNU-1, has successfully obtained data on polar regions, according to the satellite’s chief scientist.”

Source: “China’s first polar observation satellite supports polar research,” *Xinhua*, 9 October 2019. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-10/09/c_138458767.htm

China’s first polar observation satellite supports polar research

China’s first polar observation satellite, the BNU-1, has successfully obtained data on polar regions, according to the satellite’s chief scientist Wednesday.

After nearly one month of in-orbit testing, the satellite is working normally and conducting full-coverage observation of the Antarctic and the Arctic every day, Cheng Xiao, the chief scientist, said at the China Symposium on Polar Science 2019. Cheng said the satellite data connection system allows scientists around the world to obtain polar observation data acquire by the satellite. Registered users can also propose new observation requirements.

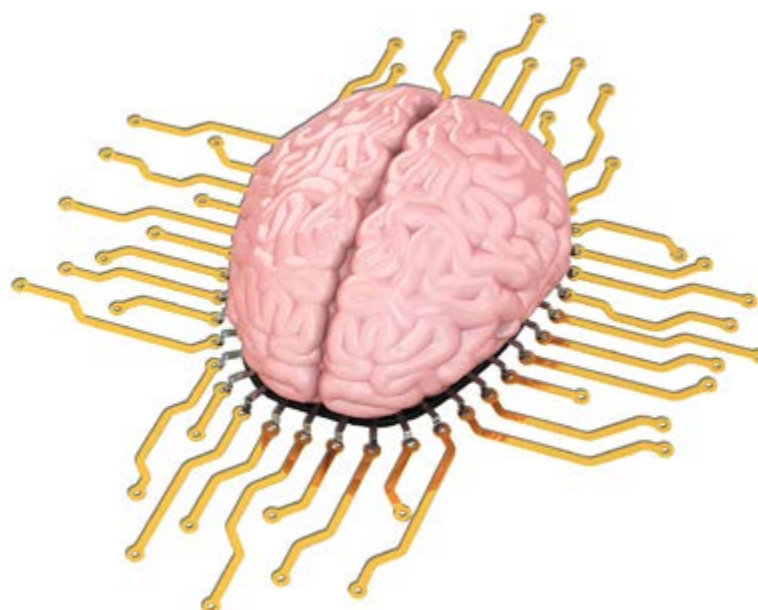
The satellite continuously monitored a gigantic iceberg breaking away from the Amery Ice Shelf in east Antarctica in September, helping limit its impact on submerged buoys and investigation ships in the surrounding area. Cheng said the satellite will help reduce China’s reliance on foreign satellites for polar observation data. “The satellite’s spatial resolution reaches 75 meters, which offers more detailed information on the ice cover and the sea ice...”

The satellite will also support China’s upcoming 36th Antarctic expedition by enhancing its navigation capability in the polar ice zone. Developed by the Beijing Normal University and Shenzhen Aerospace Dongfanghong Development Ltd., the satellite weighs 16 kg and is equipped with two cameras and one receiver. It has great significance in promoting the research of Polar Regions and global climate change.

THE MAD SCIENTIST LABORATORY BLOG

<https://madsciblog.tradoc.army.mil/>

Mad Scientist Laboratory engages global innovators to report on the Operational Environment (OE), emergent disruptive technologies and their convergent impacts, and the changing character of warfare.



China Developing More High Latitude Equipment

OE Watch Commentary: China continues to show interest and invest time, funding and research in the polar regions. China's first ice breaker, *Xuelong* [Snow Dragon] doubles as a polar research vessel and has spent most of her time in the Arctic and Antarctic including over 20 annual Chinese Antarctic expeditions. The vessel was built in Soviet Ukraine shipyards in 1993. As the accompanying passage from *Xinhuanet* discusses, *Xuelong 2*, built in China, will probably make the Antarctic voyage this year. China maintains the Taishan station in Antarctica. This development of an all-terrain amphibious polar vehicle will support the station and other polar research. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

“The vehicle Nanji 2 (Antarctica No. 2), painted in red and yellow, was manufactured by Guizhou Jonyang Kinetics Co., Ltd. It was delivered to the Polar Research Institute of China in Shanghai...”

Source: “China’s New All-Terrain Vehicle to Join 36th Antarctic Expedition,” *Xinhuanet.com*, 9 October 2019. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-10/09/c_138458038.htm

China’s New All-Terrain Vehicle to Join 36th Antarctic Expedition

China’s self-developed all-terrain vehicle will set off to the South Pole, contributing to the country’s upcoming 36th Antarctic expedition.

The vehicle Nanji 2 (Antarctica No. 2), painted in red and yellow, was manufactured by Guizhou Jonyang Kinetics Co., Ltd. It was delivered to the Polar Research Institute of China in Shanghai on Sunday.

Compared to previous generations, the new amphibious vehicle is equipped with an upgraded running system. It also applies new material and technologies to improve low-temperature performance and wear resistance, allowing it to work at minus 41 degrees Celsius. In addition, the vehicle has increased comfort for researchers with air conditioning and ventilation systems.

Its control system and other core components were all developed in China, said Lyu Qian, general manager of the manufacturer. The vehicle is multifunctional with strong transport capacity and good adaptability to complex terrain. It can undertake various missions, including personnel and materials transportation, sea, ice and land explorations, as well as search and rescue operations.



Chinese icebreaker *Xue Long*, departing from the inner harbour of the Port of Fremantle, Western Australia, on her way back to her port of registry, Shanghai, China after a visit to Antarctica.

Source: Bahnfreund via Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Xue_Long,_Fremantle,_2016_\(4\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Xue_Long,_Fremantle,_2016_(4).jpg), CC BY-SA 4.0



The Philippines Ramps up Efforts to Counter the NPA



Flag of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Source: Molecule Extraction via Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_the_Communist_Party_of_the_Philippines_\(alternative_II\).svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_the_Communist_Party_of_the_Philippines_(alternative_II).svg), Public Domain

OE Watch Commentary: The Philippine government has been struggling to combat the New People’s Army (NPA) for five decades. Formed in 1969, the NPA was inspired by former Chinese Communist Party leader Mao Zedong, and is the guerrilla arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines. It has been classified as a terrorist organization by both the United Nations and the European Union. The NPA has been showing up more recently in the Philippine media as the government takes measures to try to eradicate them. The accompanying passages from *Global Media Arts (GMA)*, a Philippine-based television and broadcast network, and the *Philippine News Agency* offer a glimpse into the government’s efforts to counter this ongoing threat.

While members of the NPA can likely be found throughout the Philippines, some areas appear to be more successful in combatting them. The second and third

articles discuss ongoing efforts to rid the area of Leyte of the group. In 2018, the Philippine military activated the 93rd Infantry Battalion, which is reportedly one of the Army’s elite forces. One of ten new battalions nationwide, it was created to “fight against insurgency and terrorism.”

The articles claim that there are only 15 NPA fighters (all considered “leaders”), remaining in Leyte, the seventh largest island in the Philippines. These fighters continue running and hiding in the mountains of the island and, according to Brigadier General Lope Dagoy, commander of the 802nd Infantry Brigade, efforts are ongoing to wipe them out before March 2020. One way to fight the rebellion, according to Leyte Mayor Azucena Mirambel, “is to provide the basic needs of people, build roads, and schools” to enable easier delivery of goods and services to far-flung communities to reduce their vulnerability to NPA recruitment, for example.

The battle against recruitment is an important part of the effort. According to the first article, two committees at the Senate have been pushing for police presence in schools due to the recruitment and disappearance of minors into the communist movement. Along with increased police presence, the committees are recommending more careful scrutiny of students, staff, curriculum, and relevant activities. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

“The communist rebellion in the Philippines is one of Asia’s longest-running insurgencies.”

Source: Joahna Lei Casilao, “Senate Panels Recommend Police Presence in Schools, Checking Student Activities Amid NPA Recruitment,” *Global Media Arts (The Philippines)*, 2 October 2019. <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/710244/senate-panels-recommend-police-presence-in-schools-checking-student-activities-amid-npa-recruitment/story/>

Senate Panels Recommend Police Presence in Schools, Checking Student Activities Amid NPA Recruitment

Two committees at the Senate have recommended police presence inside schools and scrutiny of student activities inside and outside the campus “to ensure their security, safety and well-being” amid the so-called recruitment of minors into the communist movement.

The report recommended, among others:

- *Increased/intensified internal security enforcement in schools*
- *Police visibility around the within campus premises*
- *Strict regulations on issuance of IDs*
- *Study possible liability of school administration and teachers*
- *Allow the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police to conduct lectures to students and parents, and career orientation on the law enforcement sector*
- *Regular review of academic curriculum / modules, and monitoring and evaluation of school activities:*
- *Filing of charges, when there is evidence, against the leftist leaders*
- *Investigation of allegations against teachers*



Continued: The Philippines Ramps up Efforts to Counter the NPA

Source: Sarwell Meniano, “Army Seizes Firearms after Clash with NPA in Leyte,” *Philippine News Agency*, 1 October 2019. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1081901>

Army Seizes Firearms after Clash with NPA in Leyte

Based in Kananga, Leyte, the military activated the 931B last year to reinforce military units in the more aggressive fight against communist rebels in the region. The battalion, considered as one of the Army’s elite forces, is composed of well-trained army officers and enlisted military personnel.

The military unit is just one of the 10 new battalions created nationwide as announced by Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana to augment the existing government forces in the fight against insurgency and terrorism.

The Communist Party of the Philippines NPA is listed as a terrorist organization by the United States and European Union. The communist rebels have been battling government forces for 50 years. The communist rebellion in the Philippines is one of Asia’s longest-running insurgencies.

Source: Sarwell Meniano, “Army Vows to Wipe Out NPA Fighters in Leyte by 2020,” *Philippine News Agency*, 4 September 2019. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1079514>

Army Vows to Wipe Out NPA Fighters in Leyte by 2020

The Philippine Army has vowed to work double-time to neutralize the remaining 15 armed fighters of the New People’s Army (NPA) still running and hiding in the mountains of Leyte Island.

Brig. Gen. Lope Dagoy, commander of the Philippine Army’s 802nd Infantry Brigade said on Wednesday their goal is to completely wipe out insurgency in Leyte before he retires in March next year.

“The practical way to fight rebellion is to provide the basic needs of people, build roads, and schools,” the neophyte mayor said.

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FOREIGN MILITARY STUDIES OFFICE:

OVER 30 YEARS OF FOREIGN PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT



The Philippines Eyes End to Communist Insurgency

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying passage from a Philippine news source discusses the military's statement that the country's communist insurgency could be defeated by 2022. According to the article, the National Security Adviser said the growth and progress of Mindanao's regions, particularly Caraga and northern Mindanao would make the communist rebellion irrelevant by then. This statement came amid meetings between tribal leaders from all over Mindanao to discuss best practices in combatting the insurgents.

One of the conclusions of these meetings was that the military needs the support of civilians, who depend on the government to deliver basic services and invest in infrastructure. At the same time, the article also highlights the responses of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) to the military's claims. According to the CPP, any military attempt to defeat the insurgents will only breed more insurgents. Such a response would seemingly vindicate the military's claims about the necessity of cooperating with civilians and winning their loyalty.

The article also indicates the military's timeline to end the insurgency coincides with the period just before current President Rodrigo Duterte will leave office. Therefore, the military's success could be an important achievement for Duterte's legacy. Whether the new strategy is implemented and succeeds will have to be assessed over the course of the next few years. If it does succeed, it may also provide a template for countering the country's other insurgencies in Mindanao, including jihadists aligned with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



Caraga Region in Philippines.

Source: TUBS via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caraga_Region_in_Philippines.svg, CC BY-SA 3.0

“Esperon said the growth and progress of Mindanao’s regions, particularly Caraga and northern Mindanao would make the Communist rebellion irrelevant [by 2022].”

Source: “Military Seeks to End Insurgency by 2022.” *Inquirer.net*, 13 October 2019. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1177034/military-seeks-to-end-insurgency-by-2022>

The government’s goal is to make the Communist insurgency irrelevant by 2022, just before President Rodrigo Duterte bows out of office, the country’s top security official said. “We are tempted to set a self-imposed deadline to us, which would be naturally 2022 because that’s the end of the term of the President,” National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon told reporters. “There may be a few stragglers left but by that time, they would just be doing banditry and the Philippines would have been able to fly economically,” Esperon added. Esperon spoke before a regional summit of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict that gathered concerned Cabinet and security officials, local chief executives and tribal leaders from all over Mindanao.

Esperon cited the consistency in the investment of resources needed to kick-start infrastructure projects and the delivery of basic services to the people in the countryside. He noted that the war waged by Communist rebels was most felt in Mindanao. But Esperon said the growth and progress of Mindanao’s regions, particularly Caraga and northern Mindanao would make the communist rebellion irrelevant.

But the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) said the government’s effort to wipe out the insurgency was creating conditions ripe for the recruitment of more guerrillas.



ISIS Interrupts Fragile Peace in Southern Philippines

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying passage from a Philippine source discusses a militant group called the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). This group is loyal to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and is based in Mindano.

According to the article, BIFF clashed with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and killed seven MILF members. One of the effects of BIFF attacks on MILF is that it can disrupt the peace agreement MILF made with the government in 2014, which BIFF rejects. There is also the risk that the fighting can displace or kill civilians and unsettle the Mindanao region.

The article also explains why BIFF continues to be able to recruit. For one, BIFF provides recruits cash for joining and then monthly allowances. In addition, BIFF members, according to a police director quoted in the article, tend to be young, uneducated and lacking exposure to formal religious education.

The article further indicates that BIFF partakes in clan disputes and can recruit by siding with one clan over another.

At the same time, the article mentions ways the army is attempting to combat BIFF. They are speaking with religious scholars and Islamic schools, requesting that they urge BIFF recruits not to fight. However, this is challenging because BIFF is aligned with ISIS and their fighters still want to fight. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



Bombing on Marawi City.

Source: Mark Jhomel via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bombing_on_Marawi_City.jpg, CC BY-SA 4.0

“The BIFF members are going around in remote communities to continue recruiting young Moros, especially those uneducated because they can easily be lured.”

Source: “Maguindanao police chief: IS-linked BIFF continues to recruit young Moro,” *Mindanews.com*, 7 October 2019. mindanews.com/top-stories/2019/10/maguindanao-police-chief-is-linked-biff-continues-to-recruit-young-moro/

The Islamic State-inspired Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) continues to recruit young Moro in Mindanao, luring them with at least P50,000 outright cash and P10,000 monthly allowance, the chief of police of Maguindanao province said. Colonel Arnold Santiago, Maguindanao police director, revealed the information following the clash between the BIFF and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) on October 3 that killed seven from the MILF. “The BIFF members are going around in remote communities to continue recruiting young Moros, especially those uneducated because they can easily be lured. They are offered cash to become IS fighters,” he said, adding that potential BIFF recruits are indoctrinated with the wrong teachings of Islam, including violence. To counter IS recruitment, Santiago said the provincial police office are sending representatives to talk at the madaris (Islamic schools) or with the ustadz (religious scholar) to propagate the “true essence of Islam,” which is a religion of peace, said Santiago, a lawyer.

Rommel Banlaoi, chair of the Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research, earlier said foreign IS fighters continue to arrive in Mindanao, despite the defeat in Marawi City, to help local militant groups establish a caliphate in Southeast Asia. On May 23, 2017, the IS-aligned Maute and Abu Sayyaf groups seized Marawi, resulting to a five-month urban combat with government security forces that displaced over 350,000 civilians and left the core of the city in ruins. Some 1,100 individuals died, mostly Islamic militants.



Indonesian Armed Group JAD Strikes Again

OE Watch Commentary: On 10 October, Indonesia's Chief Security Minister Wiranto was stabbed at a routine public event with other officials. The excerpted Indonesian language article details the immediate Indonesian investigation of the attack, which revealed that the attacker was influenced by Indonesia's main pro-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) religious group, Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) in Bekasi, led by an individual named Abu Zee.

According to the article, Indonesia's counter-terrorism unit arrested members of the JAD cell in Bekasi, including Abu Zee two weeks prior to the attack. This may have triggered the attacker to seek revenge; once he was aware high-level officials would be in town. Nevertheless, the article indicates the attack was unconventional because it involved not guns or bombs but a small ninja-style knife. JAD is linked to ISIS and is thought to be responsible for a series of church bombings and attacks in Surabaya in 2018 and a 2016 attack in Jakarta. An Indonesian court had ordered JAD to be disbanded in 2016, but the group still wields influence. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



Wiranto stabbing.

Source: Pandeglang District Police via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wiranto_stabbing.jpg, Public Domain.

“It is certain that the perpetrators are part of the Bekasi JAD group with the Amir of Abu Zee.”

Source: “Tusuk Wiranto, Abu Rara Ikut JAD Bekasi Pimpinan Abu Zee (Tusuk Wiranto, Abu Rara Participates in JAD Bekasi, the Chairman of Abu Zee),” *Suara.com*, 10 October 2019. suara.com/news/2019/10/10/185745/tusuk-wiranto-abu-janda-ikut-jad-bekasi-pimpinan-abu-zee

It is certain that the perpetrators are part of the Bekasi Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) group led by the Amir Abu Zee. Syaril Alamsyah alias Abu Rara, is the perpetrator of the stabbing of Wiranto and is identified as a member of the terrorist group, JAD, in Bekasi. Abu Zee himself was caught by the 88 Antiterror Special Detachment team on 9/23/2019. The arrests were carried out with 8 other suspected terrorists in North Jakarta and Bekasi. Wiranto struck using a kunai — a small ninja-style knife. In this stabbing case, the police arrested Abu Rara and his wife, Fitria Adriana. Now, the couple who have been named as suspects are still undergoing investigation by the police.



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>

India Tests its New Integrated Battle Groups

OE Watch Commentary: The governments of India and China have worked to improve their relationship over the past few years, particularly following the Doklam standoff in the summer of 2017. The accompanying excerpted articles report on how this is playing out as the Indian government continues its efforts to modernize its army.

The article from *The Print* reports on an Indian army exercise in the state of Arunachal Pradesh for several days in mid-October, noting that it included “15,000 soldiers backed by tanks, medium artillery, helicopters and transport aircraft” and that it was the “Mountain Strike Corps’ maiden exercise.” While the exercise took place in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, which borders China, the article mentions how it was planned to “be away from the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.” In addition to utilizing the Mountain Strike Corps, the exercise was important “because the Army... for the first time [saw] in action its integrated battle groups (IBGs).” The article notes how Indian officials believe the IBGs will become the “mainstay of future operational strategies in the Western, Northern and Eastern theatres” and that each one “will be sector and terrain specific.”



The shield (emblem) of the Eastern Command of the Indian Army.

Source: Sumanch via Wikimedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Command_\(India\)#/media/File:IA_Eastern_Command.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Command_(India)#/media/File:IA_Eastern_Command.jpg), CC BY-SA 3.0

The article from *Live Mint* discusses Chinese President Xi Jinping’s visit to India during the exercise and the hope among Indian officials that the visit would “give fresh momentum to ties bedeviled by a string of irritants in recent weeks.” Specifically, the Chinese government has been “backing Pakistan on the Kashmir issue after India scrapped the temporary provision in its constitution that gave Kashmir special status” on 5 August. The article mentions how Chinese officials have “been upset by India’s military exercise,” but that the two sides have been working in “recent days to ensure the atmosphere ahead of the summit remains calm.” Regardless of China’s response, the first test of India’s new IBGs is an important milestone in the Indian government’s efforts to upgrade military infrastructure in northern states along the border. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

“Gen Rawat wanted to create integrated units for the border that will be self-sufficient with artillery, armoured, combat engineers and signal units.”



Continued: India Tests its New Integrated Battle Groups

Source: Snehesh Alex Philip, “Army to debut its Mountain Strike Corps next month, at HimVijay exercise in Arunachal,” *The Print*, 11 September 2019. <https://theprint.in/defence/army-to-debut-its-mountain-strike-corps-next-month-at-himvijay-exercise-in-arunachal/289902/>

Over 15,000 soldiers backed by tanks, medium artillery, helicopters and transport aircraft will be part of the Mountain Strike Corps’ maiden exercise, ‘HimVijay’, at over 10,000 feet in Arunachal Pradesh next month.

The exercise will be held away from the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China. It will coincide with the expected visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping next month.

The exercise assumes greater significance because the Army will for the first time see in action its integrated battle groups (IBGs) — the brainchild of Army Chief Gen Bipin Rawat.

Sources said three mountain IBGs carved out of the Panagarh-based 17 Corps’ (Mountain Strike Corps) 59 Mountain Division will be in action.

The exercise will be keenly watched by the top security czars of the Narendra Modi government and the Army chief as the IBGs are touted to be the mainstay of future operational strategies in the Western, Northern and Eastern theatres...

Asked if China has been informed, the source said, “The exercise is being held a little further from the LAC.”...In a bid to ensure faster punitive and defensive operations, Gen Rawat had envisioned the IBGs, which are brigade-sized self-sufficient agile formations.

...Gen Rawat wanted to create integrated units for the border that will be self-sufficient with artillery, armoured, combat engineers and signal units.

As such, each corps is to have three divisions, with each division to have three brigades. The overall idea is to break down the divisions into IBGs with all essential elements.

The IBGs are primed to strike in less than 24 hours. They will be sector and terrain specific — in effect, the IBGs in the North will not be the same as the IBGs in the Western sector...

Source: Elizabeth Roche, “India, China may formally announce visit for Chinese President today,” *Live Mint*, 9 October 2019. <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/india-china-may-formally-announce-visit-for-chinese-president-today-11570590178842.html>

India and China on Wednesday are expected to formally announce the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to India for the second informal summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, scheduled for this weekend in the coastal resort town of Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu.

...Xi is expected to arrive in Chennai on 11 October and leave about 24 hours later which means that the duration of the second summit could be less than the first...

The interactions with Modi — there are several planned over the space of a day — are expected to give fresh momentum to ties bedeviled by a string of irritants in recent weeks.

India has reacted strongly to what officials described as China’s “pro-active stance” backing Pakistan on the Kashmir issue after India scrapped the temporary provision in its constitution that gave Kashmir special status.

The two countries also postponed talks between Special Representatives on the boundary dispute which had in turn resulted in speculation about whether the informal summit would be held or not.



Keeping Up with Information Flows in Egypt



Egyptian President Sisi during press statements following Russian-Egyptian talks, 2017.

Source: Kremlin.ru, <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/photos/big2x/IVQvftALmQyGjmUQkvUv2WXJTCvSG.JPG>, CC 4.0

OE Watch Commentary: The Egyptian government sees the spread of “rumors” and “fake news” as a dangerous issue demanding immediate action. Thus, during its new legislative session, the Egyptian parliament will discuss a draft law that would criminalize “the spread of rumors.” Most notable in the proposed legislation is the creation of an agency to “monitor rumors and take the necessary legal measures domestically and internationally, and to issue statements in response as soon as [the rumors] emerge and spread.” The new agency is to be overseen by the Egyptian cabinet and staffed by representatives from across the government, including the defense, foreign, justice and telecommunications ministries, the intelligence services, religious bodies and the council of journalism. The new draft law follows recent cybercrime and media legislation granting the Egyptian government greater control over social networking sites. The raft of legislation, according to the excerpt from *al-Araby al-Jadid*, is due to the fact that social networking sites “have been and continue to pose the greatest threat to [the Egyptian

government’s] stability.”

The precipitating event behind the latest attention on influence campaigns is a “virtual conflict” spearheaded by a series of videos in which a self-exiled Egyptian businessman detailed corruption within Egypt’s military-controlled economy. Predictably, the Egyptian government framed the episode as part of an ongoing disinformation campaign orchestrated by Turkey, Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood. The videos and their aftermath led to scattered protests that Egyptian authorities blamed on Qatari media and specifically *al-Jazeera*, which they accused of inciting and deceiving the Egyptian population. The excerpted column from Egypt’s English-language semi-official *Ahram Weekly* coarsely summarizes the flare-up as an “attempt to fake a revolution in Egypt” led by the Muslim Brotherhood and “the terrorism-supporting regimes of Qatar and Turkey.”

Speed is of vital importance to the effects of social media-fueled, cross-border influence campaigns; hence the Egyptian government’s goal of being able to “issue statements in response as soon as [the rumors] emerge and spread.” As governments and their opponents devise new methods to outmaneuver each other in the virtual sphere, their reliance on speedy bot armies and other automated methods is likely to increase.

End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)

“The [anti-rumor] law shall establish an agency to monitor rumors and take the necessary legal measures domestically and internationally, and to issue statements in response as soon as [the rumors] emerge and spread...”

Source: تفاصيل مشروع قانون مكافحة الشائعات.. السجن والغرامة عقوبة ترويح الأكاذيب “Details on the Draft Anti-Rumor Law... Prison and Fines as Punishment for Spreading Lies,” *al-Yaum al-Sabaa*, 16 September 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/y5z8h2jx>

1. Any person found to be behind the manufacturing, promotion, recruitment or dissemination of any false rumor shall be punished by imprisonment for a term not less than 6 months and not more than 3 years, and by a fine of not less than LE 10,000 and not exceeding LE 100,000 or by one of these punishments. The penalty shall be doubled if it results in the death or injury of one or more persons as a result of this rumor.

2. The law shall establish an agency to monitor rumors and take the necessary legal measures domestically and internationally, and to issue statements in response as soon as [the rumors] emerge and spread.

3. The proposed organ shall be established by the Council of Ministers, and shall include a member of the Ministry of Defense, Interior and Foreign Affairs, Justice, Communications, General Intelligence, Religious Endowments, Al-Azhar, the Church and the Supreme Council of Journalism.

Source: واتساب مصر: “المواطن المخبر” “WhatsApp Egypt: The Citizen Informant,” *al-Araby al-Jadid*, 30 September 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/yywkpe45>

Since its rise to power, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi’s regime has taken control of social networking sites, which have been and continue to pose the greatest threat to its stability, amid continued political and on-the-ground repression and the closure of the public sphere.

Source: Hany Ghoraba. “The desperation of the Brotherhood,” *al-Ahram Weekly*, 25 September 2019. <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentP/4/351508/Opinion/The-desperation-of-the-Brotherhood-.aspx>

In its attempt to fake a revolution in Egypt, the Brotherhood has gone to great lengths online and through social media. Its members have faked and re-edited old videos of protests and gatherings, including of people celebrating football victories with edited-in sounds of their apparently shouting slogans against the government. After the videos were exposed as fakes, Aljazeera, which had helped the group to spread the videos, issued an apology even though the plot failed to garner attention. The Brotherhood has even gone so far as to fake a Facebook page in the name of the Armed Forces to suggest that there is dissent within the ranks of the army in another desperate attempt to sow discord within the nation. All this, of course, is simply aimed to divert attention away from the rifts within the terrorist group itself. No amount of fake news will destabilise the Egyptian state, even if this simple message cannot be got into the thick heads of the Brotherhood leadership along with the terrorism-supporting regimes of Qatar and Turkey...



Nuclear Power in the UAE and Beyond



Earth at Night 2012 - Middle East and India.

Source: NASA, <https://svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/vis/a030000/a030000/a030028/earthatnight2012-middleeast.png>, Public Domain

OE Watch Commentary: The UAE is among the highest per capita consumers of electricity worldwide. Like its Arabian Gulf neighbors, much of its population is urban and relies on desalination plants for drinking water. Its government is also investing heavily in high-tech ventures with the aim of becoming a regional hub of the digital economy. To meet these growing needs, in 2009 the UAE hired a consortium led by the Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) to build four 1400 MW pressurized water reactors for what was named the Barakah Nuclear Plant. The project has been plagued by delays and the UAE is now aiming to start running the first two reactors in 2020, about three years behind schedule but still in time to make them the Arab world's first. On the heels of a September 2019 Emergency Preparedness Review by a team of experts, the UAE's representative to the IAEA claimed that "the agency and many of the member states [view the UAE] as a model for being a responsible, peaceful nuclear power program because we followed the book and... best practice[s]."

Not all countries of the Arabian Peninsula view the UAE's nuclear program favorably. Qatari authorities voiced their concern last March, through a letter to the IAEA that called for greater regional coordination. The Barakah plant is located on the western edge of the UAE, geographically closer to the Qatari capital of Doha than to Abu Dhabi or Dubai. The letter noted that a radioactive leak would poison Doha's drinking water supply, which like Abu Dhabi's, is fed almost exclusively by desalination. In December 2017, Houthi-led forces in Yemen claimed to have used their first-ever cruise missile to target the Barakah plant. The UAE denied the incident and no evidence emerged of the plant being hit, but nonetheless, it raised fears of the site being caught in the crossfire of a regional war.

Nuclear power seems poised to become a new focal point for Middle East geostrategic competition. The UAE's regional rivals may seek to continue delaying the Barakah plant, but if and when the plant becomes operational, the regional race to obtain and exploit nuclear technology should accelerate. Several countries are expected to have functioning nuclear power plants within the next decade, including current UAE adversary Turkey and current UAE allies Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is keen on mining and enriching domestic uranium deposits, while the Turkish president recently mused that his country is "currently working" on developing or acquiring missiles with nuclear warheads.

End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)

"...The first nuclear power plant in the Arab world is expected to start operations by early 2020, less than nine years after work started..."

Source: "Ambassador: UAE is a 'model' nuclear power," *The National (UAE)*, 18 September 2019. <https://www.thenational.ae/uae/ambassador-uae-is-a-model-nuclear-power-1.911996>

The first nuclear power plant in the Arab world is expected to start operations by early 2020, less than nine years after work started, said Hamad Alkaabi, the UAE's permanent representative to the Vienna-based UN nuclear watchdog...

"The government concluded that demand for electricity in 2007 would triple by 2020. With that demand, naturally, you start to look at the options available to us," Mr Alkaabi said...

"All of this allowed the UAE and IAEA partnership to grow over the years," Mr Alkaabi said. "Now the UAE is seen in the eyes of the agency and many of the member states as a model for being a responsible, peaceful nuclear power programme because we followed the book and we followed the steps and best practice."

Source: السعودية تكشف عن خطة لتخصيب اليورانيوم مع سعي أمريكا لاتفاق نووي "Saudi Arabia reveals uranium enrichment plan as United States seeks nuclear pact," *Reuters Arabic*, 9 September 2019. <https://ara.reuters.com/article/businessNews/idARAKCN1VU18G>

"We are proceeding with it cautiously ... we are experimenting with two nuclear reactors," [Saudi Energy Minister] Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said at a conference in Abu Dhabi, referring to a plan to issue a tender for the Gulf Arab state's first two nuclear power reactors. He told the conference that the kingdom ultimately seeks to carry out the full nuclear program cycle, including the production and enrichment of uranium for atomic fuel.

Source: Kadri Gürsel. "Why does Erdogan want nuclear weapons?" *Al-Monitor*, 10 September 2019. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/09/turkey-why-does-erdogan-want-nuclear-weapons.html>

Speaking at an economic forum in the central Anatolian city of Sivas Sept. 4, Erdogan praised the advancement of Turkey's defense industry and then said, "It's all fine and well, yet some countries have missiles with nuclear warheads, not one or two. But I don't have missiles with nuclear heads. This I cannot accept"...

As he wrapped up the topic, Erdogan made a crucial remark. "We are currently working on it," he assured the audience, suggesting that Turkey is engaged in activities to acquire a nuclear capability...

Women in the Saudi and Emirati Militaries

OE Watch Commentary: The UAE sees itself as an Arab pioneer when it comes to women in the military. The first all-female military school in the region, the Khawla bint Al Azwar Military School, opened in Abu Dhabi following the 1991 Gulf War. In 2014, the UAE passed a conscription law for males that also established a voluntary nine-month training program at the all-female military school, with eligibility limited to women between 18 and 30 who had obtained consent from their guardian. In January 2019, the school launched a three-month training program for female peacekeepers from the UAE and six other countries (Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Yemen). A profile of the course, published in *Vogue Arabia*, explains that the UAE covers all the costs of the trainees and although it “does not qualify the cadets to serve in their home militaries or take part in peacekeeping operations, many have shown an interest in entering the sector.” The upcoming session, in January 2020, is expected to have “about 400 women from 10 countries across Asia and Africa.”



Female cadets parade during a graduation ceremony at Khalifa bin Zayed Air College, 2015.

Source: Jazzstinger via Wikimedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Khalifa_Academy_Graduation.jpg, CC by 4.0

With the notable exception of Egypt, women are becoming more involved in the militaries of Arab nations. This includes Saudi Arabia, which in 2018 began allowing women to serve in the Ministry of Interior’s General Security Directorate. According to the accompanying report from *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, over the past year Saudi women have begun working as security guards in public and private facilities, in the General Directorate of Narcotics, General Directorate of Prisons, Criminal Evidence, and Customs, and “in the areas of traffic, road security, security patrols, district police, Hajj and Umrah security, weapons and explosives, and intellectual and moral guidance.” In October 2019, for the first time in its history, Saudi Arabia’s defense ministry allowed women to enlist for certain roles in the armed forces at one of four ranks (Private First Class, Corporal, Sergeant and Staff Sergeant). Given the kingdom’s tendency to backtrack on promised social reforms, it remains to be seen how consequential this decision will be. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

“...The Saudi Defense Ministry, through its General Directorate of Admission and Recruitment in the Armed Forces, announced that qualified women may now enlist in the military...”

Source: “Hundreds of women from Asia and Africa to be trained by UAE Armed Forces as peacekeepers,” *The National (UAE)*, 18 July 2019. <https://www.thenational.ae/uae/government/hundreds-of-women-from-asia-and-africa-to-be-trained-by-uae-armed-forces-as-peacekeepers-1.887965>

The first cohort of 134 female cadets, from seven Arab countries, were trained in Abu Dhabi this year. They completed three months of basic military training and two weeks of peacekeeping instruction, graduating on May 10.

A second batch expected to be about 400 women from 10 countries across Asia and Africa is scheduled to begin training in Abu Dhabi in January. It will be the first time civilians are trained by a country’s army under the Military and Peacekeeping Training Programme....

The latest group of prospective peacekeepers will learn conflict resolution tactics and receive medical training, urban combat, field engineering and fitness training, as well as learning jiu-jitsu and military marching. After completing the programme, they will qualify to join their country’s military.

Source: تعرفوا إلى المجندات العربيات اللواتي تغير مسار حياتهن إثر التحاقهن ببرنامج تدريب النساء على عمليات حفظ السلام في الإمارات “Meet the Arab Cadets Whose Lives Have Been Transformed by UAE’s Military and Peacekeeping Training for Women Program,” *Vogue Arabia*, 17 September 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/y2d4hlft>

In addition to the course being the first initiative of its kind, the UAE has become a further pioneer by becoming the first country to allow its Ministry of Defense to train female foreign citizens, covering the costs of all the flights, training, board, and weekend social trips for all cadets...

Although the course does not qualify the cadets to serve in their home militaries or take part in peacekeeping operations, many have shown an interest in entering this sector. Officials will work on making more opportunities available to participants taking part in the second edition of the course, which will take place in January 2020 and will also be open to applicants from Africa and Asia.

Source: القوات المسلحة السعودية تفتح باباً جديداً للنساء في الوظائف العسكرية “Saudi Armed Forces Open New Military Positions to Women,” *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 3 October 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/y5c2pocl>

The Saudi Defense Ministry, through its General Directorate of Admission and Recruitment in the Armed Forces, announced that qualified women may now enlist in the military, with the rank of private first class, corporal, sergeant or staff sergeant, in the various branches of the armed forces: the Royal Saudi Land Forces, Royal Saudi Air Force, Royal Saudi Arabian Navy, Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces, Royal Saudi Strategic Missile Forces and Armed Forces Medical Services...

During the past year, Saudi women have served in the military ranks of public security, including the General Directorate of Narcotics, General Directorate of Prisons, Criminal Evidence, and Customs. The women also conducted inspections and worked in the Customs and as security guards in many malls and public and private hospitals to reduce crimes committed by women and maintain security in society. Women in the interior sector continue to work in the areas of traffic, road security, security patrols, district police, Hajj and Umrah security, weapons and explosives, and intellectual and moral guidance, which have been widely accepted by girls and society.

Syrian Reconstruction: The Economic Battleground

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying passages from an extensive report by the *Italian Institute for International Political Studies* discuss the geopolitics of Syrian reconstruction. The passages suggest that the Syrian conflict is shifting into a new “economic battleground” in which Russia, Iran, China and the Gulf States are competing for post-conflict influence in Syria through control of investment opportunities and profit from Syria’s resources.

According to the report, the Syrian government estimates that it will cost around \$400 billion to rebuild the country. The government is looking to Russia and Iran for immediate support, as the “strong and long-standing backers of the regime.” However, these two countries do not have the resources to foot this bill, and they diverge on how to address this problem. According to the report, Moscow supports internationally-backed reconstruction efforts, as this would solidify “Western acquiescence in [Russia’s] victory and its status in Syria as a great power” whereas Iran does not favor Western support. The report claims that there is financial competition between Russia and Iran over control of investment opportunities and profit for their private sectors. Facing sanctions, Iran has even less resources to invest than Russia and is more interested in “extracting economic gain out of Syria than putting investment into it.”

The report discusses that Damascus is also interested in attracting investments from China. China still has diplomatic relations with Syria and is not expected to tie support to any political demands. All the BRIC countries still have diplomatic relations with Syria and are not expected to tie support to any political demands. Assad is also reportedly open to receiving financial support from the Gulf states, even though they supported the opposition for many years. However, they recently accepted the regime’s military victory and want to increase Arab influence to counterbalance Iran in the region, as symbolized by the re-opening of the UAE embassy in Damascus in late 2018; and speculation that Syria will soon be invited back to join the Arab League (which had suspended it in 2011). Support from the Gulf Arab states would not come with political strings attached that threaten Damascus, “for those governments are more keen on restoring authoritarian stability than to meet popular demands to see Assad gone.”

This is a competition that excludes the West. As the report notes, Damascus is opposed to Western support “in view of the West’s role in backing the opposition and the perception that its help will be tied to unacceptable political demands.” The government instead is focused on securing investments from “friendly countries” that stood by Damascus during the conflict.

The report concludes with some observations about Europe’s position in this matter. The position of the European Union (EU) so far has been one of non-engagement with the Bashar al-Assad regime unless and until there is an “inclusive and Syrian-led political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.” In addition, the lifting of EU sanctions has been conditioned on the beginning of a meaningful political transition, including Assad’s removal from power. However, the report notes that such a stance “might well deny the EU authorities any prospect of leverage in post-war Syria.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**



Responders clear rubble with Syria Regional Program-provided heavy machinery following a regime attack in Maaret Nouman, Idleb, in November 2014. USAID.

Source: United States Agency for International Development via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Syrian_Civil_Defense_clearing_rubble_Maaret_Nouman.jpg, Public domain

“Russia and Iran are both looking for payback in the form of control of investment opportunities and profit for their private sectors from Syria’s resources and reconstruction plans...”

“Support from the Gulf Arab states would not come with political strings attached that threaten Damascus; those governments are keener to restore authoritarian stability than to meet popular demands or see Assad dislodged.”



Continued: Syrian Reconstruction: The Economic Battleground

Source: Chapter by Julien Barnes-Dacey, “Geo-Politics of Reconstruction: Who Will Rebuild Syria and Pay for It?” in Eugenio Dacrema and Valeria Talbot, “Rebuilding Syria: The Middle East’s Next Power Game?”, *ISPI (Italian Institute for International Political Studies)*, September 2019. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ispi_report_rebuilding_syria_2019_0.pdf

Who is going to foot the bill for the country’s reconstruction? The World Bank has estimated the damage at \$200bn, while the UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) forecasts that the total cost of restoring the country to its 2010 condition will be almost \$400bn.

...While the Assad regime has shown considerable resilience and seems likely to remain in power for the foreseeable future, it lacks the means to rebuild the country on its own. Its main allies, Russia and Iran, are not endowed with the kind of financial resources needed for a significant contribution; and indeed, they have already started jockeying for position to profit as much as possible from reconstruction contracts and from exploiting the country’s limited natural resources. As for the West, the EU and US have imposed sanctions designed to hobble Assad’s war machine and obstruct any attempts at reconstruction without a political resolution involving some sort of power-sharing, together with guarantees for the opposition and the refugees abroad....

...The Syrian government says it will cost around \$400 billion to rebuild the country...

...Damascus has made clear that it has no interest in Western support for reconstruction in view of the West’s role in backing the opposition and [Assad’s] perception that its help will be tied to unacceptable political demands. The government concentrates instead on securing investment from “friendly countries” that stood by Damascus during the conflict.

The immediate focus is on Russia and Iran, because of their strong and long lasting backing of the regime. But the attitudes of these two states highlight the increasingly complex dynamics of the post-conflict environment: Moscow, for its part, is now an active cheerleader for internationally-backed reconstruction efforts and is clearly keen to secure Western support; and this puts it at odds with the regime.... Moscow wants to use the prospect of reconstruction to secure Western acquiescence in its victory and its status in Syria as a great power.

...

For the moment...Damascus has shown no interest in Western support of any kind; and its position seems to be mirrored by the regime’s other key backer, Iran, which unlike Russia, has made little effort to secure Western legitimization of Assad’s victory...

...Having invested significant economic resources in propping Assad up and ensuring his survival over the past eight years, Russia and Iran are both looking for payback in the form of control of investment opportunities and profit for their private sectors from Syria’s resources and reconstruction plans. Like Russia, Iran clearly has not the funds to pay for Syrian reconstruction. Indeed, facing more intense US economic pressure... Tehran has even slimmer resources to share with Damascus... and is probably more focused on extracting economic gain out of Syria than on putting investment in.

...

Damascus is making significant efforts to woo the BRIC countries, and particularly China, all of which still have diplomatic relations with Syria and will not tie support to any political demands.

...

Assad also now appears open to receiving financial support from the Gulf states; and although all these countries, like the West, supported the opposition for many years, an emerging acceptance of the regime’s military victory and a desire to increase Arab influence to counterbalance Iran and Turkey have resulted in warmer relations, symbolized by the reopening of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) embassy in Damascus in late 2018. This is a trend that is likely to accelerate in future: there is widespread speculation that Syria will soon be invited back into the Arab League which had suspended it in 2011. Support from the Gulf Arab states would not come with political strings attached that threaten Damascus, for those governments are keener to restore authoritarian stability than to meet popular demands or see Assad dislodged.

...

Until now, the official EU position has remained one of non-engagement with the Bashar Al-Assad regime unless and until there is – to quote UN Resolution 2254 on which the EU’s position is based – an “inclusive and Syrian-led political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people”. That makes the lifting of EU sanctions conditional on the beginning of a meaningful political transition, including Assad’s removal from power. However, given the past and present evolution of the conflict, such a stance might well deny the EU authorities any prospect of leverage.



China Sees Opportunity in Syrian Reconstruction

OE Watch Commentary: As the first accompanying passage from the *South China Morning Post* reports, a hotel company owned by China's JinJiang- a leading hotel group in China- will soon open two hotels in Damascus, in the first such agreement since the Syrian conflict began. This is only the latest example of the investment opportunities China sees in Syrian reconstruction; and the Syrian government welcomes Chinese involvement in this process, including "oil-for-loans" deals. The accompanying passages from Chinese and Syrian sources shed light on China's interest in Syria, with one of them claiming "China is set to be the leading foreign presence in [Syria] in the postwar arena."



The Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

Source: Kremlin.ru, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60393>, CC BY 4.0

Damascus is a critical link for the China-Central Asia-West Asia corridor of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and presents business opportunities for Chinese companies. As the second passage notes, China is focused on Syrian ports as part of its effort to secure an "alternative route to the Mediterranean as opposed to the Suez passage." The passage notes that in October 2018, "China donated 800 electrical power generators to Lattakia, Syria's largest port. Syria's evident growing centrality in the overland route from China to the Mediterranean means [that] it is set to become an increasing recipient of Chinese funds..."

The passage also provides useful background on China's interest in Syrian reconstruction going back to 2017. In mid-2017, Beijing hosted the "First Trade Fair on Syrian Reconstruction Projects." At the time, China committed \$2 billion toward rebuilding Syrian industry, including a plan to construct an industrial estate that would host some 150 companies. Chinese businesses have since been working on opening representative offices across Syria, and there are numerous contracts in the pipeline. According to the passage, over 200 Chinese companies, mostly state-owned, attended the 60th Damascus International Trade Fair in September 2018, where they pledged deals including the "construction of steel and power plants, car manufacturing and hospital development." The passage also notes some of China's leading involvements include "Huawei committing in 2015 to rebuild Syria's telecommunications system by 2020, and the China National Petroleum Corporation owning major stakes in two of Syria's largest oil companies, the Syrian Petroleum Company and Al Furat Petroleum."

The third and fourth passages demonstrate Syria's willingness to work with China for its reconstruction. According to the third passage, in April 2019, China invited Syria to participate in its Second Belt and Road Forum, and the Syrian government welcomed this as a "new approach for coordinating policies that are different from those adopted by the US, which interferes in the states' internal affairs."

Beijing has played a relatively impartial role in the Syrian conflict, gaining an open welcome from the Assad government for Chinese investment and trade. As the final passage discusses, the Syrian government has expressed its willingness for Chinese "oil-for-loans" deals or even "settling trade and investment deals in yuan, which would help [China] to bypass the US dominance in the global settlement system." **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

"China is set to be the leading foreign presence in the postwar arena..."

"Some of China's flagship involvements [in Syria] include Huawei committing... to rebuild Syria's telecommunications system by 2020, and the China National Petroleum Corporation owning major stakes in two of Syria's largest oil companies."



Continued: China Sees Opportunity in Syrian Reconstruction

Source: “Louvre Hotels Group, owned by China’s Jin Jiang, to open two hotels in Damascus, Syria,” *South China Morning Post*, 15 September 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/3027291/louvre-hotels-group-owned-chinas-jin-jiang-open-two-hotels-war-torn>

Louvre Hotels Group, owned by China’s Jin Jiang, has signed an agreement to open two hotels under its own name in Damascus... The hotels “will open soon under the brand name of Louvre Hotels Group,” the French company said in a statement.... Deal was reported to be the first agreement with a western hotel operator since 2011, when the devastating conflict began...

Source: “China in Postwar Syria,” *Belt and Road News (China)*, 13 March 2019. <https://www.beltandroad.news/2019/03/13/china-in-postwar-syria/>

China’s increasingly dominant industrial foothold in the country combined with Beijing’s delicate approach to the Assad regime throughout the war means China is set to be the leading foreign presence in the postwar arena, ushering in a potentially unprecedented dynamic in the immediate region.

...

The Levant is set to become a critical node in the BRI’s China-Central Asia-West Asia economic corridor, as it offers an alternative route to the Mediterranean as opposed to the Suez passage. Syria is being eyed in the long term as the key Levantine region to achieve this aim.

...

China’s attention is now turning to secure Syrian ports directly... In October 2018, China donated 800 electrical power generators to Lattakia, Syria’s largest port. Syria’s evident growing centrality in the overland route from China to the Mediterranean mean it is set to become an increasing recipient of Chinese funds....

China is set to be the major player in the impending rebuilding process that will occur in postwar Syria. In mid-2017, Beijing hosted the “First Trade Fair on Syrian Reconstruction Projects,” at which time China committed to contribute \$2 billion toward rebuilding Syrian industry, centred on a plan to construct an industrial estate that could house up to 150 companies.

Chinese businesses have been preparing to open representative offices across Syria, and have sent frequent delegations to the country, leading to numerous contracts being in the pipeline or having already been signed.

More than 200 Chinese companies, largely state-owned, were present at the 60th Damascus International Trade Fair in September 2018.

Here, China pledged deals including the construction of steel and power plants, car manufacturing, and hospital development. Some of China’s flagship involvements include Huawei committing in 2015 to rebuild Syria’s telecommunications system by 2020, and the China National Petroleum Corporation owning major stakes in two of Syria’s largest oil companies, the Syrian Petroleum Company and Al Furat Petroleum.

Once an acceptable level of stability is reached in Syria, Chinese businesses will be ready to build off their extensive groundwork and leverage the experience Chinese industry has in post-conflict Middle Eastern settings...

Source: “Shaaban: China’s invitation to Syria to participate in Belt and Road Forum defies US sanctions,” *Syrian Arab News Agency*, 26 April 2019. <https://sana.sy/en/?p=164263>

Presidential Political and Media Adviser Bouthaina Shaaban said that China’s invitation to Syria to participate in the 2nd Belt and Road Forum is a crucial challenge to US sanctions and a new approach for coordinating policies that are different from those adopted by the US, which interferes in the states’ internal affairs.

Speaking to al-Mayadeen TV channel on Thursday, Shaaban said that “The Silk Road is not a silk road if it does not pass through Syria, Iraq and Iran, as Syria enjoys a high rank in the 2nd Belt and Road Summit because it is a corner stone on the historic Silk Road...”

Source: “Syria courts China for rebuilding push after fall of Islamic State’s strongholds,” *South China Morning Post*, 25 November 2017. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2121552/syria-courts-china-rebuilding-push-after-fall-islamic>

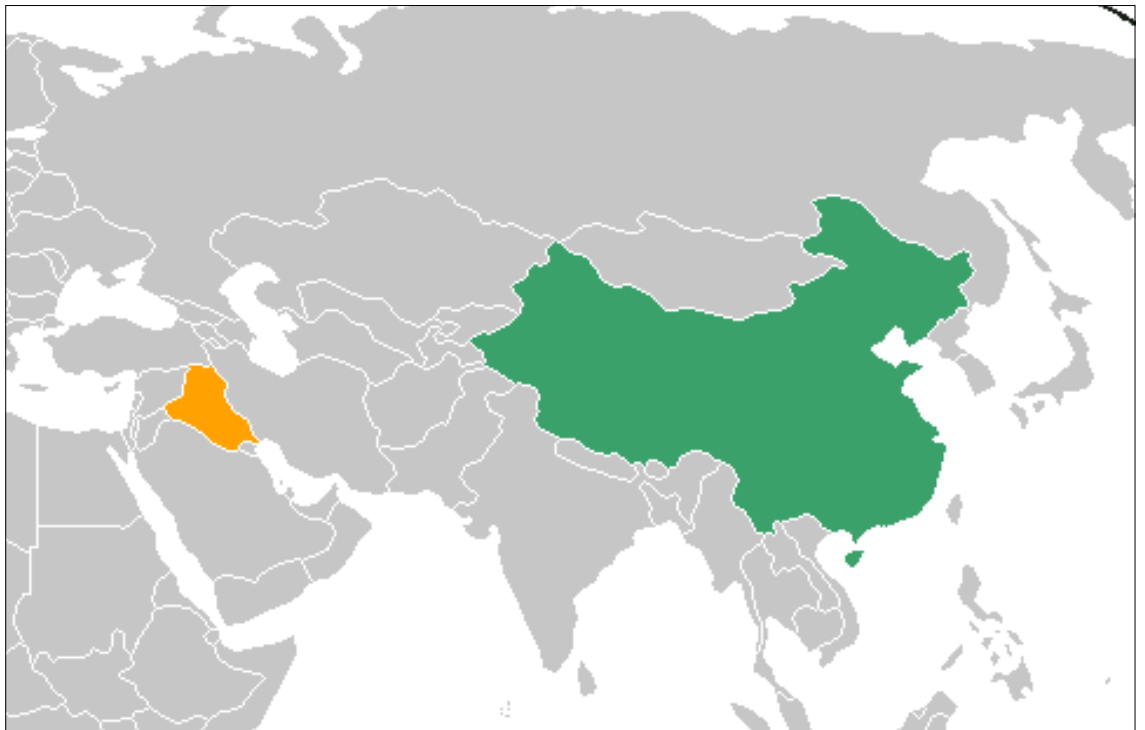
To better finance the reconstruction efforts, Moustapha [Syria’s Ambassador to Beijing] said the Syrian government would be open to any offers that were in its interests, including “oil-for-loans” deals or even settling trade and investment deals in yuan, which would help it to bypass the US dominance in the global settlement system... “We are very open to such suggestions [oil-for-loans deals] from various Chinese companies,” he said.



China and Iraq Seek to Expand Bilateral Strategic Partnership

OE Watch Commentary: On 23 September, at the end of a five-day visit to Beijing, Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul Mahdi signed eight Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with the Chinese Government. The meeting between the Iraqi and Chinese delegates comes as the trade balance between the two countries surpasses \$30 billion. Iraqi oil exports to China amount to \$15 billion. The accompanying passages from local sources discuss the economic and security ties formed during the meeting.

As the first accompanying passage from the social media page of the Iraqi Prime Minister discusses, “the agreements and memorandum of understanding covered financial, commercial, security, reconstruction, communication, culture, education and foreign affairs.” The second passage from the Chinese Government operated news site *Xinhua* notes that China aims to expand upon the Belt and Road initiative through further construction operations in Iraq and by increased oil cooperation among the two states. Jinping is quoted as saying that “China is ready to work with Iraq to push their bilateral strategic partnership to new height(s)...” Additionally, the passage mentions Jinping’s desire to increase security and law enforcement coordination between Iraq and China.



China Iraq locator map.

Source: Busterof666 via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:China_Iraq_locator_map.png CC BY 3.0

The third passage from *Al-Monitor* discusses an “oil for reconstruction and investment program,” under which Chinese companies will finance investment projects in exchange for 100,000 barrels per day of oil. Chinese investment prior to the deal amounted to \$20 billion and was primarily focused in the Iraqi energy sector. Furthermore, as the fourth excerpt points out, the current Iraqi Electricity Minister stated, “China is our primary option as a strategic partner in the long run. We started with a \$10 billion financial framework for a limited quantity of oil to finance some infrastructure projects.”

The final passage from the Erbil-based Iraqi Kurdish news source *Rudaw* discusses an attempt to diversify economic ties between China and Iraq. Under one of the MoUs signed at the meeting, the two states agreed to build a “joint Iraqi-Chinese manufacturing city in Iraq to produce goods” which would meet international standards. The Iraqi Minister of Industry and Minerals Saleh Abdullah al-Jabouri stated his ministry introduced 200 “projects and investment opportunities” to Chinese firms. (Also see: “China’s Cooperation with the Iraqi Kurdistan Region,” *OE Watch*, September 2019) **End OE Watch Commentary (Fesen)**

“China is our primary option as a strategic partner in the long run. We started with a \$10 billion financial framework for a limited quantity of oil to finance some infrastructure projects.”

Source: Adil Abd Al-Mahdi, Facebook Feed, 23 September 2019. https://www.facebook.com/Adil.Abd.Al.Mahdi1/posts/2711476228916900?_tn=-R

In Beijing on Monday, the Iraqi and Chinese governments signed eight agreements and mou in the presence and supervision of the Prime Minister Mr. Adel Abdul Mahdi and president of the Chinese Council of state...The agreements and memorandum of understanding covered financial, commercial, security, reconstruction, communication, culture, education and foreign affairs....



Continued: China and Iraq Seek to Expand Bilateral Strategic Partnership

Source: “Xi meets Iraqi PM on bilateral cooperation, situation in Middle East, Gulf region,” *Xinhua*, 23 September 2019. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-09/23/c_138415892.htm

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday met with Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi on bilateral cooperation and the situation in the Middle East and Gulf Region at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.... Hailing the two sides’ traditional friendship, Xi stressed that China is ready to work with Iraq to push their bilateral strategic partnership to a new height from a new historical starting point.... China is ready to enhance the integration of the Belt and Road initiative and the Iraqi reconstruction plan, Xi said, noting that both sides could push forward cooperation in petroleum, infrastructure and other fields.

Source: Salam Zidane, “Iraq, China launch ‘oil for reconstruction’ agreement,” *Al-Monitor*, 10 October 2019. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/10/iraq-china-india-oil-construction.html>

When Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi led a delegation to China in September, Baghdad and Beijing activated an “oil for reconstruction” and investment program. Under the arrangement, Chinese firms work in Iraq in exchange for 100,000 barrels per day.

Speaking to the press, Abdul Mahdi said that, including this new deal, about 20% of Iraq’s daily oil production is being exported to China. “We agreed [with Beijing] to set up a joint investment fund, which the oil money will finance,” he said, adding that Iraq requires that China not monopolize implementing projects inside Iraq but rather will work in cooperation with international firms.

Chinese investments in Iraq total \$20 billion, mainly in the energy sector via a consortium with international firms or independently to develop power plants. Moreover, annual trade between the two countries exceeds \$30 billion, with a total of \$15 billion in Iraqi oil exports.

“First is building and modernizing the highways and internal roads with their sewage systems. Second is the construction of schools, hospitals, and residential and industrial cities, and third is the construction of railways, ports, airports and other projects.”

Source: Luay Al Khatteeb, Facebook Feed, 24 September 2019. https://www.facebook.com/LuayAlKhatteeb/posts/1366578080173834?tn_=_K-R

China is our primary option as a strategic partner in the long run. We started with a \$10 billion financial framework for a limited quantity of oil to finance some infrastructure projects.

Source: Mohammed Rwanduzy, “Iraqi PM ends China visit with flurry of agreement signings,” *Rudaw*, 23 September 2019. <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/23092019>

Iraq’s Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi concluded his five-day trip to China with the signing of eight broad-ranging agreements on Monday in a bid to diversify ties between the two countries.

However, in a bid to diversify their economic ties, one of the agreements signed involve the building of a joint Iraqi-Chinese manufacturing city in Iraq to produce goods meeting “world standards,” according to Iraqi Minister of Industry and Minerals Saleh Abdullah al-Jabouri. The agreement is the sixth of its kind. Jabouri added that his industry ministry presented 200 “projects and investment opportunities” to Chinese companies during the Iraq-Chinese Economic Cooperation Forum.



Turkey to Develop Advanced Drone with Ukraine

OE Watch Commentary: On 4 September, Turkish President Erdoğan announced financial support for the country's unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) sector to further advance the development of UAVs. Turkey's domestically manufactured UAVs have surveilled the Aegean Sea, Syrian airspace and northern Iraq, giving Turkey the opportunity to test its indigenous military hardware. The accompanying article provides insight into the joint development of a more advanced UAV by Turkish defense company Baykar Makina and Ukraine.

Baykar Makina, owned by the family of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's son-in-law, will develop a "twin-engine, high-altitude, long-endurance (HALE) drone" called Akıncı with the financial support of the Turkish government.

The company already makes the battle-tested TB2, a medium-altitude, long-endurance drone. Baykar Makina will develop this drone with Ukrainian state-owned company Ukrspesexport. The article states that since the Turkish defense industry still grapples with developing a functional engine, Baykar Makina will procure Ukrainian "turboprop engines that generate 950 to 1,050 brake horsepower (bhp) from the MS-500V-S family, and AI-450C turboprops that provide 450-630 bhp, and use them with Akıncı drones." According to the article, Akıncı "will have a wingspan of [over 65 feet] and a maximum takeoff weight of" 9,900 pounds and will "be able to stay aloft for as long as 24 hours and attain an operational ceiling of" 40,000 feet. Furthermore, Akıncı "will be equipped with Aselsan AS-developed mission equipment, active electronically scanned array (AESA) radar, and electronic warfare (EW) and satellite communication systems enabling the platform to operate independently from a ground station." It will also be able to carry Turkish defense company Roketsan's "SOM-B2 air-to-surface cruise missile with a range of" 155 miles. The company plans to produce 24 Akıncı drones for the Turkish military and 13 of them for Ukraine by 2021. Qatar, Azerbaijan and Malaysia are reportedly interested in buying the Akıncı.



Armed Bayraktar TB2.

Source: Bayhaluk via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Armed_Bayraktar_TB2.jpg, CC BY-SA 4.0

The author discusses several reasons for Turkey's ambitious plan to develop this drone despite challenges. First, "Akıncı and SOM-B2 cruise missiles with their long ranges will give Turkey unmanned precision strike capability at a distance of...373 miles." As such, Akıncı will likely to replace F-16 jets currently operating in northern Iraq against Kurdish militants who Turkey considers terrorists. Additionally, with Akıncı Turkey "will acquire 24/7, low-cost, low-risk aerial surveillance capability over the Aegean Sea and the eastern Mediterranean." However, Turkey also faces some challenges, such as ensuring procurement of the engine from Ukraine, potential deviations of ammunition loads and center-of-gravity issues arising from Akıncı's mass and wingspan" and choosing a navigation system. The author asks "Will Akıncı remain linked to GPS or move on to [Russian] GLONASS?" **End OE Watch Commentary (Gündüz)**

“When the Akıncı is in service, Turkey will achieve 24/7, low-cost, low-risk aerial surveillance capability over the Aegean Sea and the eastern Mediterranean.”

Source: Metin Gürçan, "Turkey going full speed ahead with ambitious drone projects," *Al-monitor.com*, 19 September 2019. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/09/turkey-on-full-speed-with-its-ambitious-drone-projects.html>

...Turkey's leading drone producer, Baykar Makina, is teaming up with Ukrainian company Ukrspesexport on Turkey's twin-engine, high-altitude, long-endurance (HALE) drone called Akıncı (Raider)...

The fundamental motive behind Baykar Makina's joint venture with Ukrspesexport is the eternal engine problem Turkey's defense industry has been unable to cope with... Baykar Makina will procure turboprop engines from Ukraine that generate 950 to 1,050 brake horsepower (bhp) from the MS-500V-S family, and AI-450C turboprops that provide 450-630 bhp, and use them with Akıncı drones.

...The Akıncı drone will have a wingspan of 20 meters and a maximum takeoff weight of ... [9,900 pounds]. It is expected to be able to stay aloft for as long as 24 hours and attain an operational ceiling of... [40,000 feet].

According to the Turkish Defense Industry Management, the Akıncı will be able to carry internal and external payloads as heavy as 450 to 900 kilograms [990 to 1,980 pounds], respectively. The air vehicle will be equipped with Aselsan AS-developed mission equipment, active electronically scanned array (AESA) radar, and electronic warfare (EW) and satellite communication systems enabling the platform to operate independently from a ground station.

It will be able to carry a range of external weapons, such as Roketsan MAM-L precision-guided bombs (PGBs), Cirit guided rockets and the latest MAM-C smart munition, which can engage targets up to 8 kilometers [5 miles] away, depending on its launch altitude. More importantly, it will accommodate a Roketsan SOM-B2 air-to-surface cruise missile with a range of 250 kilometers [155 miles] and a selection of PGBs based on the Mk 82 general-purpose bomb.

...

The company is expected to deliver 24 of the Akıncı drones to the Turkish military in two years and export 13 to Ukraine. Furthermore, Qatar, Azerbaijan and Malaysia are interested in buying the Akıncı.

Ankara reveals its vision by defining Akıncı as an "unmanned air-to-surface fighter plane" — more than a drone. Akıncı and SOM-B2 cruise missiles with their long ranges will give Turkey unmanned precision strike capability at a distance of 600 kilometers (373 miles). This means Akıncı will be replacing the F-16 jets currently operating in northern Iraq and in northern Syria against the Kurdistan Workers Party, which Turkey considers a terrorist group. When the Akıncı is in service, Turkey will acquire 24/7, low-cost, low-risk aerial surveillance capability over the Aegean Sea and the eastern Mediterranean.

...Turkey faces three important problems regarding the Akıncı. The first is ensuring continued engine procurement from Ukraine when the drone's serial production begins. The second is potential deviations of ammunition loads and center-of-gravity issues arising from Akıncı's mass and wingspan. Finally, Akıncı depends on GPS, which presents a serious risk. Today, the only global alternative to US-controlled GPS is Russia's GLONASS, which reached full global coverage a couple of years ago. Will Akıncı remain linked to GPS or move on to GLONASS?



Turkey's Re-engagement in Asia

OE Watch Commentary: Central Asian Republics in particular and greater Asia, more broadly, have strategic importance “for ensuring the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic region” as the Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu once noted. Turkey was one of the first countries that recognized the independence of some Central Asian Republics after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. It intended to seize many opportunities from taking on construction projects to importing natural gas from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan. It also established the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) in 1992 to provide technical assistance to these countries and the agency has been operational since then. Despite its efforts, Turkey was unable to obtain the desired outcome from its engagement with Central Asia, and the interest eventually waned. The accompanying article from *thenewturkey.org*, a non-profit digital platform run by the pro-government think tank Seta Foundation, argues that Turkey has a “renewed interest in” Asia.

According to the article, Turkey is trying to re-engage with Asian countries, especially with Turkic nations. However, as the Turkish government re-positions its Asia strategy to build alliances, it must avoid making the same mistakes of the past. It should draw on the expertise of policymakers with a deep understanding of regional developments and dynamics. It should assess how it is perceived by regional alliances such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to accurately evaluate potential for sustainable collaboration. It should also look into how ASEAN and SCO could benefit Turkey while considering what disadvantages may arise from interacting with these organizations. The article claims that Turkey has been successfully deploying its soft power, especially to Central Asia in the form of “humanitarian aid, and scholarship programs for international students among other initiatives.” Now it needs to combine this with hard power.

The author states that Turkey will have advantages in terms of “its leadership capacity, historical-cultural ties, positive perception of Turkey by regional peoples, liberal values intermingled with deep historical and religious roots, [and] experiences in liberal economic practices.” Turkey may also have advantages in countries with which it shares a linguistic and ethno-cultural background. However, it also faces some challenges, including “being less informed about the historical background, colonial impact, diverse religious-cultural realities of the region, and the scale of competitiveness” in the region. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gündüz)**



Map of Central Asia.

Source: Cacahuete via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Central_Asia.png, CC BY-SA 4.0

“Political circles in Turkey are once again discussing re-engaging with Turkic nations but from a different perspective.”

Source: Mehmet Özay, “Turkey’s Renewed Interest in Asia: A Second Chance at Success?” *thenewturkey.org*, 3 September 2019. <https://thenewturkey.org/turkeys-renewed-interest-in-asia-a-second-chance-at-success>

... Turkey, as seen in the recent statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, is trying to reposition its geo-economic strategy by building alliances with some countries in new regions.

To be able to understand current realities in a comparable sense, one should recall what happened some decades ago... though there were some attempts to gain momentum for a potential alliance among the Turkic nations, Turkey was unable to provide effective leadership and the initiatives were unsuccessful.

Political circles in Turkey are once again discussing reengaging with Turkic nations but from a different perspective. It might be described as an Asian policy of Turkey, which is undoubtedly strategically important and should not be wasted as had happened in the previous era.

...while the world has been evolving into multipolar power houses, the importance of ASEAN and SCO is being felt even more, and they will have a greater global influence in the rest of the 21st century.

Although Turkey's soft power, emerging in forms such as humanitarian aid and scholarship programs for international students among other initiatives, have been particularly successful, Turkey's real economic and political impacts are yet to be realized....

Turkey's engagement with regional blocs in the near future should take into consideration what places are advantageous and disadvantageous. Turkish authorities should evaluate both the benefits and disadvantages of both ASEAN and SCO.

The issues considered to be advantages of Turkey are its leadership capacity, historical-cultural ties, positive perception of Turkey by regional peoples, liberal values intermingled with deep historical and religious roots, experiences in liberal economic practices and so on. Turkey's ideologically neutral stand as compared with China, Russia and the US will also increase its alignment with regional Asian countries.

On the other hand, being less informed about the historical background, colonial impact, diverse religious-cultural realities of the region, and the scale of competitiveness are the challenges which Turkey will need to overcome....

For a successful engagement of Turkey and Turkish companies, a much broader mapping of investments in technologies, collaboration in larger regional and global markets and cultural investments are highly critical.



Turkey's National Cyber Security Strategy

OE Watch Commentary: In 2018, Turkey established the Turkish Cyber Security Cluster, which brings together the public and private sectors along with academia to develop a Turkish cyber security infrastructure. The accompanying article from Turkish state-owned *Anadolu Ajansı* provides insights into Turkey's readiness in cyber security to combat cyber threats.

As the article points out, speaking at the "Future of Cyber Wars Conference," Ömer Abdullah Karagözoğlu, the Chairman of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, noted that cyber wars are one of the most damaging threats to a country's national security as well as to its citizens' personal security. According to Mr. Karagözoğlu, Turkey has developed cyber security strategies as part of its cyber space security efforts in recent years.

Turkey established the National Cyber Incident Response Center (NCIRC) under the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) to increase the country's capacity to efficiently coordinate its cyber capabilities. The number of cyber-attacks against Turkey has increased dramatically, reaching almost 100,000 by mid-2019. These attacks may target critical infrastructure including power grids. The NCIRC also aims to develop national software to protect against such attacks. There are already a few Turkish-made software programs including *Avcı*, *Azad*, and *Kasirga*, which have been effectively tested. Speaking at the event, Ahmet Hamdi Atalay, the general manager of HAVELSAN (one of Turkey's largest defense contractors) also pointed out the importance of developing national software and training a workforce specialized in cyber security. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gündüz)**

“Karagözoğlu stated that these software [programs] could effectively identify cyber espionage attacks.”

Source: Ayşe Böcüoğlu and Sefa Şengül, "Siber Savaşlara 'yerli ve milli hazırlık (National preparation for cyber wars)," *Anadolu Ajansı*, 25 September 2019. <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/bilim-teknoloji/siber-savaslara-yerli-ve-milli-hazirlik/1593689#!>

Karagözoğlu stated that cyber attacks can reach capabilities that can cause a great damage, "cyber wars are one of the most important threats to the national security of countries."

Turkey... in recent years has been developing cyber security strategies for cyber space activities.

Karagözoğlu stated that the National Cyber Incident Response Center (USOM) within BTK has an important mission for the efficient and coordinated use of cyber space capacity and said:

"We give special importance to [developing] Turkey's local and national software... Software such as Avcı, Azad and Kasirga, which have been developed entirely with domestic and national means, are proof of this."

Karagözoğlu stated that these software [programs] could effectively identify cyber espionage attacks. We are contributing to cyber security studies with the Cyber Star Contest, by organizing trainings for SOMEs and [by conducting] periodic consultation meetings...

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>

TCG Kınalıada: Strengthening Turkish Naval Power

OE Watch Commentary: In late September, the Turkish Navy commissioned the TCG Kınalıada (F-514), Ada-class corvette and the fourth ship of the MİLGEM project, after it completed sea trials. The Turkish Naval Forces have previously received TCG Heybeliada, TCG Büyükada and TCG Burgazada which were developed as part of the MİLGEM project, showcasing the innovation of the Turkish defense industry. This project was launched in 2004 by the Istanbul Naval Shipyard Command and aims to develop warships using local resources to improve national naval warship building capacity, to reduce dependence on foreign military hardware technology. The MİLGEM project's national Ada-class corvettes have anti-submarine warfare capability and are the latest technological advancement of Turkish defense industry. Other countries have shown interest in ordering warships constructed by this project. The accompanying articles from Turkish media provide insight into the project.



Turkish corvette TCG Heybeliada (F511) during a passing exercise in the Mediterranean Sea, Sept 2, 2014.
Source: MC2 John Herman via Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:U.S._Navy_Cmdr_Russell_Caldwell_waves_to_the_Turkish_corvette_TCG_Heybeliada_\(F_511\)_from_ aboard_the_guided_missile_destroyer_USS_Ross_\(DDG_71\)_in_the_Mediterranean_Sea_during_a_passing_exercise_Sept_140902-N-IY142-159.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:U.S._Navy_Cmdr_Russell_Caldwell_waves_to_the_Turkish_corvette_TCG_Heybeliada_(F_511)_from_ aboard_the_guided_missile_destroyer_USS_Ross_(DDG_71)_in_the_Mediterranean_Sea_during_a_passing_exercise_Sept_140902-N-IY142-159.jpg), Public Domain

The first article highlights President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speech at the commissioning ceremony of TCG Kınalıada and the steel-cutting ceremony for the Ada-class corvette to be built for Pakistan. In his speech, the President said, "the recent developments around the world and particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean have shown that Turkey must be much stronger in the seas, just as we are in other areas." He also pointed out that Turkey is one of 10 countries that is able to develop, build, and maintain a warship using exclusively domestic means, noting that the MİLGEM project is supported by over "50 local companies" in subcontractor capacity. According to the article, Turkish defense firm STM provided platform systems and design services, ASELSAN provided weapon and sensor systems and HAVELSAN supplied the combat management system. TCG Kınalıada is also equipped with Turkey's first domestic maritime missile ATMACA, developed by ROKETSAN, a Turkish defense contractor. The latest MİLGEM project product, TCG Kınalıada, is 99-meter-long and 14.4-meter-wide and can reach a maximum speed of 29-plus nautical miles. The other corvettes manufactured by this project have participated in numerous national and international exercises showcasing their superior capabilities and their success has attracted the attention of other countries.

As the second article states, Turkey has started the construction of a naval ship under the MİLGEM project for Pakistan. Turkey and Pakistan signed a contract for the acquisition of MİLGEM-class warships in July 2018. Turkish President Erdoğan and Pakistan's Chief of Naval Staff Zafar Mahmood Abbasi were present at the steel-cutting ceremony for the construction of the warship for Pakistan. This indicates deepening defense cooperation between Pakistan and Turkey. Exporting domestically made defense industry products has been an objective of the Turkish government under the leadership of the President Erdoğan. Turkish officials stated that while 70 percent of the MİLGEM project products are domestically made, it still has foreign dependency. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gündüz)**

“The recent developments around the world and particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean have shown that Turkey must be much stronger in the seas, just as we are in other areas.”
-President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan



Continued: TCG Kınalıada: Strengthening Turkish Naval Power

Source: Çiğdem Alyanak Berk Özkan et al., “Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Her alanda yerli ve milli imkanları en üst seviyeye çıkarmakta kararlıyız (President Erdoğan: We are determined to maximize national opportunities in every field),” *Anadolu Ajansı*, 29 September 2019. <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-her-alanda-yerli-ve-milli-imkanlari-en-ust-seviyeye-cikarmakta-kararliyiz/1597166>

The President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan attended the commissioning ceremony of the fourth domestically produced corvette TCG Kınalıada and the steel-cutting ceremony for the first MİLGEM-class corvette... [to be sold to] Pakistan.

“Turkey has become one of the 10 nations able to design [and develop] warships using domestic means...”

“The recent developments around the world and particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean have shown that Turkey must be much stronger in the seas, just as we are in other areas.”

Erdoğan said that the design, construction and integration activities of Kınalıada were carried out at the Istanbul Shipyard Command. “The design, research, development and procurement were carried out by our Defense Industry Presidency with domestic and national means... The ships design and platform systems [were provided] by STM, weapon and sensor systems were provided by ASELSAN, war and management system [were provided] by HAVELSAN. More than 50 local companies served as subcontractors under these companies.”

....

Unlike the first three of the MİLGEM Ada Class Corvettes, Erdoğan said, TCG Kınalıada is equipped with Turkey’s first domestic maritime missile ATMACA, developed by ROKETSAN.

Meanwhile, Advent, a network supported combat management system developed jointly by HAVELSAN and Turkish Navy, is being used for the first time on this ship...

Source: “Turkey begins construction of naval warship for Pakistan,” *ahvalnews.com*, 30 September 2019. <https://ahvalnews.com/turkey-pakistan/turkey-begins-construction-naval-warship-pakistan>

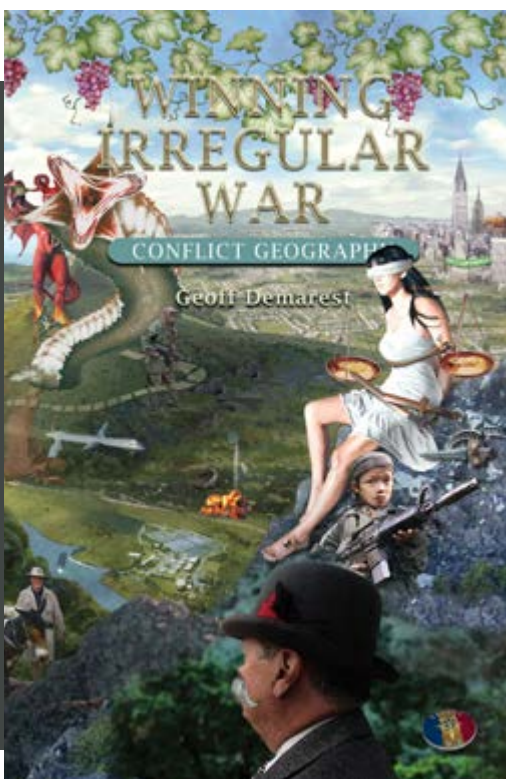
Turkey has started the construction of a naval warship to be sold to ally Pakistan as part of a deal signed in July 2018...

Construction for the MİLGEM warship was kicked off with a steel-cutting ceremony attended by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Pakistan’s Chief of Naval Staff Zafar Mahmood Abbasi...

Pakistan’s navy last year signed a contract for the acquisition of four MİLGEM-class ships from Turkey.

The 99.5-meter Turkish MİLGEM class corvettes are anti-submarine warfare (ASW) oriented vessels designed to embark ASW/ASUW helicopters and fitted with Harpoon and RAM missiles and a 76 mm gun.

Turkey and Pakistan have recently deepened cooperation in the defense field.



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>

Iran and Turkey: Friend or Foe?



[Iranian] President Hassan Rouhani welcomes Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Saadabad Palace, 7 April 2015.

Source: Tasnim News Agency via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:President_Hassan_Rouhani_welcomes_Turkish_President_Recep_Tayyip_Erdo%C4%9Fan_in_Saadabad_Palace_02.jpg, CC BY 4.0

“secular-democratic model.” By comparison Iran has had “a weaker influence and even at times entertained conflictual relations with states like Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan for its attempt to import Shiite Islam.”

The second article from pro-government *Daily Sabah* echoes similar points about the ongoing rivalry between Turkey and Iran, but it also notes several key issues that they collaborate on. The first collaboration effort pertains to how to deal their Kurdish minorities. Both Turkey and Iran have armed Kurdish minority groups seeking to either gain more rights or independence. Curbing aspirations of their Kurdish populations has led to increased cooperation. Turkey also desires to collaborate with Iran and Russia to prevent the establishment of any Kurdish entity in Syria that could “provoke similar secessionist demands at home.” Second, a new tacit alliance formed by Turkey, Qatar and Iran against a Saudi-led axis has brought Iran and Turkey even closer. Third, Turkey’s drift from Western alliances has brought Turkey and Iran closer as Iran is facing United States imposed sanctions. Finally, Iran and Turkey are interdependent on the issue of natural gas: Iran needs markets for its natural gas and Turkey needs a gas supply for its domestic consumption. Aside from these factors, regional dynamics will also play a significant role in shaping relations, which the article describes as “co-opetitive” (competitive and cooperative). **End OE Watch Commentary (Gündüz)**

OE Watch Commentary: Turkey and Iran, the two non-Arab states in the Middle East, are key countries in the region. The Turkey-Iran border goes back to the signing of the Qasr-i Shirin treaty in 1693, which brought an end to 150 years of intermittent warfare between the Ottomans and Safavid Dynasty and established a boundary between the two empires that has remained unchanged until today. Relations have been dominated by alternating phases of imperial and religious rivalry and cooperation, with a steady underlying competitive streak for regional dominance. The accompanying passages discuss recent dynamics between the two countries, including where their interests align and diverge.

According to the first article from *Al-Monitor*, there are several challenges that prevent the two countries from forming more stable relations. First, in Syria, Turkey and Iran have been on opposite sides of the conflict despite ongoing dialogue between them facilitated by Russia. While Tehran supports al-Assad’s regime in favor of the status quo, Turkey has actively supported the armed opposition group seeking to oust Bashar al-Assad. Additionally, Iran remains wary of the presence of Turkish troops in Syria. Tehran’s willingness to act as a broker between Ankara and Damascus all depends on Russian consent. Second, although both Iran and Turkey have attempted to develop a joint strategy to combat Kurdish groups fighting against their governments, “cooperation remains limited.” The latest cooperation of this nature was announced by Turkey in March 2019 but “...Turkey’s statement has been rejected by Iran’s armed forces several times and Tehran refrained from giving clear details about the extent of the cooperation.” Another point of contention is rivalry over influence in the central Asian Republics. Turkey appeals to the central Asian Republics through economic influence with 4,000 Turkish companies investing and operating in the region and the

“The most important matter [between Iran and Turkey] is how to find a common ground in Syria.”



Continued: Iran and Turkey: Friend or Foe?

Source: Pinar Tremblay, “Is Iran-Turkey rapprochement sustainable?” *Al-monitor.com*, 01 October 2019. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/09/turkey-iran-experts-ask-if-rapprochement-sustainable.print.html>

Yet, there are many challenges behind the smiles of Erdogan and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who meet regularly as part of trilateral Astana summits. We rarely hear about the sustainability of Iranian-Turkish rapprochement in the media. The relations between the two are anything but stable...

A high-level bureaucrat from the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs told Al-Monitor, “The most important matter [between Iran and Turkey] is how to find common ground in Syria. Turkey no longer calls for the ouster of [Syrian President Bashar] al-Assad. Yet, Tehran is not happy about our presence in northern Syria. Can Tehran play the role of broker between Ankara and Damascus? If Russia allows that, it may be possible. It will depend on how they approach the [Kurdistan Workers Party] PKK, which Turkey considers a terrorist organization and the same as other Kurdish groups in the region such as the YPG [People’s Protection Units].”

... “Despite much talk and attempts to bolster bilateral cooperation on the Kurdish issue, which is conceived as a grave security challenge for both countries, cooperation remains limited. The latest example has been the declaration of a joint operation by Turkish-Iranian forces against the PKK in March 2019. However, Turkey’s statement has been rejected by Iran’s armed forces several times and Tehran refrained from giving clear details about the extent of the cooperation.”...

...rivalry over the central Asian republics is another potential hurdle for bilateral relations... “Turkey had appealed to many of the Turkic states of central Asia by virtue of a flourishing economy and a secular-democratic model, while Iran had retained a weaker influence and even at times entertained conflictual relations with states like Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan for its attempt to import Shiite Islam...”

Source: Görkem Dirik, “Co-opetition in Turkey-Iran relations,” *Dailysabah.com*, 19 July 2019. <https://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2019/07/19/co-opetition-in-turkey-iran-relations>

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Iran Opens 'Persian Gulf Air Defense Command Center'

OE Watch Commentary: The Iranian navy's repeated interception of shipping in the Persian Gulf as well as its sabotage of tankers in Emirati waters have increased strategic attention to the Strait of Hormuz. In July, the Pentagon announced plans for the United States and like-minded allies to escort and protect shipping in the region. It is against this backdrop that the excerpted article from the *Fars News Agency*, an Iranian outlet close to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), is relevant. It reports that Iranian authorities have opened a new command-and-control center in Bushehr province, which is littoral to the northeastern Persian Gulf, along Iran's coastline south of Khuzistan and north of Hormuzgan, the Iranian province that sits astride the Strait of Hormuz.

The new Persian Gulf Air Defense Command Center, which supposedly depends entirely on indigenous technology, will theoretically coordinate both IRGC and Iranian Army Air Force operations in the Persian Gulf. The photograph accompanying the article does not make clear whether the new center has any specific capabilities to track aircraft that an ordinary airport or, for that matter, commercial flight tracking services, would not.

The article discusses a visit to the center by Major General Sayyid Abdul Rahim Mousavi, the army command-in-chief whom Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in May 2019 bestowed the additional position of commanding the Khatam al-Anbia Air Defense Base. As the passage reports, Mousavi also visited Kharg Island from which over 90 percent of Iran's oil is exported and Asalouyeh, a town in the central Bushehr province, which is the closest Iranian port to the offshore South Pars gas field. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“The center is set up with the capability of controlling the vast area.”

Source: “Markaz-e Farmandhayeh Pedafand-e Havaye Khalij-e Fars Eftatah Shod (The Persian Gulf Air Defense Command Center Opened),” *Fars News Agency*, 7 October 2019. <https://www.farsnews.com/news/13980715000150>

The Persian Gulf Air Defense Command Center Opened

While in Bushehr province, Major General Sayyid Abdul Rahim Mousavi, commander-in-chief of the army and commander of Khatam al-Anbia Air Defense Base, visited the Army air force and Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps units stationed in Asalouyeh and on Kharg Island. Alongside the base commander, he also visited the Persian Gulf Air Force Command Center which began operations. Based on state-of-the-art technology, the center is set up with the capability of controlling the vast area and directing the Army and Corps' air and defense units stationed along the southern coast of the country. In this center, this country's young staff and defense specialists monitor, with the most advanced Iranian-made equipment, all airborne activities in the Persian Gulf.



A photo showing the Persian Gulf Air Defense Command Center.

Source: Fars News Agency, https://media.farsnews.com/Uploaded/Files/Images/1398/07/15/13980715000341_Test_PhotoN.jpg, CC BY 4.0

Iran: Mobile Rocket Systems and Underground Tunnels

OE Watch Commentary: The Iranian military regularly announces new indigenous abilities, many of which it exaggerates but all of which are based in the experience of being initially dependent upon foreign platforms and an unsympathetic international community following Iraq's 1980 invasion. The excerpted article from the *Fars News Agency*, an outlet close to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), highlights a new mobile radar device that the Aerospace Force is reportedly designing. The need for such a device suggests either that Iran seeks to plug existing holes in its coverage or to rapidly recover should adversaries' military action take out existing radar facilities.

According to the article, General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of IRGC's Aerospace Force, also touted new underground "missile cities," large underground tunnels dug into rock capable of storing large missiles. The Iranian military has turned to such underground facilities for 35 years,

since it faced Iraqi missile barrages in the so-called 'war of the cities' during the Iran-Iraq War. (While there is no mention of North Korean participation in tunnel construction, it is interesting to note that Iran's proxy Hezbollah adopted a similar strategy to shield its weaponry from Israeli bombardment in southern Lebanon, often relying on North Korean engineers to construct underground facilities.)

Taken together, the two capabilities that Hajizadeh highlights suggest Iranian leaders are signaling that they can absorb a first strike and retaliate should hostilities in the Persian Gulf area of operations devolve into more direct military conflict. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**



Soldiers pose in front of a missile in an underground tunnel.
Source: Mashregh News, https://cdn.mashreghnews.ir/old/files/fa/news/1394/7/22/1276551_482.jpg

“One of the most important capabilities of our country is the missile sector which should not be exposed to [a] surprise attack by the enemy.”

- General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Aerospace Force

Source: “Dar Hal Terahi Samaneh Radari Motarek Hastim/Jagher Shabanehruzi Tunel baraye Shahrhaye Mushaki (We are Designing a Mobile Rocket System/Digging Tunnels for Rocket Cities),” *Fars News Agency*, 30 September 2019. <https://www.farsnews.com/news/13980708001180>

Mobile Rocket Systems and Tunnels for Rocket Cities

General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Aerospace Force, said on the television program *Chehel Setun [Forty Columns]*: Only superpowers are capable of designing and producing smart precision-guided missiles. The number of countries producing such missiles is less than ten. Today, we are the first in the region with regard to missiles, and we are one of the top seven or eight countries in the world....

With regard to the importance of air defense, General Hajizadeh said, “We had almost nothing in the field of air defense about ten years ago and we sought to purchase equipment which was not being sold to us. Today, we are self-sufficient in every aspect of our defense.”

The commander of the aerospace force also said, “We are designing a radar system that is deployable, unlike other radars in the world that are fixed, [this] is deployable and remains engaged with the target it is tracking and destroys it....”

As for ‘missile cities’ and their features, Hajizadeh said: “One of the most important capabilities of our country is the missile sector which should not be exposed to surprise attack by the enemy.” The idea for these cities began in 1984, that is with the war of the cities, and actually before the first missile struck the country, the first tunnel was created.



Iran Announces Dome Defense against Drones

OE Watch Commentary: The Iranian government has utilized unmanned aerial vehicles for almost 35 years, and has engineered several generations of surveillance and attack drones. In recent years, Iran or its proxies have put these to use in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen, or against Israel and Saudi Arabia. Until recently, Iran had a qualitative military edge in drones over its immediate neighbors and was second only to Israel in its ability to deploy drones.

According to the excerpted article from the *Fars News Agency*, a conservative outlet close to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the Iranian government is now recognizing that it is vulnerable to unmanned aerial vehicles launched by its adversaries. The article alleges that a surveillance drone triggered anti-aircraft fire over central Tehran in 2016, and suggests that drones increasingly pose espionage and security risks to Iranian facilities. The Iranian military, therefore, has reportedly developed anti-drone and low altitude air defense which purport to jam GPS and scramble electronics. As often the case with Iranian military announcements, it is unclear whether the reality of capabilities matches the military's rhetoric.



Iran developing "dome defense" against drones.

Source: Fars News Agency, https://media.farsnews.com/Uploaded/Files/Images/1398/07/11/13980711000731_Test_PhotoN.jpg, CC BY 4.0

The acknowledgement of penetrations of restricted airspace in central Tehran, however, is significant given that Tehran is approximately 350 miles from the Iraqi border and 370 miles to the Azerbaijani border. The Alburz mountain range—many of whose peaks top 9,000 feet and one double that—make drone infiltration from the Caspian Sea unlikely. In all probability, then, Iranian cities' vulnerability to small drones suggests that Iranians themselves and perhaps domestic opposition groups have begun utilizing drones inside Iran. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“The best way to deal with enemy drones may be to disrupt their processes electronically.”

Source: “Dastyabi Iran beh Pedafand Gonabadi (Iran's Access to Dome Defense),” *Fars News Agency*, 5 October 2019. <https://www.farsnews.com/news/13980711000828>

Iran's Access to Dome Defense

Today, there are a number of different types of commercial drones—helicopters, quadcopters, quadrotors, and multi-rotors among others—that have different applications. In recent years, both around the world and in Iran, drones have proliferated with a wide variety of applications for mapping, imaging, recreation, etc. They have been widely available across classes and despite their application, pose many threats.

In [Persian month] Dey [January 21-February 20], 2016, a ‘Helishot’ drone flew over restricted airspace in central Tehran, trigger an air defense response and low-altitude cannon fire.

Among the threats from unmanned aerial vehicles due to high-quality imagining is espionage, and mapping of restricted sites, and military and industrial centers. Also, in recent years with the development of Sunni extremist terrorism in West Asia, terrorist groups such as Jebhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State have used drones with explosives to carry out kamikaze attack.

Considering the threats that small UAVs could pose in restricted areas, the Army Ground Forces' Self-Sufficiency Research and Jihad Organization has designed a response and is developing a comprehensive system to deal with the new micro-threats is on the agenda of the armed forces. Commercial drones and microprocessors have radio guidance systems, and some can also be routed or returned to the first point of flight by the Global Positioning System (GPS), so the best way to deal with these types of microprocessors can be to disrupt the process electronically. Commercial drones and microprocessors have radio guidance systems, and some of these can be routed or returned to the first point of flight by GPS. The best way to deal with these may be to disrupt their processes electronically.



Putin's Long Game in Africa

OE Watch Commentary: While much of the press has focused on China's inroads into Africa, another major power has also been launching ventures in the continent, though on a far smaller scale than the Chinese (at least to date). As the accompanying excerpted article from the South African *Institute for Security Studies* relates, Russia is pursuing economic opportunities and improved relations in several African nations as it attempts to restore some of the considerable influence it yielded there before the disintegration of the USSR.

According to the article, besides Russian military support for Mozambique (described in a separate article in this *OE Watch* issue), Moscow has been supplying the Central African Republic (CAR) with troops, arms, and reportedly mercenaries. It is believed CAR is paying back Russia with a large share of its diamonds, and Mozambique is doing so by providing access to the region's gas fields.



Russian President Vladimir Putin with Faustin Touadera, President of the Central African Republic, 23 May 2018.

Source: Kremlin.ru via Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_African_Republic#/media/File:Vladimir_Putin_and_Faustin_Touadera_23_may_2018_\(1\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_African_Republic#/media/File:Vladimir_Putin_and_Faustin_Touadera_23_may_2018_(1).jpg), CC BY 4.0

Some argue that Russia's expanded presence has been beneficial. In CAR, a country struggling with religious extremism, they have helped prop up the elected President, and in Mozambique they are bolstering that country's army in its fight against jihadists. Others take a far dimmer view of Russia's presence on the continent, claiming that Putin and his cronies are using it for money laundering, and that Russia has a tendency to support African leaders even if they have an abysmal human rights record. An example of the latter was Moscow's support for Sudan's former president, Omar al-Bashir, though that was not enough to keep him from being toppled by a popular uprising.

The article points out that Moscow's new involvement in Africa is the result of several forces. Sanctions imposed by the US and the European Union have pushed Russia to look elsewhere for economic opportunities, running the gamut from extractive industries to defense contracts. There is also the chance to establish new military bases as Putin tries "to revive the grandeur of the Soviet era." Furthermore, Africa, with its untapped potential, expanding middle class, and in some nations, weak governance, presents opportunities for Russia.

Thus, Africa finds another major power expanding its footprint in the continent, with some arguing the positives outweigh the negatives and others arguing the reverse. What cannot be argued, as the article states, is that Putin often plays the long game, and so it is expected that Africa will see even more Russian involvement in the years to come. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

“President Vladimir Putin is opening up economic opportunities for Russia and restoring some of the considerable influence the Soviet Union once had on the continent.”

Source: Peter Fabricius, “From Russia with Love – or Perhaps Not?” *Institute for Security Studies (South Africa)*, 4 October 2019. <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/from-russia-with-love-or-perhaps-not>

Most of Africa's leaders are expected to attend Russia's first Africa summit in Sochi later this month. It will be co-chaired by Putin and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, as current African Union chairperson. The summit is likely to lend legitimacy and add impetus to Moscow's Africa policy.

Arguably Russia is doing the job in the CAR that France and regional powers abandoned. And in Cabo Delgado, it could be said that Russia is tackling an enemy that Mozambique's government and the region have effectively denied the existence of.

President Vladimir Putin is opening up economic opportunities for Russia and restoring some of the considerable influence the Soviet Union once had on the continent. Whether that influence will be good or bad for Africa is debatable.



The Accra Initiative to Combat Violent Extremism in West Africa

OE Watch Commentary: Responding to the growing insecurity in their region, the West African nations of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo launched the Accra Initiative in September 2017. Mali and Niger, both struggling to counter violent extremism, joined as observers this year. However, as the accompanying excerpted article from the South African *Institute for Security Studies* notes, little has been reported about its structure or degree of success.

The initiative is built around “information and intelligence sharing; training of security and intelligence personnel; and conducting joint cross-border military operations to sustain border security.” Periodic high level meetings among the member states help foster the necessary cooperation and collaboration.

The article notes several advantages of the initiative. These include not relying on a heavy administrative structure; funding by the member countries so they have ownership of it; increasing trust among the nations, including some which have harbored suspicions of the others; and finally, while the Accra Initiative is a regional military response, non-security actions by the individual member states, such as development projects, complement it.

Despite the initiative's positive aspects, it does face limitations, including limited intelligence gathering capabilities, differences in force structures, and an occasional lack of communications from language differences. There have been some successful military operations leading to arrests, but generally these activities were ad hoc, brief, and limited in geographic reach.

Two concerns regarding the initiative have also surfaced as the member countries face elections in 2020 or 2021. First, resources could be diverted away from the initiative and towards political campaigns. Second, there is fear that the initiative could be used to suppress political opposition and civil liberties under the false pretense of preventing violent extremism. However, despite concerns and limitations regarding the Accra Initiative, it is still seen as a chance for multinational cooperation to combat the threat of violent extremism in West Africa's coastal states. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**



A soldier from Burkina Faso during a training exercise.

Source: SPC Britany Slessman via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Close_quarter_combat_training_in_Burkina_Faso_during_Flintlock_2017_170308-A-ZF167-147.jpg, Public Domain

“Although little is known about the [Accra] Initiative, it has significant potential for individual states and the region.”

Source: Sampson Kwarkye, Ella Jeannine Abatan, Michael Matongbada, “Can the Accra Initiative Prevent Terrorism in West African Coastal States?” *Institute for Security Studies (South Africa)*, 30 September 2019. <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/can-the-accra-initiative-prevent-terrorism-in-west-african-coastal-states>

Although little is known about the [Accra] Initiative, it has significant potential for individual states and the region.

The 1 May kidnapping of two French tourists in Pendjari National Park straddling the Benin-Burkina Faso border and the murder of their Beninese guide also occurred after the initiative was launched. This incident confirms terror groups' attempts to gain a foothold in the northern borders of coastal states.

The threat of violent extremism in West Africa's coastal states presents regional and national opportunities. Regionally, it offers the chance for multilateral collaboration on a common threat. Nationally, countries can address existing governance, economic and socio-political problems that violent extremist groups often exploit to get a foothold in the region.

Renewing the social contract between states and their populations, especially in border communities, should be prioritised. This means incorporating the needs of the people while rethinking the role of the state and its security institutions, including the army, in responding to emerging threats.



AMISOM Soldiers Go Unpaid



Ugandan soldiers serving with AMISOM.

Source: AMISOM/Flickr, <https://flickr.com/photos/61765479@N08/6243479086>, Public Domain

Many of the TCCs have found that supplying troops to AMISOM as well as other peacekeeping missions can be quite lucrative. Indeed several threatened to quit AMISOM when funding was reduced even though that would have left Somalia in an extremely perilous state. The donor largesse is also frequently quite beneficial to the TCC militaries as poor countries would not be able to afford such a large force if not for that money. However, this monetary incentive for politicians and military leaders to keep troops in certain peacekeeping missions sometimes runs counter to the desires of their own citizens.

The EU, as well as other AMISOM donors, including the UN, will be making further cuts to AMISOM as the mission winds down. Undoubtedly the charges of misallocation of funds did not help AMISOM's cause. Meanwhile, it is unknown if the TCC soldiers who have gone unpaid will ever receive their back salaries in full. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

“... the [Ugandan] soldiers deployed in Somalia to protect a 12-year weak government, have not been paid their full allowances for several months.”

Source: “Djibouti forces under AMISOM have not been paid for months,” *Shabelle Media Network (Somalia)*, 6 October 2019. <https://www.radioshabelle.com/djibouti-forces-under-amisom-have-not-been-paid-for-months/>

Djiboutian forces serving under AMISOM deployed in Jalalqsi in the Hiiraan region have not been paid their salaries since last December last year despite the government receiving the funds from the African Union, according to Indian Ocean Newsletter.

The EU cut by 20% the stipends in February 2016 lowering the figure from \$1020 to \$800. Troops Contributing Countries (TCCs) governments retain 20% of the pay for administrative costs.

Source: “Nganda warns on militarised politics, missing Amisom pay,” *Edge.UG (Uganda)*, 7 October 2019. <http://edge.ug/2019/10/07/nganda-warns-on-militarised-politics-missing-amisom-pay/>

Nganda said the soldiers deployed in Somalia to protect a 12-year weak government, have not paid all their allowances for several months.

A group of 530 soldiers under an operation name UNGU deployed in Somalia for 12 months between July 2018 and July 2019, were paid for only five months.

They did not receive payment for seven months yet UN and AU paid all the money.

Another contingent of 1830 soldiers under the name UGABAG 25 deployed during the same period have also not been paid their full allowance.



Underfunded South African Navy Struggles to Fulfill Its Mandates

OE Watch Commentary: Fiscal constraint within the South African government has resulted in marked decreases in moneys allotted for numerous budget items. As the accompanying passage from the South African website *DefenceWeb* notes, the country's navy, despite serving a critical role in the defense of the nation, has not been spared.

The South African Navy (SAN) needs an estimated 6.818 billion Rand (roughly US \$440 million) to fulfill all of its mandates, but it is only receiving 52.9% of this. Making matters even worse, approximately 69% of what it does receive goes to human resources, leaving only about US \$73 million for operating expenses. As a result of this financial constraint, the number of hours at sea, a key performance indicator for the navy, is only resourced for 6,000, which is half of what has been determined necessary to keep the sailors trained and vessels well-maintained.

This is not the first year that the navy has suffered underfunding. Previous fiscal cycles have also seen it receiving far less than the bare minimum. Thus, SAN has a backlog of needed maintenance and repair that grows every year. It is predicted that if these cuts are not reversed, SAN will first lose its frigate capability and then its submarine capability.

The top brass of the country's navy have been warning about the decreased training and outdated equipment due to budget cuts. Perhaps Chief of the South African Navy, Vice Admiral Mosiwa Hlongwane, put it best when he briefed Parliament, "We are unable to (perform) our mandate as the country has instructed us to do so." **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

"We are unable to [perform] our mandate as the country has instructed us to..."
-Chief of the South African Navy, Vice Admiral Hlongwane us

Source: Dean Wingrin, "Defence budget sinks navy," *DefenceWeb* (South Africa), 16 September 2019. <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/defence-budget-sinks-navy/>

Presenting to the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee (JSCD) on Defence on Navy sea hours and capacity constraints to effectively utilise naval assets last Thursday, the country's senior Sailor delivered a sober message to the Parliamentarians: if the status quo of low budget allocation remains, the Navy will be defeated.

Hlongwane said that these 6 000 hours are not sufficient to meet both Force Preparation and Force Employment requirements, as the Joint Operations Division annually requires 7 800 hours at sea for Force Employment alone, consisting of 2 544 hours for maritime border safeguarding (Operation Corona) and 5 256 hours for maritime security (anti-piracy Operation Copper).

"If we don't get a budget that we are supposed to get, we are unable to do what we are supposed to do," Hlongwane said at the end of his presentation. "We are unable to (perform) our mandate as the country has instructed us to do so."



Tight South African navy budgets threaten to drydock frigates such as this one.

Source: David Holmes, US Navy via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:South_African_Navy_frigate_SAS_Amatola_\(F_145\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:South_African_Navy_frigate_SAS_Amatola_(F_145).jpg), Public Domain



Russia Strengthens Military Ties with Mozambique

OE Watch Commentary: Military ties between Russia and Mozambique were on full display recently when a Russian Air Force An-124 transport aircraft unloaded a Mi-17 helicopter as well as other equipment in the southern African country. As the accompanying passage from the South African website *DefenceWeb* reports, the transport aircraft left Eastern Europe on 24 September, unloaded its cargo in the northern port city of Nacala on 25 September, and headed home the following day.

It is difficult to know the full extent of Russian involvement in Mozambique. Mozambican papers reported that there were at least 160 Russian military personnel in the Cabo Delgado Province to help prevent attacks in the region from an Islamist group, Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jama, also known as Ansar al-Sunna. The Russian embassy, however, denied reports of Russian soldiers operating in Cabo Delgado.

Despite the uncertainties about the extent of Russian involvement in Mozambique, they are involved. The two countries signed a resolution allowing Russian military vessels to dock at Mozambican ports, with Russian military equipment now being observed at these locations. There are also security agreements providing for the Russians to train Mozambican military forces, and Russian advisors have reportedly already been deployed to the country.

Russian ties to Mozambique extend beyond just military ones. Following the devastation of Cyclone Idai, Russia provided disaster relief. It also forgave 95% of Mozambique's debt, and Russian oil producer Rosneft signed an energy deal with the country, providing much-needed investment.

The Russian-Mozambique partnership appears to be strengthening as mutual benefits accrue. One aspect that will be particularly interesting to observe in the long term is its impact on Ansar al-Sunna. As the article mentions, Russian advisors and equipment will help strengthen the Mozambican military's capabilities against them. Furthermore, given that the terrorist group often recruits members from the country's large pool of unemployed young people, Russian financial assistance and investment may cause a decline in those numbers, by potentially facilitating employment. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**



With military ties strengthening, Russia recently delivered an Mi-17 helicopter similar to this one to Mozambique.

Source: Parfaits via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mil_Mi-17,_Russia_-_Air_Force_AN1738473.jpg, CC BY-SA 3.0

“A Russian Air Force An-124 transport aircraft has delivered an Mi-17 helicopter and other equipment to Mozambique as reports continue to indicate Russian military activity in the southern African country.”

Source: “Russian military hardware delivered to Mozambique,” *DefenceWeb (South Africa)*, 29 September 2019. <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/russian-military-hardware-delivered-to-mozambique/>

A Russian Air Force An-124 transport aircraft has delivered an Mi-17 helicopter and other equipment to Mozambique as reports continue to indicate Russian military activity in the southern African country.

Whilst Russian soldiers may indeed be deployed to Russia, experts have not ruled out that personnel and equipment may be from a private military contractor. In November 2018 the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) reported that Mozambique's government was handing over security responsibilities in Cabo Delgado to a private security company.

Since 2017 there have been dozens of attacks in Mozambique, mainly focused on the Cabo Delgado region, with hundreds killed. According to the Institute for Security Studies, the upsurge in brutal violence in northern Mozambique, including the beheadings of women and children, has sounded alarms that a violent jihadist movement like Boko Haram or al-Shabaab could be evolving. Those allegedly responsible for the attacks apparently call themselves Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jama (often abbreviated to al-Sunnah).



Al-Shabaab Down But Not Out

OE Watch Commentary: The fight against al-Shabaab in Somalia has been going on for several years, and there have been reports that the terrorist group has been losing strength and territory. Nevertheless, it is still able to mount significant operations against the Somali National Army, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and members of the Somali government. As the accompanying excerpted article from *The East African* reports, not only does the group extort money from businesses in rural areas, but it also operates in the capital city, Mogadishu (from where it was forced out in 2011).



Although al Shabaab has been weakened by AMISOM forces and the Somali National Army, it is still able to launch devastating attacks in the country.

Source: Skilla1st via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Djiboutian_forces_artillery_ready_to_fire_on_Al-Shabaab_militants_near_the_town_of_Buula_Burde_Somalia.jpg, CC BY-SA 4.0

Since President Farmaajo assumed office two years ago, AMISOM has reportedly not liberated any new territory. One reason for this might be that the nations contributing troops to that mission frequently pursue different strategies and interests, thus presenting less than a unified front. Still another reason might be, with 2020 elections approaching, Farmaajo's government is distracted.

Additionally, Farmaajo has poor relations with the leaders of three regional states, possibly compounding the central government's difficulties in combating the terrorists.

While Somali domestic politics play out, and AMISOM shows its fractures, al-Shabaab has taken advantage of the situation to infiltrate government agencies. The killing of Mogadishu's mayor by one of his staff members who turned out to be a suicide bomber bears testament to that.

Against this already troubling backdrop, the UN has instructed AMISOM to make further reductions in its forces. Reduced donor funding has made such a decision almost inevitable. Some claim that the Somali National Army will be able to fill the void left by AMISOM's withdrawal, but others are worried that al-Shabaab, which already controls many areas at night, might someday be able to control them during the day, too.

End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)

“There are concerns that Al-Shabaab are gaining ground, with troop-contributing countries pursuing different strategies and interests, and the government of President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo... preoccupied with 2020 elections.”

Source: Fred Oluoch, “Concern that Mogadishu losing control to Al-Shabaab,” *The East African*, 28 September 2019. <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Concern-that-Mogadishu-losing-control-to-Al-Shabaab/4552908-5291106-mup6bd/index.html>

However, Amisom spokesperson, Col Charles Imbiakha told The East African that contrary to the growing belief about a resurgent militant activity, the African peacekeepers have degraded the jihadists' capacity and left them on the run.

There are concerns that Al-Shabaab are gaining ground with troop-contributing countries pursuing different strategies and interests and the government of President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo remains preoccupied with 2020 elections.

The president of Hirshabelle State of Somalia Mohamed Abdi Ware, recently complained that his region has been overwhelmed by the militants.

“We are being overwhelmed by Al Shabaab. We are asking the federal government of Somalia to take action and help us contain the problem,” President Ware told the media in Jowhar town.



Nigerian Army Recruiting New Anti-Boko Haram Vigilantes

OE Watch Commentary: In Nigeria's battle against Boko Haram, the army has solicited support from civilians who formed the Civilian Joint Task Force (Civilian JTF) against Boko Haram. With the Nigerian military overstretched in its effort to combat Boko Haram across several states, the Civilian JTF has been an important force enhancer that also provides local knowledge to the military. As a result, according to the excerpted article from the Nigerian source *Legit*, Nigeria's Borno State Governor Babagana Zulum has summoned 1,000 traditional hunters to join the vigilantes.



Milice d'autodéfense Nigeria 2015.

Source: VOA via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Milice_d%27autod%C3%A9fense_Nigeria_2015.JPG, Public domain

The article notes that the vigilantes are believed to have spiritual powers to make themselves disappear during operations.

As Muslims, they take an oath on the Qur'an before beginning their employment as vigilantes. In addition to these reports about the vigilantes, the article states that Governor Zulum has requested Muslim clerics in northern states to pray for victory against Boko Haram and for clerics in Mecca, Saudi Arabia to do the same.

Perhaps the absence of tangible results in the fight against Boko Haram has led to such desperation that some officials hope spiritual intervention can make a difference. Alternatively, this news may reflect the low morale in northeastern Nigeria and is an attempt to inspire confidence at a time when Governor Zulum is taking concrete steps to support soldiers by recruiting the 1,000 new vigilantes. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

“Governor Babagana Zulum has begun the employment of not less than 1000 traditional hunters from northern states.”

Source: “Governor Zulum employs 1000 vigilantes to fight insurgency in the north,” *Legit (Nigeria)*, 7 October 2019. <https://www.legit.ng/1263845-boko-haram-governor-zulum-employs-1000-vigilantes-fight-insurgency-north.html>

In his effort to end insurgency in Borno, Governor Babagana Zulum has begun the employment of not less than 1000 traditional hunters from northern states. According to an unnamed source in the state, Zulum is secretly recruiting the vigilantes (northeast and northwest) who are said to possess the spiritual power to disappear during operation. Moreover, the source revealed that as part of the employment exercise, the hunters take oath of allegiance using the Islamic holy book, Qu'ran. Zulum had engaged the spiritual effort of clerics in northern states to fight Boko Haram. The clerics, resident in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, were to offer prayers to God to help bring back national security in the country.



Latest Attacks in Mali Raise Specter of Military Coup

OE Watch Commentary: On the night of 30 September, the Malian army suffered a pair of simultaneous attacks, representing its worst military defeat since March of this year when up to 23 soldiers were killed in a single attack. The recent pair of attacks and subsequent battles lasted into the next morning. The most significant losses occurred at the Mali position at the G5 Sahel joint forces base in Bulkessy. At the same time, a second and smaller attack occurred 150 kilometers away in Mondoro.

Initial western media reports put the death toll in Bulkessy in the 60s. According to numerous Malian sources in the days following the attacks, the initial number of soldiers killed was in the vicinity of 35 with another 30 missing. Since then the reports have been updated to 40 Malian soldiers killed and another 25 still missing. More clarification and updates are sure to follow.

According to a majority of Malian media sources, the attacks have been attributed to Ansarul Islam, a Burkinabe group founded in 2016 by Malam Dicko, a jihadist organization operating in north and central Mali where both Bulkessy and Mondoro are located.

However, at least one press report broke with the prevailing thesis and claimed that the attacks were not the work of Ansarul Islam but that of a former colonel in the Mali armed forces determined to undermine the central government. The report claims that the fatal blow was “the work of a man long imbued with the functioning of the national defense apparatus.” The press also reported the likelihood of a possible coup. Anti-MINUSMA (The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali) demonstrations were also held in Bamako on 12 October, with future demonstrations planned. The focus of the demonstrations was a general frustration and distrust of the French military mission and a call for a Russian component, if not Russian lead in the anti-jihadist struggle.

Whoever the culprit, the attacks of 30 September have shocked many in Bamako. According to those this author has spoken to, the attacks have made locals feel vulnerable and scared. The war has been ongoing for years with steady casualties. Attacks like the one on Bulkessy have many on edge. At the same time, media reports about coups and disgruntled former military officers (with or without merit) seem to have increased tension, jolting public memory and consciousness regarding the on-going conflict. **End OE Watch Commentary (Billingsley)**



Faladie Sema IDP camp, one of 16 refugee encampments in the capital of Bamako.
Photo by Dodge Billingsley

“These attacks and the impotence attributed to the central government to deal with the deterioration of the situation have awakened the specter of a coup d’etat similar to that led by officers in 2012.”

Source: “Mali-conflit-armée-jihadistes: Attaque de camps militaires au Mali: le bilan passe à 40 soldats tués (Mali-conflict-army-jihadists: attack of military camps in Mali: the assessment passes to 40 soldiers killed),” *MaliWeb*, 11 October 2019. <https://www.maliweb.net/insecurite/mali-conflit-armee-jihadistes-attaque-de-camps-militaires-au-mali-le-bilan-passe-a-40-soldats-tues-2843208.html>

“These attacks and the impotence attributed to the central government to deal with the deterioration of the situation have awakened the specter of a coup d’etat similar to that led by officers in 2012.”

Source: “Attaques contre les FAMAs : Quelle posture adopter? (Attacks against FAMAs: Which posture to adopt?),” *JournalDuMali*, 10 October 2019. <https://www.journaldumali.com/2019/10/10/attaques-contre-famas-posture-adopter/>

“According to the information we received, both operations were allegedly conducted by Colonel Ba Ag Moussa. The procedure used is too sophisticated for Ansarul Islam. Camp Boulkessy was shelled from 20 kilometers away, with precise GPS coordinates. And attacking the camp, they first destroyed the armored vehicles and those who were in defensive positions. According to Mahamadou Diouara, a sociologist and specialist in security issues in Mali. This fatal blow is the work of a man long imbued with the functioning of the national defense apparatus. ‘The military means, the tactical organization and the ability to have the information on the camp before attacking it show that it is truly a big group. And that it was a military operation prepared for a long time by actors who know the tactics of defense and the military device of the camps. Another would hardly have succeeded.’”



Can Malian Jihadists Negotiate Peace?

OE Watch Commentary: Amadou Koufa is the leader of the Mali-based jihadist “Group for Support of Islam and Muslims,” which is known by the acronym JNIM. Aligned with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), JNIM has been responsible for numerous attacks throughout Mali, according to the accompanying passage from the French-language news source *MaliJet*. The article reports that Kouffa may entertain negotiations, having recently released an audio message on social media, mentioning a possible ceasefire agreement. This represents the first time Kouffa has publicly considered reducing hostilities.

The ceasefire agreement would be with an ethnic Dogon militia called Dana Ambassagou. The article suggests Kouffa used this message to portray himself as defender of ethnic Fulanis. This is because Kouffa’s condition for the ceasefire was that the Dogon militia, which consists of traditional hunters, would have to stop attacking Fulanis. The article is not optimistic about prospects for the ceasefire, however. First it is unclear if Kouffa, a Fulani himself, will live up to the ceasefire if it is declared, given his group’s history. Second, he may simply be using the audio as propaganda to portray himself as a defender of Fulanis. And, third, the Dogon militia has a political wing, which is open to negotiation, but also a militant wing, which rejects negotiation. This militant wing is loyal to the Malian government fighting JNIM and will not abandon that effort.

While the prospect of a ceasefire is now on the table, the security situation in Mali remains complex, due to the many actors including ethnic militias, jihadists, and the government. There are also other actors not mentioned in the article, such as regional and international forces. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

“But this cessation of hostilities is totally rejected by the military wing of Dana Ambassagou.”

Source: “Amadou Koufa pose des conditions pour négocier avec une milice dogon (Amadou Koufa sets conditions to negotiate with a dogon militia),” *Malijet.com*, 6 October 2019. <https://malijet.com/actualite-politique-au-mali/flash-info/233835-mali-amadou-koufa-pose-des-conditions-pour-negocier-avec-une-mil.html>

In Mali, Amadou Koufa, the Fulani leader of the jihadist group JNIM [Group for Support of Islam and Muslims], broadcast a new voice message on social networks in which he mentioned a possible ceasefire agreement with the Dogon militia Dana Ambassagou. “Traditional hunters must stop attacking members of the Fulani community,” says Amadou Koufa. For several years, fighting between the Fulani and Dogon communities has been disturbing localities in central Mali in Dogon country.

In a document dated September 24, the political wing of the self-defense group Dana Ambassagou also reported on the mediation. But this cessation of hostilities is totally rejected by the military wing of Dana Ambassagou.



Hunter in Dogon region, Mali.

Source: J. Drevet via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dogon_Hunter.JPG, CC BY-SA 3.0



Mali Attempts to Disarm Militants

OE Watch Commentary: The conflict in Mali involving jihadist groups and self-defense militias has become increasingly complex and widespread in recent years. The Malian government is seeking to address the growing numbers of young people joining armed groups by establishing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs. The accompanying passage from French-language *Radio France Internationale* discusses the Malian Prime Minister's visit to the Mopti region, where he launched a new DDR camp.

The article notes that the the DDR program may help eliminate the number of weapons in circulation. While the article does not specify the process for individuals to enter the DDR camp, it is open to any former rebel, including jihadists and self-defense militias. Various tents have already been set up at the camp. According to one militia leader commanding 300 men, the DDR program will contribute to bring peace to the country. With an estimated 8,500 armed fighters in the country, DDR camp need to have the potential to scale and accommodate hundreds, if not thousands of individuals, according to the article.

However, the DDR programs also raise some questions. For example will jihadists and self-defense militiamen become subject to the same program in terms of reintegration into society? Presumably, jihadists would not be as well received as militiamen into local communities. The article also does not state how long participants in the DDR program will remain before being released. Thus, while there are signs that DDR is being prioritized and that Malian leaders consider it important, specifics of the program will have to be ironed out if the program is to succeed and contribute to the cessation of hostilities in the country. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

“Reducing or even completely eliminating the possession of weapons - be they weapons of war, small arms, or light weapons - is important for the pursuit of security.”



Malian PM Cissé and President Ibrahim Boubakar Keita, 2019.

Source: Kassim Traoré (VOA) via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Malian_PM_Ciss%C3%A9_and_President_Ibrahim_Boubakar_Keita,_2019.jpg, Public domain

Source: “Le Premier ministre lance une opération de désarmement dans le centre (The Prime Minister launches a disarmament operation in the center),” *Radio France Internationale*, 12 October 2019. <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20191012-mali-premier-ministre-boubou-cisse-lancement-operation-desarmement-mopti-segou>

Malian Prime Minister Boubou Cissé ended a 48-hour visit to the Mopti region. He launched the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program in central Mali. In this regard, he visited Camp Soufroulaye, a locality near Mopti where armed fighters will be quartered. In the Soufroulaye camp, military honors were provided to the Prime Minister. Later, Boubou Cissé emphasized the importance of the ceremony. “Reducing or even completely eliminating the possession of weapons - be they weapons of war, small arms, or light weapons - is important for the pursuit of security,” he said. In the main area, dozens of tents and other infrastructure awaited future ex-combatants to be impacted by DDR. Among them are ex-rebels in the north and in the center alleged jihadists but also fighters of self-defense militias. The leader of a militia has told RFI that his men “will come here soon, to make peace in the country,” before stating that he leads “more than 300 men.”



Coup in Peru?

OE Watch Commentary: Peruvians witnessed some dramatic political activity in October, but it seems to have been less than it seems, at least according to perspectives reflected in the accompanying references. President Martín Vizcarra closed the legislature, a move that his opponents quickly labeled a golpe de estado, a coup d'état. The Peruvian system is a half-parliamentary one, with the president having the capacity to close congress contemplated in the country's constitution. Contemplated doesn't mean jurisprudentially settled, however; as the situation is causing obvious confusion among Peruvian experts in the matter. Based on the accompanying sources, the bottom line appears to be this: The military is standing behind President Vizcarra's decision, the latter has scheduled new elections for January, and the President seems to enjoy majority public support for the move. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



Martin Vizcarra, President of Peru.

Source: Galería del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores via Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Martin%20Vizcarra_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Martin%20Vizcarra_(cropped).jpg), CC BY-SA 2.0

“...The constitutional experts are not in agreement...”

Source: Karem Barboza Quiroz, “Perú: “Esto no es un golpe de Estado (This is not a coup d'État),” *El Comercio*, 4 October 2019. <https://elcomercio.pe/politica/actualidad/disolucion-del-congreso-carlos-ramos-nunez-magistrado-del-tc-esto-no-es-un-golpe-de-estado-noticia/>

“Karem Barboza [interviewer from El Comercio] Q: Doesn't this seem like a coup d'État?”

Carlos Ramos Núñez [Magistrate and Director of the Center for Constitutional Studies of the Constitutional Court of Peru] A: No, it is not a coup d'État. It is a constitutional mechanism foreseen in the Constitution and that forms part of something very normal in the Constitution of '93, that is to reinforce the power of the presidency of the Republic. That is to say, it is not a creation of this government, it is a creation of the Constituent Assembly of the year 93.”

Source: Martín Higuera, “Se mantiene la incertidumbre en Perú ante una situación política inédita (Uncertainty continues in Peru in the face of an unprecedented political situation),” *Libertad Digital* (Madrid), 3 October 2019. <https://www.libertaddigital.com/internacional/latinoamerica/2019-10-03/se-mantiene-la-incertidumbre-en-peru-ante-una-situacion-politica-inedita-1276645727/>

“The confrontation between the Executive and the now ex-congressmen continues while experts debate the constitutionality of what happened...The most recent antecedent, and similarly a crisis with the Legislative Power of Peru, of the same magnitude as the current one with the decision last Monday of President Martín Vizcarra, dates to 5 April 1992 when Alberto Fujimori decided to dissolve congress. Nevertheless, although it has been a noted fact lately, there are few coincidences between the two moments, given that, on that past occasion, Fujimori did not take into account the conditions contemplated by the Constitution in order to take that step...Also, in that [1992] occasion, he did not convoke elections, which Vizcarra did with a date of 26 January 2020... The constitutional experts are not in agreement. What Vizcarra did was interpret the that the Congress had rejected a motion of no confidence requested by the then Prime Minister, Salvador del Solar, who did so to modify the method of election of the members of the Constitutional Court...”

Source: Juan Manuel Vargas, “Perú: Los militares respaldan a Vizcarra tras disolución del congreso (Peru: the military supports Vizcarra after dissolution of congress),” *RCN Radio and EFE*, 1 October 2019. <https://www.rcnradio.com/internacional/militares-respaldan-vizcarra-tras-disolucion-del-congreso>

The highest-ranking chiefs of the Peruvian armed forces met at the Palace of Government in order to give President Martín Vizcarra their support after the dissolution of the Congress by the President this Monday...a supreme decree announced that parliamentary elections would be carried out 26 January 2020, following the period established by the Constitution in order to resolve a dissolution of the legislature.



More Russia in Cuba

OE Watch Commentary: The first accompanying reference is from an article reporting a recent visit by Russian Prime Minister Dimitri Medvédev to Cuba during which he reaffirmed the alliance between the two governments. The second reference is from the same media source two days later, giving some context. Cuban President Díaz-Canel recently declared the Cuba fuel crisis over. The crisis, announced by Díaz Canel earlier in the year, had been anticipated because of the events surrounding the emergence of Juan Guaidó and the seeming possibility of an overthrow attempt in Caracas. After that eventuality failed, things have apparently returned toward normal in Cuba, and it seems the Putin government may have felt more comfortable in increasing its visibility there as in the rest of the region. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



Dmitry Medvedev and Diaz Canel in 2016.
Source: The Russian Government, <http://government.ru/en/news/23183/>, CC BY 4.0

“Dimitri Medvédev... emphasized strategic cooperation with the government of Raúl Castro/Díaz-Canel, in support of the Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro...”

Source: Miriam Leiva, “Rusia se hace fuerte en Cuba (Russia gains strength in Cuba),” *CubaNet*, 8 October 2019. <https://www.cubanet.org/destacados/rusia-se-hace-fuerte-en-cuba/>

“During the speech made at the University of Havana, on receiving the Honorary Doctorate Degree as part of the official visit carried out on 3 and 4 October, Dimitri Medvédev... emphasized strategic cooperation with the government of Raúl Castro/Díaz-Canel, in support of the Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and put priority on cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean, region that he does not consider the United State’s backyard.”

Source: Editors, “Díaz-Canel cree superada etapa más crítica de crisis de combustible en Cuba (Díaz-Canel believes that the most critical period of the fuel crisis in Cuba is past),” *CubaNet* and *EFE*. 10 October 2019. <https://www.cubanet.org/noticias/diaz-canel-cree-superada-etapa-mas-critica-de-crisis-de-combustible-en-cuba/>

“Last September 11, Díaz-Canel announced that the country faced a complicated ‘conjunctural’ situation because it had temporarily stopped receiving petroleum because of pressures from the United States on the shipping lines to prevent the arrival of fuel to Cuba as a reprisal for its support of Venezuela...Nevertheless, the Cuban governor today held that there had been ‘fewer affect than expected, the country was ‘not paralyzed’ and it managed to avoid ‘blackouts’ in the delivery of electricity so frequent during the crisis of the 90s...He opined that the country had come out ‘strengthened and victorious’ thanks to the reaction of the citizenry, [and] reiterated his conviction that Cuba would not give in, and rejected ‘betraying the commitment we have with our brother countries’, in reference to the alliance Havana has with the administration of the Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro.”



Colombia War Geography

OE Watch Commentary: The first accompanying reference criticizes a set of Colombian government development plans that were inspired by the accords reached between the FARC and the previous administration of former President Juan Manuel Santos. The programs, and in particular their latest iteration, the “Development Plans with Territory Focus (PDET),” enjoy considerable support from international organizations. However, the author points out a fundamental flaw in the PDET, a flaw that is made obvious by its strategic geography. His argument is compelling. Of Colombia’s 1,100 or so counties, the 170 counties on which the government will focus correlate closely with organized violence. They are more or less also the 170 counties that FARC insisted in negotiations that the government help economically and developmentally. They are not, however, violent places because of underlying socio-economic or demographic factors. They are violence prone because they are hosts to the illicit commodity sources and smuggling routes that the FARC and their associates maintain. There are easily another 170 counties in Colombia with similar socio-economic profiles, but within which there has been no organized violence. What differentiates those peaceful counties from the violent counties is that the peaceful counties don’t contain smuggling routes.

As the second accompanying reference demonstrates, the government ministry in charge of the program blames socio-economic underdevelopment in the 170 violent counties on ‘abandonment by the State’ or the ‘presence of illicit crops’ (as though the crops cultivate themselves), and not on the guerrillas. Mr. Lafaurie suggests that the monies from the burgeoning structure of assistance programs will flow ever more precisely to outlaw front organizations, to the Bolivarian narco-guerrillas. The government appears to be broadly, systematically building and securing the rear support areas and lines of communication of what Colombians with Lafaurie’s perspective would call its enemies. The prospects are not encouraging. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

“...[The] map of 170 counties... overlap... with that of the war and illegal groups, as well as that of illicit crops and illegal mining, and with a third map with the decision of the [FARC-government] Accord as to the Peasant Reservation Zones and the Township Zones...”

Source: José Félix Lafaurie Rivera, “Geografía del poder y de la guerra (Geography of power and of the war),” *La Linterna Azul*, 29 September 2019. <https://lalinternaazul2.wordpress.com/2019/09/29/geografia-del-poder-y-la-guerra/>

...[The] map of 170 counties ... overlap completely with that of the war and illegal groups, as well as that of illicit crops and illegal mining, and with a third map with the decision of the [FARC-government] Accord as to the Peasant Reservation Zones and the Township Zones... My geography exercise ends with the map of the 16 Special Electoral Districts, and everything coincides... With that there have been seven candidates [for mayor or commissioner], five suffering attempts, two more kidnapped, 40 receiving threats, and 54 victims of violence...

Source: E”Planes de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial (Development Plans with Territory Focus),” *Agencia de Renovación del Territorio (Territory Renovation Agency)*, Undated. http://www.renovacionterritorio.gov.co/especiales/especial_PDET/mapa.html

The objective of the PDETs is to achieve structural transformation in the countryside and rural ambit, and an equitable [relationship] between the countryside and the city...

The transformation of the 170 Colombian counties most affected by violence, the presence of illicit crops, poverty and abandonment by the State, has already begun...

Elections in Spain: Spexit?

OE Watch Commentary: On 6 October, Spanish politician and leader of the Vox Espana party, Santiago Abascal gave a campaign-launching political harangue at a party rally at the Palacio Vistalegre convention center in Madrid. The speech is worthy of analysis as a possible milestone in Spanish political history and as a referent for the general election (11 November) campaign that is underway in that country.

As the accompanying passage demonstrates, in the speech, Mr. Abascal rejected uncontrolled immigration, stressed protection of the family and Christian religious faith, heralded Iberian global cultural influence, rejected further regional autonomy (Catalan in mind) and most importantly for the strategic moment, rejected leadership from Brussels (the European Union). The speech might be seen as an early milestone declaration of the Spanish movement to exit from the European Union, made during the month that British exit from that body is a centerpiece of European geopolitical focus.

The speech serves as a neat prompt to highlight the consequences of the election for Spain and for European political issues generally, several of which have obvious defense and security consequences, including for the United States. It is being emphasized and viewed in part because it contrasts Vox against what Mr. Abascal termed the ‘progressive consensus.’ Abascal distanced the new party from both of the old parties that have carried the polar flags of Spaniards’ political identities for decades: the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE) and the People’s Party (PP), left and right respectively. In the current Spanish political firmament, left and right are apparently led by the Podemos party and Vox. Mr. Abascal used the Spanish national motto, Plus Ultra as his speech’s exclamation marks. That symbolism is as unmistakable as it is controversial. Vox is in effect coopting the motto of the national crest, which has a long etymology and evolved connotation. Today, it is as ad astra might be to a Kansan, extolling aspiration and striving. The term is also an obvious assertive allusion to Spanish nationalism. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



Santiago Abascal.

Source: VOX Valencia via Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:\(Santiago_Abasal\)_La_Espa%C3%B1a_Viva_en_Valencia_\(43737563140\)_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:(Santiago_Abasal)_La_Espa%C3%B1a_Viva_en_Valencia_(43737563140)_(cropped).jpg), Public Domain.

“We have to protect our borders because we are not going to let anyone come live among us to tell us how we have to live, how we have to pray, what we have to eat and what our laws must be.”

Source: Santiago Abascal, “Discurso de Santiago Abascal en Vistalegre Plus Ultra (Santiago Abascal’s Plus Ultra speech at Vistalegre),” *VOX España*, 6 October 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDOvL1CDZeo>

“...without apology...we say here today...Spain Plus Ultra...We want the power to protect the Spanish people from its enemies...from their globalist positions [that] want to dissolve the existence of Spain in a multi-cultural magma...We have to protect our borders because we are not going to let anyone come live among us to tell us how we have to live, how we have to pray, what we have to eat and what our laws must be. Neither will we let them tell us from afar, from Brussels, tell us how we are to protect the walls of our house...”



Leftist Action in Ecuador

OE Watch Commentary: In early October, large-scale demonstrations broke out in Ecuador. While they did not appear to put President Moreno in immediate risk of removal, they did force the Moreno administration to negotiate concessions outside the formal course of governance, as indicated in the first accompanying reference. This may weaken the president's political cache going forward, although this is to be seen. The Armed Forces stood by the president, but also indicated a reluctance to take much aggressive action against the demonstrators. The immediate spark of the demonstrations does not appear to be the subject of much debate. President Moreno determined to end transportation fuel subsidies that had been in place for some time. Removal of the subsidies made an immediate economic impact, and the reaction was widespread organized demonstrations.

The question of who organized the demonstrations has been a matter of debate. President Moreno accuses the Bolivarians, that is, the organizations of ex-president Rafael Correa and his foreign allies, of orchestrating and sustaining the uprising. It is a widely deduced hypothesis. The second accompanying reference, from a Venezuelan website [opposition to Nicolás Maduro], is typical of that sentiment. President Moreno had been vice-president in the same Bolivarian government as Rafael Correa, but upon becoming president took a turn away from that alignment of socialist governments. It is reasonable to hypothesize that we witnessed some strategic revenge for the betrayal, although the reaction also seems to have been a widely popular if not spontaneous response to a decree that had an immediate negative pocketbook effect on a large number of people who could least afford it. The leaders of the Armed Forces of Ecuador, meanwhile, seemed to tread carefully. By mid-month, as indicated in the final source, the crisis was apparently overcome, with Moreno conceding and the decree withdrawn. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

“...the Armed Forces [have not taken] a strong position...”

Source: “Manifestantes y Gobierno de Ecuador hacen tregua y abren puertas al diálogo (Demonstrators and Ecuadoran Administration make truce and open doors to dialog),” *Panorama.com, Reuters and Agencies*, 10 October 2019. <https://www.panorama.com.ve/mundo/Manifestantes-y-gobierno-de-Ecuador-hacen-tregua-y-abren-puertas-al-dialogo-20191010-0001.html>

“The President of Peru assured Wednesday night that he had initiated a rapprochement with the sectors in disagreement (indigenous movements and unions... The demonstrations blew up last week when Moreno put an end to diesel and gasoline subsidies, that had been in effect for decades, this in the framework of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for 4.2 billion dollars, with which they sought to reduce a swollen fiscal deficit... The protests began to affect oil production in the small nation... Moreno has accused ex-president Rafael Correa, in whose government he [Moreno] was vice-president, of an attempted coup d'état with the help of Venezuelan chief executive Nicolás Maduro. Correa, from Belgium. Denied the accusation, and Maduro did the same in Caracas... The chief executive [Moreno] has the support of the business elite, the Armed Forces [have not taken] a strong position, but their popularity has fallen...”

Source: Enrique Aristeguieta Gramcko, “Urge activar el Art. 3.1 del TIAR para impedir que Maduro derroque al Gobierno de Ecuador (Urgent to activate Article 3.1 of the [Rio Treaty] to block Maduro from bringing down the [Moreno] Administration in Ecuador),” *Venezuelagana*, 10 October 2019. <http://venezuelagana.org/2019/10/08/urge-activar-el-art-3-1-del-tiar-para-impedir-que-maduro-derroque-al-gobierno-de-ecuador/>

“It is becoming more and more evident that the regime of Nicolás Maduro – with the support of drug trafficking [organizations], the Cuban G2 and the Forum of Sao Paulo – is directing a paramilitary operation to take down the legitimate administration of President Lenin Moreno. The maneuver has the cooperation of ex-president Rafael Correa and his allies inside the country...”

Source: “¡HUMO BLANCO! Gobierno de Ecuador e indígenas llegaron a un acuerdo para poner fin a la crisis (White Smoke! Government of Ecuador and indigenous arrive at an agreement to put an end to the crisis),” *Dolartoday and AFP*, 14 October 2019. <https://dolartoday.com/humo-blanco-gobierno-de-ecuador-e-indigenas-llegaron-un-acuerdo-para-poner-fin-la-crisis/>

“Jaime Vargas, leader of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities, announced that decree 833 that had freed the price of fuel, had been left without effect...After more than four hours of negotiation with the mediation of the UN and the Catholic Church, the two parties reached a compromise that met the demands of the indigenous movement: the derogation of the decree...The indigenous, who represent 25% of the 17.3 million Ecuadorans, reached a resonating victory at the negotiation table.”



Continued: China's Investments in Latin America

Source: “El ascenso de China y su impacto en América Latina (China’s Growing Impact in Latin America),” *America Latino in Movimiento*, 20 March 2019. <https://www.alainet.org/es/articulo/198832>

This source garnered multiple conclusions from their research, but three are listed in this excerpt. The first is that Latin America has become one of China’s principal commercial partners. The second is that Latin America has helped China grow as Latin American countries purchase more from China than they export in many cases. This has produced trade deficits in many Latin American countries. The third is that China could play a role in depleting Latin American natural resources.

This source also points out that increased exports to China from Latin America countries from the 90’s to present day have benefited the region. However, it has made some countries vulnerable in the sense that they depend on China to buy their products. The most extreme case in South America is Chile where 25% of all their exports go to China. Peru, Brazil and Venezuela are not far behind as they also export 15-20% of their goods to China.

Source: “El ascenso de China y su impacto en América Latina (China’s Growing Impact in Latin America),” *America Latino in Movimiento*, 20 March 2019. <https://www.alainet.org/es/articulo/198832>

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Source: “China Hoy: Latinoamérica, foco de la Ruta de la Seda (China Today: Latin America Focuses on the Silk Route),” *Miami Diario*, 8 May 2019. <https://miamidiario.com/china-hoy-latinoamerica-foco-de-la-ruta-de-la-seda-ii/>

China continuously works to maintain strong diplomatic ties with Latin American countries. One way in which they achieve this is by providing third-world countries’ infrastructure, loans or other support they may need. For example, China has discussed the idea of creating a corridor between the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Mexico. If the plan is successful, it would create a new trade corridor for both Mexico and China (this idea is further discussed in excerpt 4). A second proposed project is to build a railway that would connect Peru and Brazil. China’s rationale behind financing products of this nature is that they would potentially improve and facilitate both exports/imports to and from these countries and China.

Source: “The Isthmus of Tehuantepec Rail Line; Interest from China and Backbone of the Special Economic Zones,” *Mazatlán Post*, 18 May 2018. <https://themazatlanpost.com/2018/07/11/the-isthmus-of-tehuantepec-rail-line-interest-from-china-and-backbone-of-the-special-economic-zones-zees/>

China has proposed financing to revitalize a rail corridor across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, where the Atlantic and Pacific oceans are just 200 kilometers apart. In theory, this would serve as a Panama Canal-lite, opening up a shortcut to the Atlantic. The rail corridor of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec will be the backbone of the Special Economic Zones (ZEEs) established in the southeast of the country and will make the region competitive with the Panama Canal.



Cyber-Security in Peru

OE Watch Commentary: Cyber-attacks are nothing new, and while nearly all countries work stringently to avoid being the target of hackers, the cost to do so is high. Many countries with limited economic resources are not able to protect themselves as well as developed countries. The accompanying passages discuss Peruvian cyber-security considerations and actions the government is taking to mitigate possible threats, including the new Cyber-Defense Command at the Army Headquarters in Peru.

According to Peruvian news source *El Comercio*, the Peruvian government realizes that in order to protect itself against cyber-attacks, they need budget increases and a strategic vision. The passage notes that Peru currently spends 0.07% of its GDP to counter cyber-attacks. The Peruvian news source *Conexión Esan* discusses the government's strategic vision on the issue.

At present, Peru is working to expand its cyber-defense strategies. In fact, the country is already using the military to counter actual and potential attacks as discussed in digital military journal *Dialogo*. Proof that the country is taking cyber threats and security seriously is the new Cyber-Defense Command at the Army Headquarters in Peru. This center initiated operations in late October 2018 and is equipped with cutting edge technology. For example, facial recognition is the only way to enter this Command.

As Peru continues to advance in protecting itself from cyber-attacks, the government will continue to change laws as necessary. This is evident as Congress passed three new laws in July 2019 to include 4228, 4237 and 4352. These new laws pertain to both cyber-defense and cyber-security. As the final passage discusses, the amended laws regulate all cyber military operations and to “protect and defend sovereignty, international interests and digital information, which currently falls under the Ministry of Defense.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**



Metaphor of the cyber iceberg.

Source: Chiaerae via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Deep_web#/media/File:Surface_Web_&_Deep_Web.jpg, CC by SA 4.0

“He who wins will not defeat the enemy with a physical battle, but with a cyberspace battle.”

Source: “Qué posibilidades hay de que el mundo viva una gran guerra cibernética (What are the Possibilities of a Worldwide Cyber War),” *El Comercio*, 16 August 2019. <https://elcomercio.pe/tecnologia/tecnologia/posibilidades-hay-mundo-viva-gran-guerra-cibernetica-mexico-espana-colombia-argentina-noticia-658786>

Cyber-attacks occur every day and have the capacity to affect basic internet users, businesses and governments. In order to mitigate potential cyber-attacks, Peru is currently spending 0.07% of its GDP to support counter-cyber attacks. Furthermore, Peru plans to increase its cyber-security budget by 2021.

Source: “La visión estratégica del Perú a nivel de ciberseguridad Conexión (Peru’s Strategic View of Cyber-Security),” *Conexión Esan*, 17 June 2019. <https://www.esan.edu.pe/apuntes-empresariales/2019/06/la-vision-estrategica-del-peru-a-nivel-de-ciberseguridad/>

These bullet points represent part of Peru’s strategic vision to combat cyber-attacks:

- Create departments that will monitor and anticipate possible cyber-attacks
- Distance itself from traditional norms and focus on innovating technical mechanisms
- Generate a more comprehensive plan to prevent and/or react to cyber threats
- Provide information to problems related to cyber-security in the private sector
- The military will work in coordination with the government to protect information that could be targets of cyber-attacks
- Increase the number of employees necessary to enhance cyber-security

Source: “Ejército del Perú listo ante ciberataques (Peruvian Army Ready for Cyber Attacks),” *Dialogo*, 7 January 2019. <https://dialogo-americas.com/en/articles/peruvian-army-ready-cyberattacks>

The Cyber-Defense Command at the Army Headquarters in Lima uses cutting-edge computer systems and highly trained military units that are responsible for monitoring cyberspace security. Following its inauguration in October 2018, Peruvian Army Colonel Ernesto Castillo Fuerman stressed the importance of the Command Center by stating “If they (IT platforms) are rendered useless, the government won’t be able to hold up in critical operations. The military won’t be able to command or use their weapons systems.” He further added that, “He who wins will not defeat the enemy with a physical battle, but with a cyberspace battle.”

Source: “Congreso peruano aprueba leyes de ciberdefensa y ciberseguridad (Peruvian Congress Approves Cyber-Defense Laws),” *Niubox*, 25 July 2019. <https://niubox.pe/congreso-peruano-aprueba-leyes-de-ciberdefensa-y-ciberseguridad/>

Laws 4228, 4237 and 4352 were created by the Peruvian government for the following reasons:

- To establish norms that apply to all cyber-defense work in Peru. This law will regulate all cyber military operations
- To protect and defend sovereignty, international interests and digital information (which currently falls under the Ministry of Defense.



Criminal Organizations Growing Cocaine in Peruvian National Parks

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying passages highlight the effects of new coca production in the Bahuaja Sonene National Park and Tambopata Reserve, located along the Bolivia-Peru border in the Puno department of Peru. They also discuss actions to thwart the growth of coca plants on protected land.

According to Peruvian news source *El Comercio*, new coca production in the Bahuaja Sonene National Park and the Tambopata Reserve of Peru has resulted three negative outcomes for the region: the deforestation of protected land by criminal organizations to grow coca plants; the rapid influx of new workers in the Puno region to support coca growth; and increased violence.

Statistics suggest that criminal organizations are highly active on protected government land and prove that their operations have thrived over the last two years. For example, news source *Mongabay* provides irrefutable evidence regarding deforestation as satellite images obtained from the Peruvian government clearly demonstrate the destruction of 6,500 hectares of land in the Bahuaja Sonene National Park and the Tambopata Reserve over the past two years where coca plants are now growing.

Secondary problems associated with increased coca growth in the Bahuaja Sonene National Park and the Tambopata Reserve include spikes in population growth and increased violence. *El Comercio* asserts that the population spike from 15,000 to 40,000 in just three years is directly correlated with increased levels of violence.

According to the passage from *Mongabay*, the Peruvian government is taking action. In April 2019, 600 workers were sent to the Bahuaja Sonene National Park and the Tambopata Reserve as part of Operation Corah. This is the 4th time in the last 15 years that the Peruvian government has taken this type of initiative to inhibit the illegal growth of illicit crops in this region. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**



Puno Department of Peru highlighted in dark blue.
Source: Tzzpffff via German Wikipedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Puno_in_Peru.png, CC BY SA 3.0

“Land utilized for coca production in the Bahuaja Sonene National Park and the Tambopata Reserve from 2017 to present increased from 600 to more than 10,000 hectares.”

Source: “El territorio de Puno donde los cultivos ilícitos de coca se expanden de manera alarmante (Cocaine Growth in Puno Expanding in Alarming Rates),” *El Comercio*, 7 October 2019. <https://elcomercio.pe/peru/puno/territorio-puno-cultivos-ilicitos-hoja-coca-manera-alarmanente-noticia-ecpm-674963-noticia/>

Residents and local authorities are reporting rapid population growth and increased violence in cities to include San Pedro, Putina and Punco (all located in the Puno department of Peru). Both issues are attributed to increased coca production in and around Puno on government protected land. Regarding population growth, local authorities assert that the population in Puno has increased from 15,000 to over 40,000 in 3 years. They further claim that the rapid population growth is directly correlated to increased violence in the Puno department. As for coca production in the Bahuaja Sonene National Park and the Tambopata Reserve, land utilized for this activity has increased from 600 hectares to more than 10,000 since 2017.

Source: “Peru: cultivos ilícitos de San Gaban acechan áreas protegidas de Madre de Dios y Puno (Peru: Illicit Crop Growth San Gaban region Rapidly Expanding in Protected Areas of Madre de Dios and Puno),” *Mongaba*, 15 April 2019. <https://es.mongabay.com/2019/04/san-gaban-tambopata-bahuaja-sonene-narcotrafico-peru/>

Satellite images obtained from the Peruvian government show that over 6,500 hectares of land have been deforested in the Bahuaja Sonene National Park and the Tambopata Reserve to grow coca plants in less than 2 years. To thwart this new activity, the Peruvian government launched Operation Corah in April 2019. The operation consisted of 600 workers and police who were sent to the Puno region and tasked to manually pull coca plants from the ground. This is the 4th time in the last 15 years that the Peruvian government has taken this type of initiative to inhibit the illegal growth of illicit crops in this area.