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by TRADOC G-2 ACE Threats Integration

TRADOC G-2 ACE Threat Integration (ACE-TI) is developing three new doctrinal products—an Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 7-100 series—on the military tactics of the Russian Federation, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and the People’s Republic of China. These three fully unclassified ATPs are being developed in conjunction with the US Army Combined Arms Center, Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate (CADD). Current actions include worldwide staffing of the program directive by CADD and framing of ATP content areas of interest by ACE-TI for the doctrine development process in FY18-19.

The ATPs will reflect threats research conducted previously for a revision of [US Army Training Circular \(TC\) 7-100.2, *Opposing Force Tactics*](#), a TRADOC G-2 Threat Tactics Report (TTR) on North Korea, and similar military data research on Russia and China. With titles of *Russian Tactics*, *North Korean Tactics*, and *Chinese Tactics*, a main theme of each will be how a peer or near-peer threat would probably engage its military combined arms combat power in modern confrontations. Focused at threat Army division and brigade echelons and subordinate task-organized units, each ATP will also address enablers of threat higher headquarters in support of tactical operations.

Principles of functional tactics common to offensive, defensive, and counterstability actions are another theme of research and collaboration among US Army and joint partners, the US Intelligence Community, US regional operators, and other subject-matter experts. Current and near-term operational environments host numerous multi-domain threats of ground maneuver, air, space, cyber, and maritime capabilities in persistent conflict. The *Red Diamond* newsletter will provide periodic updates on ATP development, staffing, and discussion of doctrinal issues.



RED DIAMOND TOPICS OF INTEREST

by TRADOC G-2 ACE Threats Integration

This issue of *Red Diamond* opens with the third article in a series of country UAV assessments. Iran conducts maritime surveillance in the Persian Gulf and harassment activities against the US Navy with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). The country manufactures several UAV platforms and provides UAVs to multiple threat groups internationally. The wide variety of names, types, variants, and sub-variants of Iranian UAVs makes analysis complicated, requiring extra diligence. This article reviews specific Iranian UAVs along with their manufacture, use, and proliferation.

India is a rapidly increasing influence both economically and militarily on the global stage, yet remains a nation targeted by extremist groups and leading the Asia-Pacific region with explosive hazard incidents, compared with neighboring nations. The country has experienced increasing numbers of improvised explosive device (IED)

events in recent years, many of which can be attributed to the group known as the Naxalites. An article examines the Naxalite organization, the techniques it uses, and how government forces are combatting this threat.

Military units deploying to the African continent need to take a close look at the use of child soldiers and how to prepare for potential interaction and possible conflict within this aspect of African society. Training for this is difficult based on US laws and regulations, but necessary to prepare commanders for requesting changes to the rules of engagement and preparing soldiers for different aspects of meeting children on the battlefield. The final article in this edition reviews the basics of this issue as manifested on the African continent, including what child soldiers are, where they are found, and who is using them.

Red Diamond Disclaimer

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UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE ASSESSMENT: IRAN



by [Nicole Bier](#) (DAC) and [Patrick Madden](#) (BMA CTR), TRADOC G-2 ACE Threats Integration

This is the third article in a series of country unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) assessments based exclusively on open-source information. The first article, about North Korean UAVs, was published in October 2017. The second article, about Russian UAVs, was published in February 2018. This third article provides an overview of Iran's broad UAV capabilities. The last article in this series will cover Chinese UAVs.

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and Army continue to conduct maritime surveillance in the Persian Gulf, as well as harassment activities against the US Navy, with their tactical and medium altitude long-endurance (MALE) UAVs.¹ Iran has also benefitted from downed American-made unmanned aircraft that operated in the Middle East, and is one of the main contributors and facilitators of UAVs used in proxy wars across the Middle East and Africa. Iran is providing UAVs to Hezbollah in Syria and Lebanon, Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and Iraqi forces involved in the war against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), as well as insurgents in Darfur, Sudan, and the Houthis in Yemen. Iran also manufactures several UAVs for its own purposes and has conducted border surveillance as well as other UAV operations in the past. The wide variety of names, types, variants, and sub-variants makes analysis of Iranian UAVs complicated and requires extra diligence.



Figure 1. USS Nimitz and US Fighter Aircraft in the Persian Gulf, Where Iranian UAVs Operate

Significant Iranian UAV Events

From January to August 2017, US Navy warship service members reported 14 different close encounters with Iranian UAVs in the Persian Gulf.¹ Most of these were of Iranian unarmed unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) that were identified as Sadegh-1, Allegiant-1, or QOM-1 aircraft, which can carry two air-to-air missiles.² The Sadegh-1 closely resembles the Mohajer 4, a tactical reconnaissance, intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition (RISTA) UAV. The Mohajer 4 is also referred to as the Migrant 4 or Mirsad.³



Figure 2. Sadegh-1

A stealth US RQ-170 Sentinel unmanned aircraft crashed in Iran on December 2011. Multiple sources reported that Iran confiscated the RQ-170 and reverse engineered it.⁴ Iran also weaponized it by adding missiles that were not part of the original aircraft design.⁵ The country's domestic version of the RQ-170 is known as the Saeqeh or Thunderbolt, which conducts reconnaissance missions, and there are probably other variants with different names.⁶ Iran acquired at least two RQ-11 Ravens and one ScanEagle as well.⁷ Iran's current version of the US ScanEagle is the Yasseer or Yasir UAV.⁸

¹ UAV is the title given to platforms used by adversaries of the US—to include the opposing force (OPFOR). When these platforms are used by US, allied, and friendly forces, even in training, they are referred to as unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). The term "unmanned aircraft" (UA) is used either to denote neutral platforms or to reference all platforms, whether friendly, neutral, or hostile.

On 10 February 2018, an Iranian UAV caused an Israeli-Syrian military engagement—the largest one since the 1982 war in Lebanon.⁹ Israeli pilots destroyed the ground control station (GCS) of an Iranian replica of a US-made RQ-170 at Tiyas Air Base in Syria, and the UAV was also shot down.¹⁰ As a result, an Israeli F-16I fighter aircraft was destroyed by Syrian surface-to-air missiles.¹¹

In another event that occurred in September 2017, Israeli Defense Force Brigadier General Ronen Manelis claimed that a UAV, operated by Hezbollah, was launched from Damascus International Airport and then flew into the demilitarized zone between Israel and Syria to collect intelligence.¹²



Figure 3. Iranian Replicas of the US-made RQ-170 (Left) and an Iranian Shahed 129 Variant (Right)

As early as 2012, there were reports of the Iranian-built and armed MALE Shahed 129 flying over Eastern Ghouta, near Damascus in Syria.¹³ Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants successfully captured pictures of key Israeli military facilities on 6 October 2012 with a Shahed 129. Additionally, Syrian rebels recorded a UAV resembling a Shahed 129 in Eastern Ghouta on 10 April 2014.¹⁴ The mass production of the Shahed 129 began in September 2013, and a new variant was detected as early as 2016—both variants were likely produced in Esfahan.¹⁵ There were also three incidents involving the Shahed 129 in June 2017. Two of these instances occurred near or in Al Tanf, which is east of Eastern Ghouta in Syria. The Shahed 129s were seemingly hostile against coalition forces, possibly armed, and were shot down by US fighter jets.¹⁶ The third Shahed 129 was spotted in June 2017 in Panjgur, southern Pakistan, and was shot down by a Pakistani Air Force fighter jet.¹⁷ This location is near the Iranian/Pakistani border around the Sistan and Baluchestan Province.¹⁸



Figure 4. Shahed 129, on the Ground and During Takeoff

Regarding smaller tactical Iranian UAVs, it was reported that Hamas operated an Ababil UAV over a parade in Gaza on 14 December 2014.¹⁹ It is assessed that Iranian airports in Kermanshah, Tehran, Zahedan, Iranshahr, and Chabahar may be used as UAV launch points based on UAV ranges and relevant information.²⁰ Furthermore, Iran has supported Iraqi forces in the fight against ISIS with Ababil 3 (Swallow 3) UAVs and conducted UAV border surveillance over the Mehran border during the annual Shia pilgrimage to Iraq in 2016.²¹

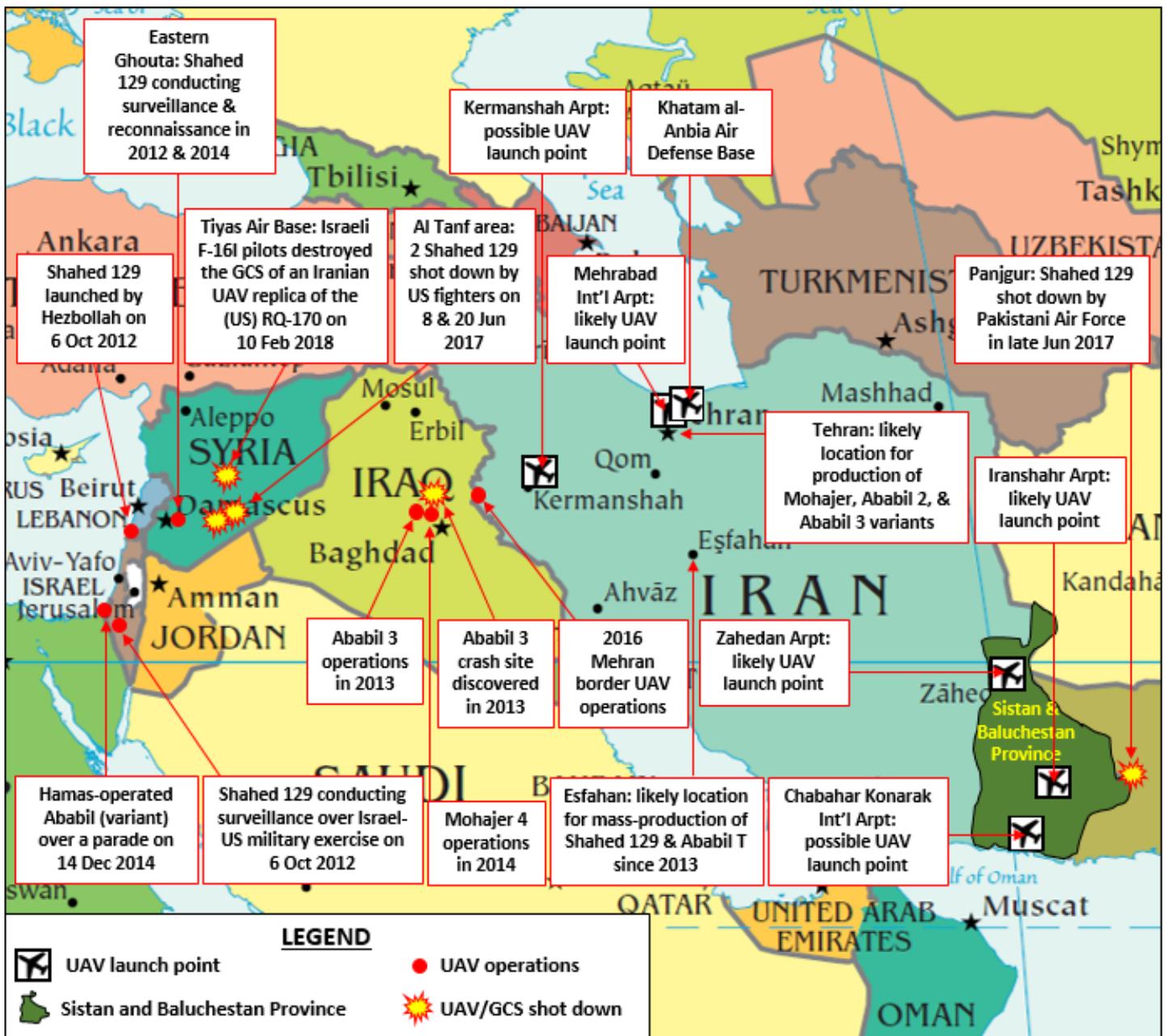


Figure 5. Significant Iranian UAV Events and Possible UAV Launch Locations

Iranian Smuggling Activities

Iran's use of UAVs, and associated smuggling routes, extend beyond its western and eastern borders. Iran has been smuggling weapons and technology into Yemen for years and providing training, thus enabling rebels to have more precise and far-reaching missiles to hit Saudi Arabia.²² It was reported by Conflict Armament Research that evidence suggests a "weapon pipeline, extending from Iran to Somalia and Yemen, which involves the transfer, by dhow, [Arabic name for traditional sailing vessels with lateen sails commonly used in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean] of significant quantities of Iranian-manufactured weapons and weapons that plausibly derive from Iranian stockpiles."²³ From September 2015 to March 2016, allied warships interdicted four Iranian dhows that were reported to have more than 80 antitank guided missiles; 5,000 Kalashnikov rifles, sniper rifles, and machine guns; and approximately 300 rocket-propelled grenade launchers.²⁴

With the tremendously fast production and proliferation of UAVs worldwide, there is a possibility that Iran has been using similar routes to smuggle tactical UAVs since late 2016 or early 2017. Smuggling transit routes likely involve Iranian airports, the Persian Gulf, Oman, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, Yemen's Mukalla Seaport and Aden International Airport, as well as the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. Considering that the Houthis currently control a substantial portion of Yemen, and a significant portion of the world's oil shipments pass through the Bab el-Mandeb strait, UAVs are likely smuggled along these areas.²⁵ It was reported in October of 2016 that a US guided missile destroyer (USS Mason) and an associated amphibious warship (USS Ponce) were targeted by Houthis from Yemen.²⁶ This incident came one week after a United Arab Emirati vessel carrying humanitarian equipment came under rocket fire by Houthis in the same area.²⁷ Houthis have conducted kamikaze-style attacks with Qasef-1 UAVs, with explosives inside the fuselage, against Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates missile defense sites—such as radar stations used by US-made Patriot surface-to-air missile batteries—in Yemen.²⁸ After disabling radars, Houthis fire missiles at coalition targets.²⁹ The Qasef-1 UAV is strikingly similar to the Ababil T, with certain parts containing identical serial number prefixes as the Ababil T.³⁰ The aforementioned events make logical sense, considering that Iran's Aircraft Manufacturing Industrial Company in Esfahan produces the Ababil T UAV, and the company is approximately 800 miles away from Oman's shore. However, it is assessed that there are multiple smuggling transit routes. The Mohajer UAV Fleet, as well as similarly capable UAVs, are passed through Oman, which borders Yemen. This Omani connection is an ideal supply route for Houthi insurgents in Yemen.³¹

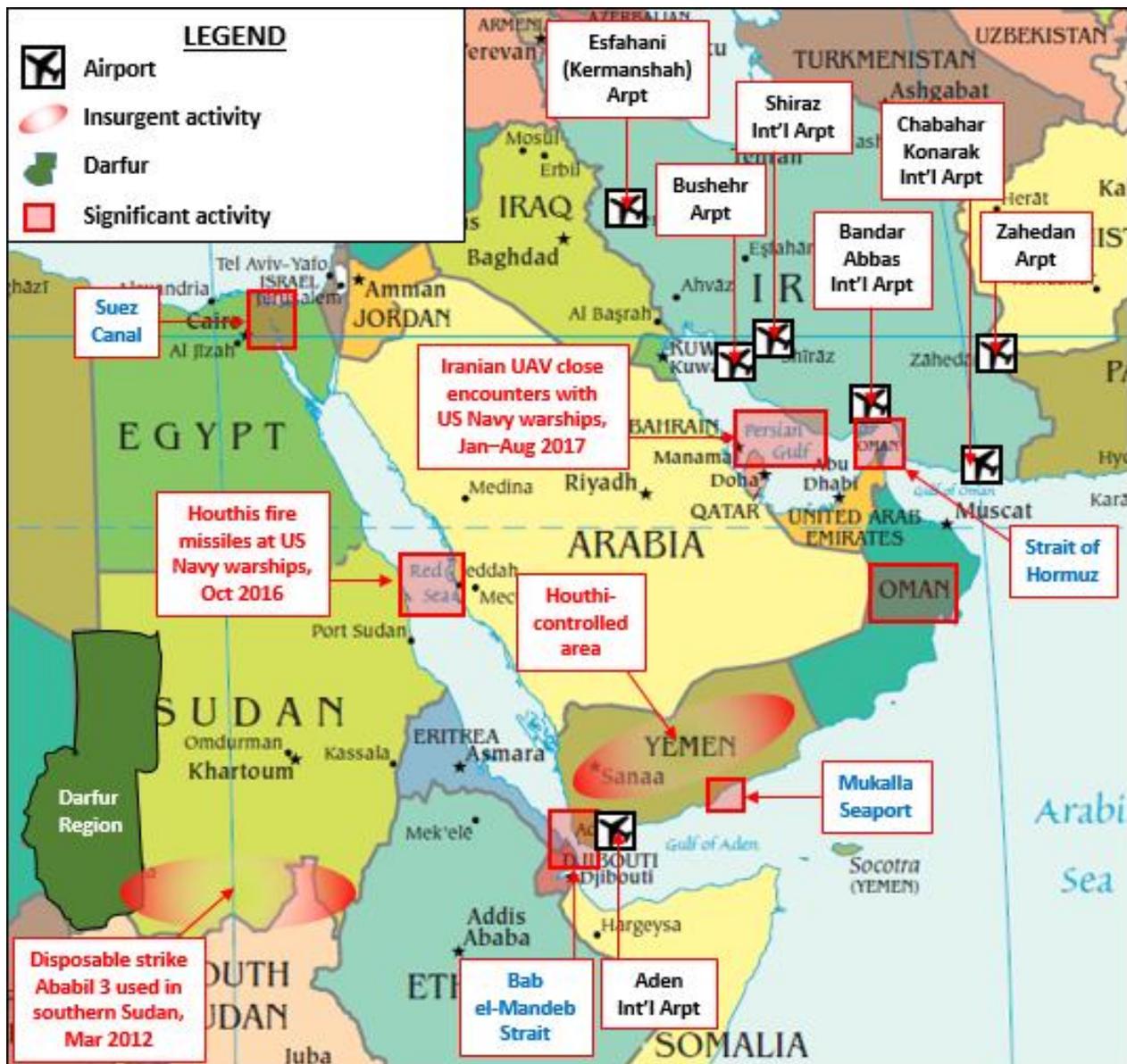


Figure 6. Possible UAV Smuggling Locations and Where Iranian UAVs Have Been Discovered

Use of Iranian UAVs

Not only are Iranian UAVs proliferated throughout the Middle East and Africa and used in proxy wars, Iran manufactures several UAVs for its own purposes. For example, Iranian UAVs are used for security, border patrol, surveillance, and defensive strike missions. Furthermore, Iran conducts surveillance on US Navy carriers in the Persian Gulf. The Mohajer series of UAVs include: Mohajer 1, 2, 2N (Novin, M2-N), 3 (Dorna, Hodhod A/100, Shahin), 4 (Mirsad), and 6, which are all



Figure 7. Ababil 2

manufactured by Qods Aviation Industries in Tehran, Iran.³² The older Mohajer 2 is comparable to the Ababil 2 (II) UAV, which is also manufactured by Qods.³³ An interesting note is that Venezuela's first indigenously manufactured UAV is the Arpia-001 or Harpy-001, which was developed with Iran's assistance.³⁴ Iran recently launched the mass production of the larger, more-capable armed Mohajer 6 UCAV, which is equipped with a Qaem precision-guided bomb that can takeoff and land on short runways and possibly ships.³⁵

The Ababil series of UAVs is one of the most popular Iranian UAV fleets and includes multiple variants and sub-variants. Ababils are typically divided into one of four classes: aerial targeting, surveillance, twin-tail, and disposable strike munition.³⁶ Ababil variants are capable of multiple launch methods, to include ship, ground/truck, and rocket-assisted takeoff. There are at least nine known variants: Ababil 1 (Karrar, Hadeh 1, AB1), Ababil 2 (II) (AB2, possibly the Qasef-1), 3 (Swallow 3, AB3), R, T (probably the Qasef-1), CH (possibly a Qasef-1), 5, S, and B airframes.³⁷ Hadeh means "target drone" and this specific variant was modeled after one of the US-made MQM-107 variants.³⁸ Of note, North Korea has received the MQM-107 unmanned target aircraft from a Middle Eastern country in the past. The Ababil 2 is not to be confused with the Ababil T, which is manufactured by Iran's Aircraft Manufacturing Industrial Company—located in Esfahan—and the Ababil T is sometimes referred to as the Qasef-1 UAV, which is indigenously built in Yemen by the Houthis.³⁹ Esfahan is also the final assembly location of the Iranian Shahed 129 (Witness) UAV. The Ababil 2 and Ababil T UAVs are not to be confused with the Ababil 3, which is manufactured by Qods Aviation Industries.⁴⁰ Regarding the Qasef-1 UAV (likely an Ababil T or possibly an Ababil CH or Ababil 2 variant), Houthi rebels in Yemen use it as a loitering munition, while it was reported that the Ababil 3 was used in southern Sudan as a one-way strike asset in March 2012.⁴¹



Figure 8. Ababil CH



Figure 9. Iranian UAV Launch Methods—Ship, Rocket-assisted Takeoff, Ground/Truck—and UAV Recovery



Figure 10. Pictures Taken From an Iranian UAV of a US Navy Warship and a US Navy F-18 Jet Taking Off in 2013

Unlike the Jan/Feb 2018 *Red Diamond* article on Russian UAVs, which included substantial parametric data, Iran’s UAV inventory is unique. Because the country depends significantly on reverse-engineering black-marketed or captured US-made unmanned aircraft, there is limited reliable and valid unclassified information as to how capable its UAVs are compared to US-made counterparts. There are also mixed reports as to which UAVs are in the testing versus operational phase. Reputable databases indicate there are approximately 20 different Iranian UAV types; this number excludes all variants and sub-variants.⁴²



Figure 11. Iranian UAVs; Assessed Models Include the Mohajer or Sadegh Variants and Sub-variants (Left) and the Disposable Strike Ababil 1 (Karrar) (Right)

Table 1. Parametric Data for Select Iranian UAVs

UAV	Weight, pounds*	Altitude, feet	Range, miles	Endurance, hours
Ababil 3 (Swallow 3)	#	16,400	62	4
Arpia-001 w/Venezuela (Harpy-001)	#	9,000	62	#
Fotros	#	25,000	1,240	#
Mohajer 2 (comparable to Ababil 2)	187	11,000	62	1.5
Mohajer 2N (Novin, M2-N)	198	10,990	93	6
Mohajer 3 (Dorna, Hodhod A/100, Shahin)	#	NA	62	2 to 3
Mohajer 4 (Mirsad)	386	14,764	93	3 to 5
Shahed 129 (Witness)	#	23,000	1,056	24
* Maximum gross takeoff weight (MGTOW)				
# Reliable/valid unclassified numbers unavailable				

Conclusion

The IRGC and the Iranian Army will continue to conduct UAV maritime patrols in international airspace in proximity of US and coalition vessels conducting routine operations in international waters in and around the Persian Gulf. Iran will continue to integrate its UAVs in proxy wars across the Middle East and Africa. The country will also increase its production and proliferation of UAV exports to interested countries and non-state actors. Iran will continue to reverse-engineer US-made unmanned aircraft found in conflict areas, such as Afghanistan and Iraq. It is anticipated that Iran will continue to update and develop new variants of the RQ-170, RQ-11, and ScanEagle. Additionally, Iran will continue to improve its Shahed 129 UAV with upgraded, newer variants. Hezbollah, Hamas, insurgents in Darfur, Sudan, and Iraqi forces, as well as Houthi rebels, will have more access to sophisticated UAVs as Iran increases UAV production. Expect the country to continue providing the aforementioned proxy groups with UAVs and associated equipment, training, and advice on their employment.⁴³

Parametric data provided in Table 1 (page 9) portray current information from reputable commercial open-source databases and will be included in the next update of the Worldwide Equipment Guide (WEG). Due to the evolving nature of unmanned aircraft, capabilities change and new variants are produced regularly. Additionally, the WEG introduces UAV parametric information according to the International Systems of Units, whereas this article provides UAV parametric information according to the US measurement system for convenience.

Figure & Table Credits

Banner: Zscout370. "[File:Emblem of Iran \(red\).svg](#)." Wikimedia Commons. 10 June 2012. Public domain. Derivative work of: Madden. "[File:Emblem of Iran.svg](#)." Wikimedia Commons. 12 May 2006. Public domain.

Figure 1: Geoff Ziezulewicz. "[Iranian drone flies too close to U.S. forces for second time in a week](#)." NavyTimes. 16 August 2017.

Figure 2: Mark Pyruz. "[Iran's Sadegh-1 UCAV armed with air-to-air missiles](#)." Uskowi on Iran. 25 September 2014.

Figure 3: Edoardo Sorani. "[L'Iran svela Saegheh, drone derivato dal Sentinel americano](#)." Dronezine. 11 October 2016.

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Figure 5: CIA. "[World Factbook: Political World Map](#)." Accessed July 2017. Modified by ACE-TI.

Figure 6: CIA. "[World Factbook: Political World Map](#)." Accessed July 2017. Modified by ACE-TI.

Figure 7: The SiLent crY. "[Iranian UAVs: News and Discussions](#)." Pakistan Defence. 9 January 2013.

Figure 8: The SiLent crY. "[Iranian UAVs: News and Discussions](#)." Pakistan Defence. 9 January 2013.

Figure 9: The SiLent crY. "[Iranian UAVs: News and Discussions](#)." Pakistan Defence. 9 January 2013.

Figure 10: The SiLent crY. "[Iranian UAVs: News and Discussions](#)." Pakistan Defence. 9 January 2013.

Figure 11: IRIB News. "[Unveiling of Khatam al-Anbia's Defense Base](#)." 3 September 2017.

Table 1: Data sources: Association of Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI): All Things Unmanned. "[AUVSI](#)." Accessed March 2018. Account required; Shephard (Media) Plus. "[Datasets: Unmanned Systems](#)." Accessed March 2018. Account required.

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The Naxalite Threat Facing India



by [CPT Lucas Masiarak](#), Counter Explosive Hazards Center, Ft. Leonard Wood, MO

India is a rapidly increasing influence both economically and militarily on the global stage, yet remains a nation targeted by extremist groups and leading the Asia-Pacific region with explosive hazard incidents, compared with neighboring nations. Between the years of 2011 and 2016, Indian citizens have experienced approximately 264 improvised explosive device (IED) incidents.¹ Between October 2016 and October 2017, India endured approximately 420–450 IED events alone.² Overall IED discoveries have also increased. In 2014, approximately 523 IEDs were recovered. Throughout 2015, recoveries increased to approximately 1,702 total IEDs weighing around 13,000 lbs.³ The vast majority of IED events are perpetrated by the group known as Naxalite, a name derived from a village in West Bengal.⁴ The following essay will examine the Naxalite organization and the tactics and techniques that are deployed throughout India's operational environment (OE), and briefly examine how government forces are combatting this threat.

In 2004, two of India's far-left outfits, the Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninists (People's War) and the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI), combined their resources to form what is known as the Naxalite Group.⁵ The Naxalites' current estimated strength is approximately 11,500 fighters.⁶ In addition, logistical support is believed to come from the 38,000-strong Jan (People's) Militia.⁷ With the combination of personnel and resources, the Naxalite threat is a major security challenge that has the ability to inflict great harm on government forces, increasing instability throughout the OE.

The Naxalite force structure is an irregular warfare organization that contains loose centralized leadership who provide guidance to auxiliaries at the local level.⁸ Local leaders are in charge of recruiting, training, and leading groups of approximately 10 to 20 fighters. Local insurgent cells work to become legitimate authority in the eyes of the public, superseding police, elected officials, and other leaders.⁹

The main goal of the Naxalites, also known as CPI-Maoists' People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA), is to establish communist rule throughout rural India. PLGA regularly deploys combinations of information warfare tactics used to influence the local populous and direct action attacks to expel government forces from rural India. This is evidenced by the Naxalites' targeting of infrastructure that links rural areas to the state, such as communication towers, power lines, roads, and train links. A report on 26 January 2018 describes how the PLGA set fire to a mobile tower in Jharkhand's Giridih District.¹⁰ The PLGA is believed to be involved in work stoppages and economic shutdowns.¹¹ Continuous targeting of infrastructure and resources enhances the Naxalite message to the local citizens that their government does not represent the interests of the people.

The Naxalite attacks will also target headquarters of police stations, businesses, or government entities.¹² Lightly armed fighters will likely deploy complex ambushes triggered with radio-controlled IEDs.¹³ After detonation, fighters will conduct swarming attacks against targets.¹⁴ These techniques were demonstrated on 25 May 2013, when approximately 150–1,000 Naxalites targeted a government convoy in Chhattisgarh. After detonating an explosive hazard, the convoy was overwhelmed by small arms fire (SAF), resulting in 29 people killed.¹⁵ In the first six months of 2013, approximately 200 people died from attacks that included combinations of SAF and explosive hazards.¹⁶ (See figure 1.)

Naxalite tactics are also successful against highly trained Indian targets. In July 2016, a blast at the border of Gaya Bihar, followed by a surprise attack, killed eight Cobra Commandos serving in the Central Reserve Police Force.¹⁷ Successful attacks against India's highest-trained forces further decrease confidence that residents have in their local law enforcement to provide security.

Naxalite targeting feeds into the group's information campaign that depicts an incompetent government for the 84 million tribal or indigenous Adivasi people, who are subsistence farmers and live in extreme poverty.¹⁸ Many of the Adivasi farmers, and much of the populace living in Eastern India, do not have electricity or running water. The Naxalites see these

vulnerable people as recruiting opportunities.¹⁹ The Naxalite messaging tackles socio-economic problems based on failure of governance and has led to 76% of residents, who were polled, to demand reform within the Indian government.²⁰

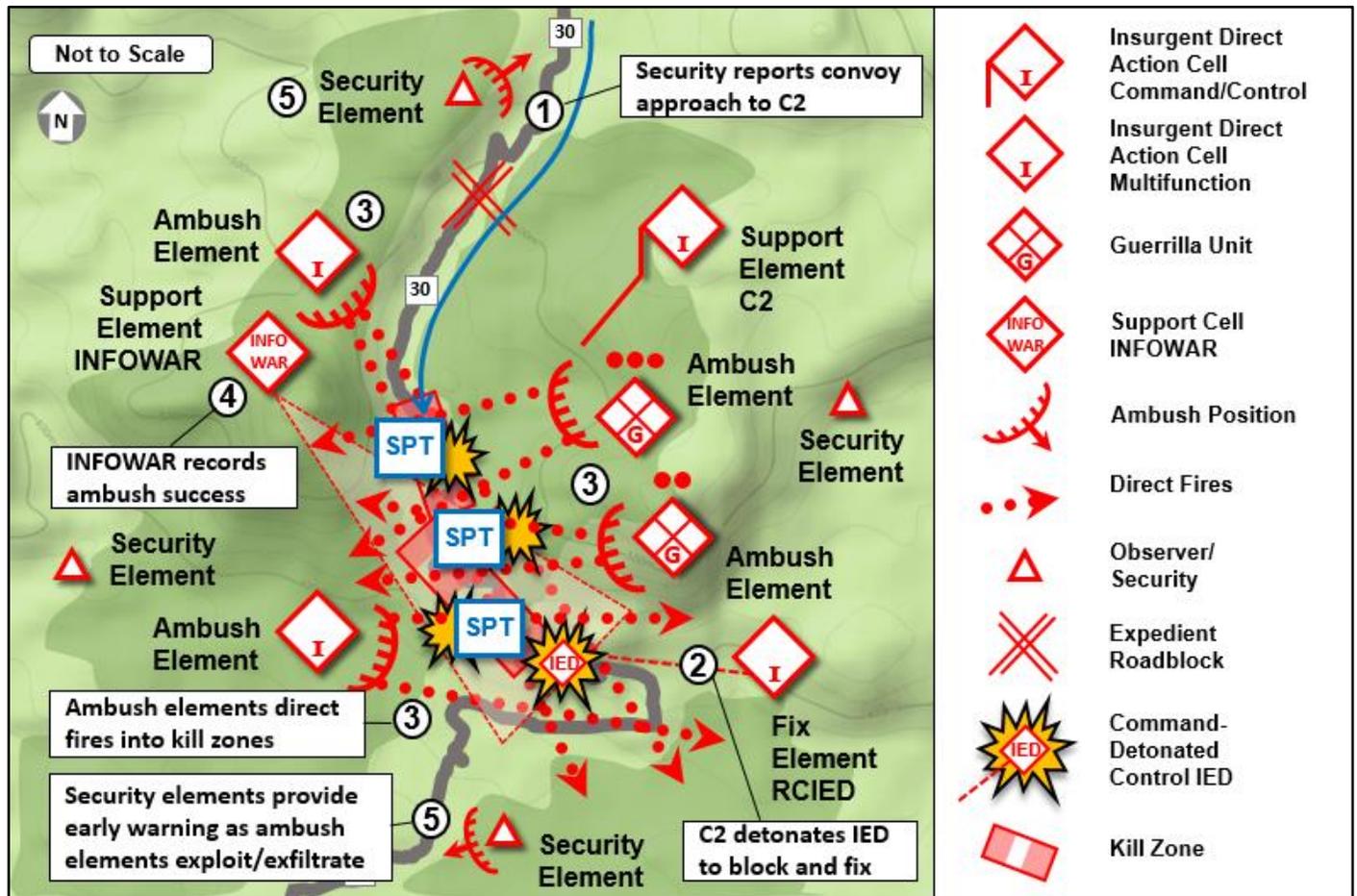


Figure 1. Theoretical Laydown of Ambush in Chhattisgarh

The Indian government delegates much authority to individual states to provide security for local citizens. States that invest heavily in their security forces have not necessarily experienced greater levels of stability in Eastern India. According to a 2010 report published by the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), “States that have dramatically surged their levels of police (in relation to their population) tended to have the highest levels of violence.”²¹ In this report, OSAC describes how the state of Andhra Pradesh maintained the same level of police and violence actually decreased. Local officials invested in improved counterinsurgency doctrine and a coordinated policing strategy that likely reduced the Naxalite violence between the years 2005–2009. Much of their strategy involved expanding police patrols throughout the community, joint training with the anti-Naxalite Special Forces Unit (the Grey Hounds), establishing fortified police stations in Naxalite-controlled areas, creating intelligence networks among the local citizens, and government-focused community development programs. Because the public’s needs were better met, trust for the government in Andhra Pradesh increased.²² It is unclear if other states will adopt the counterinsurgency strategy that Andhra Pradesh law enforcement deploys. Reports of Naxalite violence in places such as Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand continue from media outlets in India.

The Naxalite threat, using SAF and IED attacks, is a continuous security challenge for Indian government forces. While India consistently leads the Asia-Pacific region with IED attacks, the battle for the hearts and minds of citizens needs to be a top priority for local and federal government leaders. An effective, holistic counterinsurgency approach will likely reduce Naxalite influence throughout the OE. This investment will likely lead to greater confidence from the Indian citizens towards their security forces, resulting in amplified national pride for this prominent country.

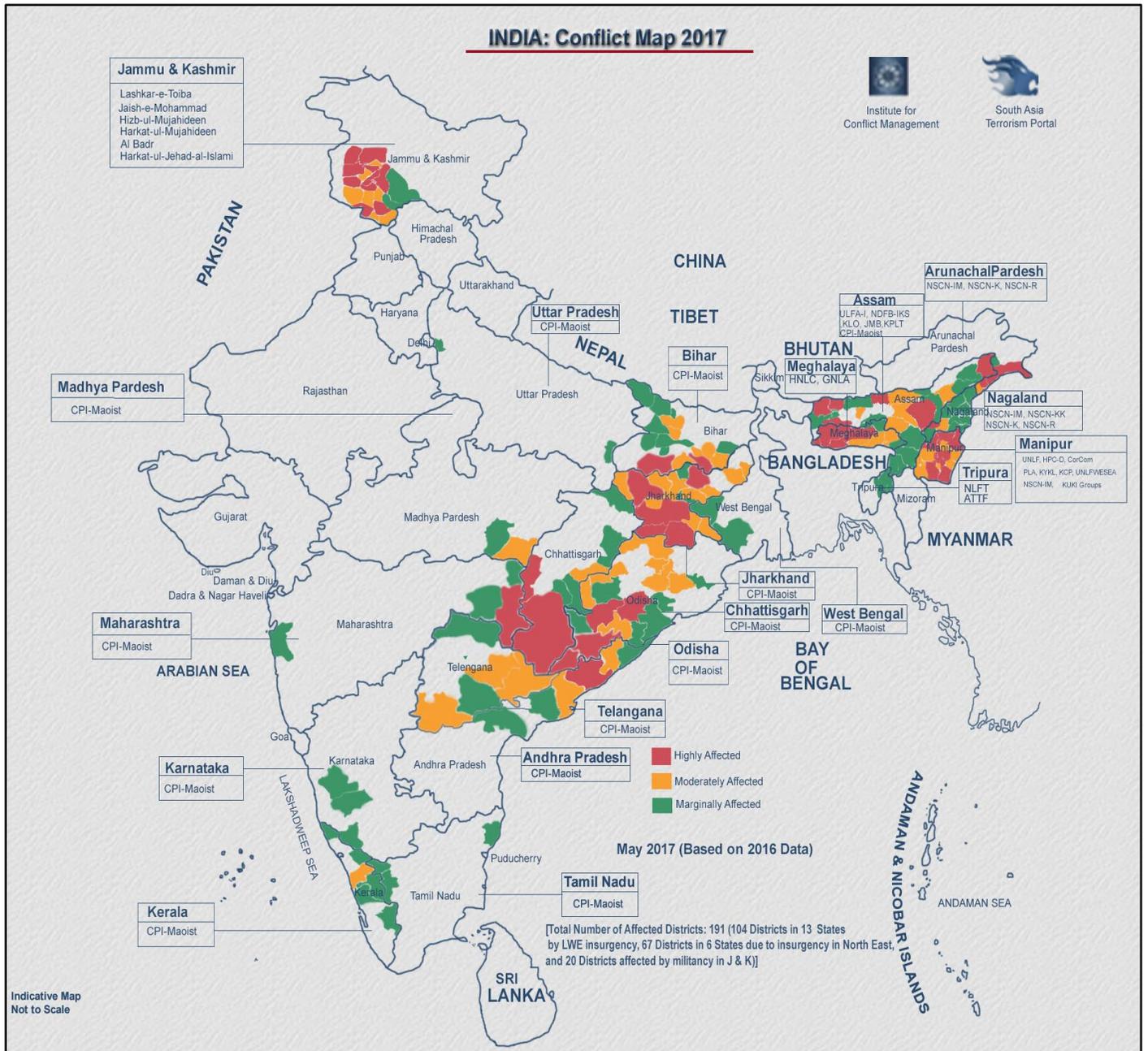


Figure 2. Conflict Locations in India

Figure Credits

Banner: CIA. “[World Factbook: India.](#)” 9 April 2018.
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Combating Terrorism (CbT) Poster Cyber 18-05
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CYBER SECURITY: STOP – ASSESS – REPORT

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- Be savvy on Wi-Fi hotspot use.

Be VIGILANT!

See suspicious e-contacts

REPORT IT

ATN
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(Image: US Army)

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by [LTC Bryce Frederickson](#), TRADOC G-2 ACE Threats Integration

Military units deploying to the African continent need to take a close look at this aspect of African society and how to prepare for potential interaction and possible conflict with child soldiers. Training for this is difficult based on US laws and regulations, but necessary to prepare commanders for requesting changes to the rules of engagement and preparing soldiers for different aspects of meeting children on the battlefield. In the continent of Africa there still remains countries with large pockets of conflict where child soldiers are used. The map below shows in red the countries where armed forces or groups recruit children. According to the US State Department, eight countries have violated the Child Soldiers Prevention Act: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.¹



Figure 1. Countries with Child Soldiers

To provide common ground for the legal definition of a child soldier, the Child Soldiers Prevention Act of 2008 (CSPA) will be used. The CSPA states the definition of a child soldier as: “1) any person under 18 years of age who takes a direct part in hostilities as a member of government armed forces; 2) any person under 18 years of age who has been compulsorily recruited into government armed forces; 3) any person under 15 years of age who has been voluntarily recruited into governmental armed forces; or 4) any person under 18 years of age who has been recruited or used in hostilities by armed forces distinct from the armed forces of a state.”² The term child soldier was expanded in the CSPA to encompass the presence of other children that are associated with/involved in the conflict, the child soldier “term includes anyone described in numbers 2–4, above, who serves in any way, including roles such as cook, porter, messenger, medic, guard, or sex slave.”³ The current number of child soldiers is difficult to obtain—the last reported figures are very dated—however, having six of the eight countries that violate CSPA in Africa creates the potential for interaction with child soldiers in that continent.

The current Decisive Action Training Environment (DATE) Africa draft contains the child soldier condition. As shown above, the potential to encounter child soldiers in current conflicts in Africa remains a real threat. [Training Circular 7-101, Exercise Design Guide](#), lists child soldiers in the Social variable in Chapter 3, under the Human Rights subvariable.⁴ Adding child soldiers to a training scenario would provide the opportunity to exercise human rights issues, presenting several legal issues and the moral and ethical difficulties in dealing with child soldiers that would have to be overcome and addressed. John Burkhart addressed this issue in his 2016 Naval Postgraduate School thesis, stating, “The need to consider child soldiers during training events is critical in order to ensure that U.S. Army personnel understand how to react, when and if they encounter child soldiers.”⁵ The DATE Africa draft contains the potential for encountering child soldiers in three of the countries contained in the environment. This allows the flexibility for increasing or decreasing the amount of child soldiers that may be used in an exercise environment. In the African continent the presence of child soldiers is a unique variable that can challenge rules of engagement and human rights dilemmas. Figure 2 shows a common example of a child soldier from the Central African Republic.



Figure 2. Child Soldier from the Central African Republic

The most recent example of child soldiers being observed in combat happened in 2017 and came from outside of Africa, in the Philippines. The conflict in the Philippines is between government forces and several Islamic groups with ties to international terrorist groups. According to ABS-CBN News, “the Maute group has been training children for combat and equipping them to use sniper weapons. These children, believed to be aged 7 to 16 years old, are allegedly being used to fight government troops in Marawi City.”⁶ Figure 3 is from an ISIS video and shows that the terrorist group still uses child soldiers.

Child soldiers have been used in several conflicts across the African continent. The majority of child soldiers are now found in the one of the eight countries identified by the US State Department. Threat actors’ recruitment of child soldiers is attainable when there is a vulnerable population that can be exploited. One of the myths involving child soldiers on the



Figure 3. ISIS Picture with Child Soldier Present

battlefield is that they have all been abducted or forced into service; although common, some teenagers join to protect their homes, only to find themselves on the front lines of the conflict. The UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) arranged the release of 1,900 child soldiers during 2015–2016 in South Sudan alone.⁷ This effort by UNICEF demonstrates that child soldiers are clearly still encountered on the African continent.

The use of child soldiers can still be expected and is still active in several countries in Africa, creating another layer of complexity that US military commanders and soldiers need to ensure they are properly prepared to confront in order to achieve mission success. In Africa threat actors have

continued using child soldiers across several operations, presenting challenges to the governments that are in conflict with them. DATE Africa makes this problem available to the exercise designers and a training opposing force (OPFOR) when exercising a unit's readiness. US forces that have potential missions in the African continent should rely on their mission and threat brief in preparing for dealing with child soldier situations that contain increased human rights violations. These situations need to be trained and addressed as often as possible to help prepare the soldiers entering the environment.

Figure Credits

Banner: L. Rose. "[DRC- Child Soldiers.jpg](#)." Wikimedia Commons. Ca 2000–2007. Public Domain.

Figure 1: TRADOC G2 ACE-TI. "Countries with Child Soldiers." April 2018.

Figure 2: Agence France-Presse. "[CAR armed factions free more than 350 child slaves](#)." Al Jazeera. 14 May 2015.

Figure 3: ISIS. "[ISIS releases English spoken video about Marawi calls on foreign fighters to join battle](#)." Al Masdar News. 21 August 2017.

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What ACE Threats Integration Supports for YOUR Readiness

- ◆ Determine Operational Environment (OE) conditions for Army training, education, and leader development.
- ◆ Design, document, and integrate hybrid threat opposing forces (OPFOR) doctrine for near-term/midterm OEs.
- ◆ Develop and update threat methods, tactics, and techniques in HQDA Training Circular (TC) 7-100 series.
- ◆ Design and update Army exercise design methods-learning model in TC 7-101/7-102.
- ◆ Develop and update the US Army *Decisive Action Training Environment (DATE)*.
- ◆ Develop and update the US Army *Regionally Aligned Forces Training Environment (RAFTE)* products.
- ◆ Conduct Threat Tactics Course resident at Fort Leavenworth, KS.
- ◆ Conduct Threat Tactics mobile training team (MTT) at units and activities.
- ◆ Support terrorism-antiterrorism awareness in threat models and OEs.
- ◆ Research, author, and publish OE and threat related classified/unclassified documents for Army operational and institutional domains.
- ◆ Support Combat Training Centers (CTCs) and Home Station Training (HST) and OE Master Plan reviews and updates.
- ◆ Support TRADOC G-2 threat and OE accreditation program for Army Centers of Excellence (CoEs), schools, and collective training at sites for Army/USAR/ARNG.
- ◆ Respond to requests for information (RFIs) on threat and OE issues.

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