



Red Diamond

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Insider Threat Handbook

by H. David Pendleton

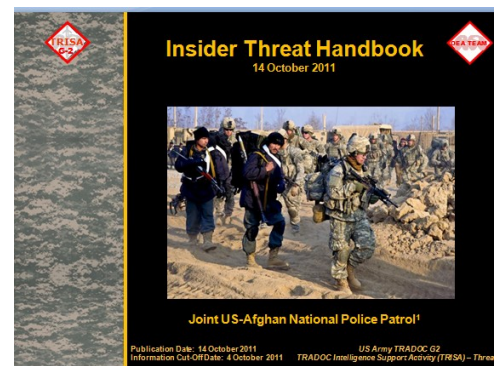
INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- ◆ *Insider Threat* 1
- ◆ *Nigerian Bombing* 3
- ◆ *Assassinations* 4
- ◆ *OPFOR TTP* 6
- ◆ *Guest Article* 9
- ◆ *CTID Update* 14

At least 34 cases of “insider” attacks against International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) soldiers by Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) personnel have taken place over the last five years. In April 2011, the number of attacks, also known as “green on blue” attacks, rose so rapidly that the ISAF Commander directed that a Red Team political and military behavioral scientist conduct a study to determine any commonalities between the attacks and possible means to identify attackers before they strike. Additional details of the insider threat can be found in the [Insider Threat Handbook](#) recently published by the TRISA-Threats OEA Team.

While the Taliban continues to claim that their agents successfully infiltrated both the Afghan National Police (ANP) and the Afghan National Army (ANA) with the sole purpose of launching these attacks, the evidence does not support the claim. In fact, at the time of the study’s completion in May 2011, investigators could not find one valid case where a Taliban member infiltrated the ANSF to launch an attack. Almost half of the attacks occurred in only three of Afghanistan’s provinces: Helmand, Kabul, and Kandahar. Many of the other provinces did not contain a single green on blue incident.

Of the five broad categories, disgruntled ANSF members or individuals who recently faced a personal disagreement with an ISAF soldier accounted for 40% of all the attacks studied. About 15% of the attacks were by an ANSF member co-opted by the Taliban through threats against the individual or his family, blackmail, or bribery. Taliban members who disguised themselves as ANP officers or ANA soldiers accounted for about 10% of the attacks. In about 35% of the attacks, the evidence could not substantiate the exact reasons for the attack. Prior to 12 May 2011, investigators could not attribute even a single insider attack to a Taliban who infiltrated into the ANSF.



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Insider Threat Handbook (continued).

Despite the lack of evidence of Taliban infiltration, the ANSF implemented a more stringent screening process for all Afghans who wish to join an ANSF unit. First, a village elder, mullah, or government official must vouch for the ANSF applicant. Second, the recruit must submit to a recording of his basic biometric information: retinal scan, fingerprinting, height, weight, and age. Third, the ANSF compares the information against the available databases of known insurgents. As another preventative measure, the ANA almost doubled the size of its counterintelligence (CI) forces to 478 in the past year, with over 73% of the Afghan CI personnel having received ISAF or NATO training.

Even though the Taliban made erroneous claims for many of the attacks, the insurgents may increase their ANSF infiltration efforts for several reasons. First, the Taliban may no longer possess the strength and capability to directly confront ISAF forces or the increasingly capable ANSF units. Second, the Taliban may hope insider attacks initiate an INFOWAR campaign demonstrating that foreigners possess no safe havens anywhere in Afghanistan while the insider attacks sow mistrust between ISAF soldiers and the ANSF personnel they train. Third, green on blue attacks offer a cheap and effective method for the Taliban to target senior ISAF or ANSF leaders. Lastly, the imperative for the ANSF to increase its size by over 141,000 personnel by 2014 may allow the Taliban more opportunities to infiltrate if the ANSF lowers its vigilance.

Many of the insider attacks occurred because of an actual or perceived slight by an ANSF member against an ISAF soldier, often based on a lack of cultural understanding by both sides. Jeffrey Bordin, the social scientist who conducted the study, discovered nine complaints that came from more than 50% of the various ANSF focus groups he surveyed. More culturally-sensitive ISAF members may reduce the number of ANSF complaints against ISAF soldiers. The top nine complaints included the use of ISAF personnel to conduct night raids instead of ANSF members; ISAF soldiers not respecting the privacy of Afghan females; ISAF setting up needless roadblocks that slowed traffic; ISAF not allowing any vehicles to pass slow-moving convoys, to include ANSF vehicles; ISAF members shooting indiscriminately in firefights; ISAF personnel causing too many "accidental" civilian and ANSF casualties; ISAF personnel cursing constantly; ISAF soldiers exhibiting extreme arrogance and refusing to heed any ANSF advice; and ISAF personnel humiliating ANSF personnel by searching ANA and ANP in public as the Afghan units entered a joint base.

While Bordin made 58 recommendations in his study, most of these fall into one of five broad categories. First, ISAF personnel need to understand the cultural differences between the Afghans and themselves in an effort to stop or reduce the number of things they do that the Afghans find offensive. Second, ISAF needs to plan ahead to eliminate or at least mediate those actions ISAF must do for force protection reasons that go against Afghan cultural norms. Third, both ANSF and ISAF must receive training about the other's culture in order to gain more mutual respect for their differences. Fourth, ISAF members need to build bridges between the ANSF and themselves, not walls. Lastly, improved communication between ISAF and ANSF personnel would eliminate much of the anger, frustration, and disrespect for the other side.

While difficult, the Asymmetrical Warfare Group (AWG) has developed three categories of possible observable indicators for ISAF personnel and actions to take in each case. If an ISAF soldier observes category I actions by an ANSF member, the ISAF soldier needs to closely monitor the situation. If the actions become category II, the ANSF member should receive counseling and/or have his name passed onto the appropriate counterintelligence (CI) agency. Any ISAF member who observes category II actions by an ANSF member needs to take immediate action to refer the individual to the chain of command and CI personnel, take the ANSF member's weapon away, and even possibly detain the individual. The AWG also developed a force protection decision matrix and recommended actions if an ANSF member's actions label him a potential, moderate, high, or extreme risk as a possible insider attacker.

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Insider Threat Handbook (continued).

The available evidence indicates that few commonalities exist between the insider attacks over the last five years in Afghanistan. While the Taliban may claim responsibility for the attacks, most of the green on blue attacks occurred after a confrontation between an ANSF and ISAF member. Many of the disagreements occurred because of lack of cultural understanding by both sides, but often the ISAF soldier either finds himself ignorant of the Afghan lifestyle or refuses to modify his own cultural norms as a sign of respect for the other side. A two-track approach of vigilance by ISAF members for the observable indicators and the improvement of trust between both sides will most likely serve as the best way to prevent future insider attacks by ANSF personnel.

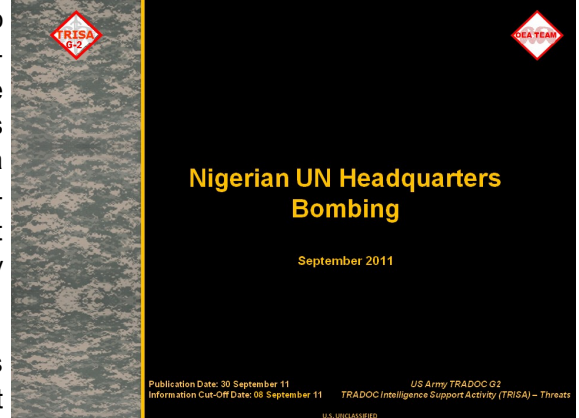
Nigerian UN Headquarters Bombing

by Laura Deatruck

The United Nations operates in many countries around the world, each of which presents a different level of danger to those involved. On 26 August of this year, Nigeria proved to possess a higher level than anticipated when the group Boko Haram attacked the UN Headquarters in the capital city of Abuja. The new OEA Team threat report, [Nigerian UN Headquarters Bombing](#), examines the attack in detail.

Jama'at Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, or "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad," is a militant Islamic group that operates mainly in northern Nigeria. The group is more commonly known as Boko Haram, which means "Western education is forbidden." Boko Haram desires to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria that includes Sharia (Islamic) law and the prohibition of all things Western, and has no qualms about using force in the pursuit of these goals. It is responsible for multiple attacks on government officials and security forces, as well as a major prison break in September 2010.

The Abuja headquarters is the main UN office in the country, and serves as the base of operations for 26 different humanitarian and development agencies. Approximately 400 employees work there on a daily basis. A suicide bomber driving a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attacked the building on the last Friday in August. The bomber entered the compound by driving the wrong way down the exit lane of the main entrance. He crashed through both security gates and drove directly into the building's main reception area on the ground level, at which time he detonated his explosives. Twenty-three people died as a result of the attack, at least 76 were injured, and the first two floors of the building received severe damage.



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Suicide Assassinations: Afghanistan

by Raines Warford

At least 700 suicide bombings occurred in Afghanistan between June 2003 and 13 October 2011. Though the attack incidents were initially infrequent, they have remained at over 100 bombings per year for the last five years. Initially suicide bombings predominately targeted foreign soldiers but progressed to targeting Afghan security forces, also. While suicide bombings in Afghanistan have most often been employed as mass casualty attacks, their use as instruments of assassination is on the rise. It is now apparent that insurgents are utilizing suicide bombers for the purpose of assassinating specific Afghans who are identified as leaders in the pro-government arena. Afghan government officials such as politicians, law enforcement, and military leaders are prominent targets, and pro-government tribal leaders are also included.

Examination of the suicide attacks reviewed in the [Suicide Assassinations: Afghanistan](#) Threat Report identifies a significant increase in the effectiveness of suicide assassinations in 2010 and an even greater increase in both the frequency and lethality of suicide assassination attacks in 2011.

Methodology

The information used in the [Suicide Assassinations: Afghanistan](#) Threat Report derives from unclassified sources such as news reports, studies, and papers produced by government and nongovernmental organizations. It is not possible for this analysis of open source information to determine the intended target of every suicide attack.

For purposes of the Threat Report, suicide attacks that killed an Afghan politician or law enforcement, military, or intelligence service official in a leadership role or a pro-government tribal leader were considered successful suicide assassinations. Suicide attacks which wounded such an individual or occurred in close proximity to them or their office or vehicle were considered unsuccessful suicide assassination attempts. It is certainly possible that other suicide assassination attempts have occurred that were not noted as having targeted a particular leader either associated with the Afghan Government or recognized as adhering to a pro-Afghan Government stance. However, in this Threat Report, only those suicide attacks which met the criteria above were considered in the statistical analysis.

In the Threat Report, the suicide attacks covered are differentiated as successful assassinations or unsuccessful suicide assassination attempts and are placed in one of two categories, either body-borne attacks or suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (SVBIED) attacks. Body-borne attacks are characterized by the bomber carrying the explosives on their person (most often wearing a suicide vest) while approaching their target on foot. In SVBIED attacks, the explosives are transported in a vehicle of some type and/or the attacker approaches the target using some form of transportation other than by foot. SVBIED attacks include suicide-vest bombers on motorcycles or bicycles.

In the [Suicide Assassinations: Afghanistan](#) Threat Report, multiple suicide attackers at the same location have been counted as one suicide assassination or attempt, unless the assassins utilized different delivery methods or the bombings were separated by a significant amount of time or distance. For example, if an SVBIED was detonated and two suicide bombers wearing explosive vests then attacked the same location, it would be counted as two suicide attacks in this Threat Report (one SVBIED and one body-borne attack).

Results

An examination of the data reveals some intriguing information. Kandahar Province, the birthplace of the Taliban, experienced more suicide bombings each year than any other province. It comes as no surprise that suicide assassinations and suicide assassination attempts are also highest in Kandahar.

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Suicide Assassinations: Afghanistan (continued).

Interestingly, the incident generally accepted as Afghanistan's first suicide bombing, the killing of Northern Alliance commander Ahmad Shah Masood with a bomb hidden in a video camera on 09 September 2001 by two al-Qaeda operatives posing as journalists, was a suicide assassination. Despite this initial success, suicide bombing appears not to have been utilized again as a method of assassination in Afghanistan until March of 2006, when an SVBIED detonated near a vehicle transporting Sibghatullah Mojadidi, a former president of Afghanistan and the chair of the upper house of parliament. While the apparent suicide assassination attempt failed, this attack marked the reemergence of the TTP.

The absence of suicide assassinations/attempts for a period of four and a half years is puzzling. Once the tactic re-emerged, the number of suicide assassinations and attempts remained consistent, averaging 10.6 attacks per year from 2006 through 2010. In 2011, though, 23 attacks have occurred with 13 of these being successful suicide assassinations (as of 17 October).

A possible explanation for the sudden increase in the utilization of suicide bombings to assassinate Afghan leaders may be that insurgents are responding in kind to the targeting of their own leadership. Data collected by Bill Roggio and Alexander Mayer and published on *The Long War Journal* website reveals that U.S. aircraft strikes against Taliban leaders in Pakistan more than doubled in 2010 compared to 2009. Perhaps correspondingly, suicide assassination attacks have already more than doubled in 2011 compared to 2010. While not definitive proof, this presents a possible cause and effect relationship.

The effectiveness of suicide assassination attacks in Afghanistan notably increased in 2010 and slightly further in 2011. The average success rate of suicide assassinations over the four-year period from 01 January 2006 – 31 January 2009 was only 28.5%, with a single-year high of 36% in 2008. Six out of 11 suicide assassination attacks were successful in 2010 – a 55% success rate. As of 17 October, 13 out of 23 suicide assassination attacks were successful in 2011 – a 57% success rate. The reasons for this increase in effectiveness are unclear at present. The successful attacks present no common TTP that might explain the greater lethality.

The [Suicide Assassinations: Afghanistan](#) Threat Report, while not a finished intelligence product, provides information to deploying units, scenario developers, and trainers regarding the threat from suicide assassinations in Afghanistan. The report provides information including data, trends, details of attacks, and maps with attack locations.

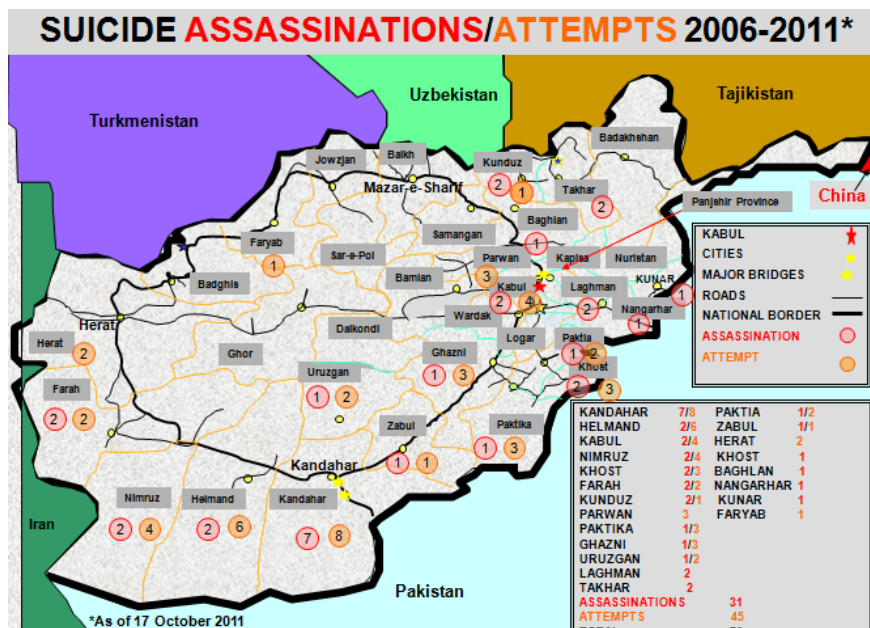


Figure 1. Suicide Assassinations/Attempts 2006-2011

Doctrine Team

Insurgent Antitank Ambush Example

by Jon Moilanen

Functional Organization of Elements to Conduct an Antitank Ambush

An *ambush* is a surprise attack from a concealed position, used against moving or temporarily halted targets. In an ambush, enemy action determines the time of attack, and the Opposing Force (OPFOR) chooses the place of attack. This example of an OPFOR antitank grenade launcher (ATGL) ambush has three elements:

- ♦ **Ambush element.** The assault element is comprised of a RPG-7V grenadier/cell leader.
- ♦ **Security elements.** Two security elements, each armed with automatic weapons, provide early warning of any approaching enemy forces. They protect the ambush element.
- ♦ **Support element.** The ammunition bearer/assistant grenadier remains near the grenadier, and is a videographer to record and transfer the audio and video coverage to an insurgent INFOWAR cell.

Background Situation

This example of an antitank (AT) ambush by an OPFOR insurgent organization uses the RPG-7V ATGL with the significant tank-killing capability of a 105-mm high-explosive antitank (HEAT) warhead. (See Chapter 1 of TRADOC G2 *Worldwide Equipment Guide, Volume I* for more information on infantry antitank weapon systems.)



Figure 1-1. RPG-7V ambush sequence

The enemy enters the network of streets and buildings. The local insurgent organization has already assigned neighborhoods as defensive areas to subordinate insurgent leaders. A direct action cell occupies an ambush position that is integrated with other direct action cells in the urban neighborhood. This cell example is one ATGL grenadier, an ammunition bearer/assistant grenadier, an insurgent with a PKM machinegun, and an insurgent with an AKM assault rifle. Obstacles channel the enemy into kill zones. Attacks separate enemy infantry from supporting armored vehicles. Insurgents command detonate improvised explosive devices (IED) to block streets with rubble and prevent any withdrawal of enemy columns. A number of other insurgents in basements, ground level positions, and rooms or rooftops of surrounding buildings coordinate for simultaneous attacks on the enemy. The cell leaders use cellular telephones to maintain situational awareness of friendly forces and the enemy.

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Insurgent Antitank Ambush Example (continued).

The RPG-7V Ambush on a Tank

The insurgent AT ambush is ready. The cell leader monitors reports from other cells to the local insurgent leader. A “keyhole” firing position conceals the ATGL grenadier from being observed. Security elements emplace hasty obstacles to slow and channel any dismounted enemy approach. A wire obstacle and camouflaged antipersonnel mine support early warning along an approach that cannot be observed by either security element. The videographer prepares to record the attack and remain clear of the back blast area of the ATGL. The cell leader receives a report that one tank has escaped a nearby ambush and is headed toward his kill zone. The cell leader receives a report that one tank has escaped a nearby ambush and is headed toward his kill zone.

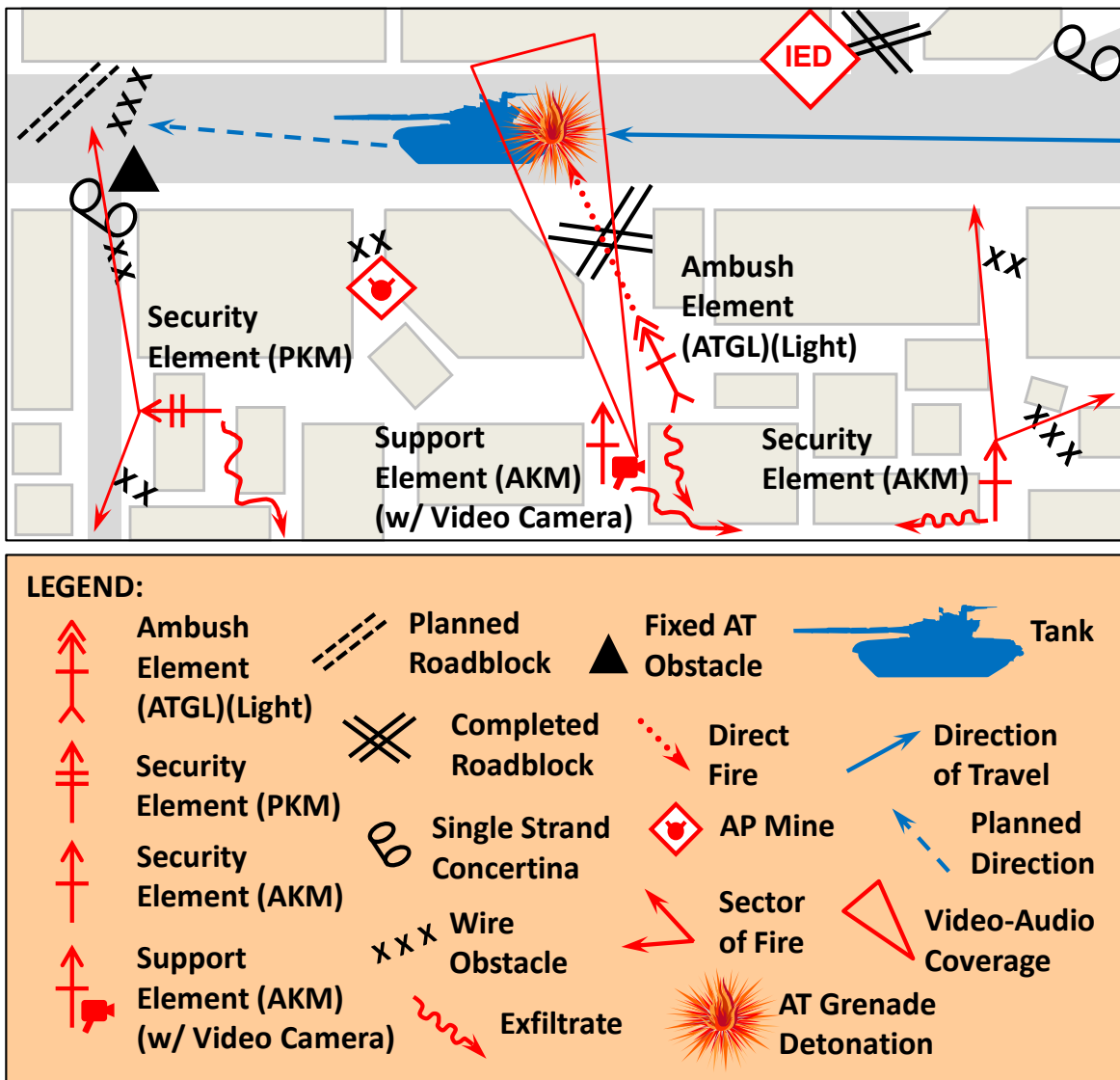


Figure 1-2. RPG-7V antitank ambush (example)

Doctrine Team

Insurgent Antitank Ambush Example (continued).

See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CI5wHGnxmqE> for a real-world example of an AT ambush. The grenadier hears an enemy tank enter the street. In the audio-videotape, the tank stops temporarily, fires one main gun round, and speeds down the street with the intent of moving through any remaining obstacles. No enemy infantry are in the street with the tank. As the tank accelerates and rumbles down the street, the grenadier aims and waits. The tank never sees the ambush. The grenadier fires into the left rear of the tank and achieves a mobility kill.

Soon after, the tank receives three additional ATGL hits from other direct action cells. Ammunition inside the tank detonates and destroys the tank with no crew survivors. The direct action cell (ATGL) exfiltrates to a subsequent fighting position and prepares for another antitank engagement. (See Chapter 3, TC 7-100.2, *Opposing Force Tactics*, for more information on ambush tactics.)



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Guest Article

Syria and Its Place in Regional Geopolitics

by *Njdeh Asisian*

Mr. Njdeh Asisian immigrated to the United States in October 1988 and became a naturalized US citizen. He currently works for the Mission Command Training Program (MCTP) as a PMESII-PT Analyst and Chief Research Analyst. He earned a bachelor's degree in International Relations from the University of California Santa Barbara, and a master's degree in East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies from the University of Kansas. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in International Law and Diplomacy.

The Arab-Spring finally has reached the Syrian coast. The Syrian people who have lived under a military government for more than 50 years have decided to ask their government to implement meaningful reforms in the country. However, the Syrian people's legal demands for reform have faced serious resistance by the government. The Syrian government is not willing to change voluntarily, especially because they believe any changes made under duress will result in the collapse of the ruling elite.

The Syrian people have seen both peaceful and brutal models for dealing with popular revolt. On one hand, they witnessed Tunisia and Egypt, where the regimes did not want to use excessive force against demonstrators. Consequently, both of those countries' presidents are in trouble. One President is on the run and the other is under house arrest. On the other hand, they have seen the Iranian model as well. In this model, the government used very brutal force to put down the popular protests against the presidential election outcomes. The results of the government crackdowns were disastrous. Hundreds of people were killed in the streets, and thousands of people remain in jail for an unspecified period.

The Syrian government chose the Iranian model due to its strategic alliance with Iran and the Iranian direct financial and material support of Assad's regime. The extent of the Iranian support was so wide that the United States Department of State officially named very high-ranking officials who directly advised the Syrian regime against the protestors. These include such people as Mohammad Ali Jafari, the Supreme Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp (IRGC), and Ghassim Suleymani, Commander of the Qods (Jerusalem) Brigade, who were major players in the Syrian crackdown. In addition to economic, financial, and security assistance the Iranian government has also provided technical expertise to help combat internet users who have used social websites to distribute their messages.

In this short article, I will try to explain the nature of the dictatorship in Syria, the Syrian Government and the new reality, Syrian friends and geopolitics, and the geopolitical and military implications of the potential fall of the Syrian government.

The Nature of Dictatorship in Syria

One can analyze the Syrian government on two different levels, first on the domestic level and the second on the regional level since they have no serious global influence. Domestically, the Syrian government has been a brutal police state for more than half a century. There are three major reasons why the Syrian government is a dictatorship.

Guest Article

Syria and Its Place in Regional Geopolitics (continued).

The first reason is the lack of a civil society which, according to Rosenblum and Post: "Civil Society is alternately viewed as a source of legitimacy and stability for government and as a source of resistance against arbitrary, oppressive, and overweening government. Civil society is sometimes conceived as a spontaneous growth, prior to and independent of government, and sometimes as dependent on government for legal structure, robust recognition, or outright fiscal support. Civil society is described both as developing in partnership with government and as substituting for the failings of government."¹ If we consider Rosenblum and Post's definition of civil society as accurate, then the Syrian government has serious problems on its hands. None of the above-mentioned qualities exists in the Syrian political system or any other Middle Eastern countries, except for Israel.

The second reason is the Syrian government's claim that they have a regional mortal enemy in Israel and by proxy the United States. Therefore, they have to have tight control in order not to allow their foreign enemies the opportunity to abuse them. Nevertheless, the reality is different; the existence of the foreign threat does not mean that they have to use brutal methods to govern their state. In contrast, providing people with free speech and other individual freedoms will improve their state stability and will reduce the chances of foreign intervention.

The third reason, the Syrian government is an ideological state. The political base of the Syrian government relies on the infamous Baath Party. This party's ideology is a mixture of idealistic Arab nationalism, fascism, and Soviet-style socialism (state ownership of economy).

Syrian Government and the New Reality

The Syrian government, like many other dictatorships, does not understand when it is time to bring some meaningful changes in the governing system before it gets too late. Syria passed through three serious historical developments in the last two decades but ignored the signs written on the wall.

The first was the collapse of the Soviet Union; second, the globalization process; and third, the demise of Saddam Hussein. The globalization movement has forced us to break socio-political and traditional boundaries all over the world. Syria has been unable to prevent its people from boarding the bandwagon of the globalization process. Therefore, we are witness to the process of polarization of Syrian society: on the one hand are the old school politicians, and on the other hand are the development of well-informed and technically savvy Syrians who are looking forward to changing their life and their country. The third reason, perhaps more important than the rest, is the collapse of Saddam Hussein in 2003. However, despite all these developments around Syria, the Syrian government is not willing to change its behavior whatsoever. The Syrian government's reasoning is a carbon copy of other dictatorships. They believe any changes may result in serious social upheavals, the collapse of their government, and ultimately destruction of the ruling class.

The best example of this is the Iranian imperial government, which had decided to democratize the country (1978-79). In contrast, the Iranian imperial government faced imminent collapse and was replaced by a ruthless regime. The Iranian experience made many regional leaders extremely conservative and wary of their future. Further, besides the domestic issues and problems, the Syrian regional allies and their behavior is also part of the Syrian problem.

Guest Article

Syria and Its Place in Regional Geopolitics (continued).

Syrian Friends and Geopolitics

There is a proverb “tell me who your friends are, and I will tell you who you are.” This proverb perfectly matches the current Syrian government’s regional allies. Syria’s regional friends are Hizbollah, Hamas, radical Palestinian groups, and Iran. It is worth mentioning that Iran’s point of contact for all of these organizations is Syria.

The Syrian leaders are trying to be the heroes of the Arab world who did not give up under pressures and did not capitulate before the United States and Israel. Therefore, the Syrian military planners and strategists have their own designs for the balance of power in the region. In their belief, Hizbollah and Hamas seriously counter Israeli. At the same time, Iran replaced Egypt in the Syrian geopolitical thought process and became the cash cow of Damascus.

Iran is the financier and Syria plays the facilitator role. One can consider that Syria is trying to manage a very complicated geopolitical game against Israel on “clay legs”²(weak capabilities). In other words, Syria is trying to contain Israel and keep it busy with unending proxy conflicts (low level) with both Hamas and Hizbollah. In the Syrian strategist’s mind, these proxies (Hamas and Hizbollah) are covering Syria, providing them with extra tools to pressure Israel to make major concessions to Syria in the final stage of the peace process (negotiating the Golan Heights’ Status).

It is important to mention that this policy was designed by the late Hafez Al Assad, the father of the current president. Hafez Al Assad was one of the most Machiavellian Arab leaders. He understood the concept of balance of power and geopolitics much better than his son, Bashar, does. He brought Iran into the picture but he implemented a strong control on Iranian activities in both Syria and Lebanon. He was ready to sacrifice Iran, Hizbollah, and any other Palestinian group, if he was able to get the concession from Israel that it would return the Golan Heights to Syrian control.

However, Bashar Assad’s infamous withdrawal from Lebanon, chronic economic problems, and more importantly, his personal inabilities made Syria weaker than ever, and Iranian power became more and more visible in Syria and the Eastern Mediterranean region as well (especially Lebanon and the Palestinian Territory).

As mentioned above, the Syrian government is trying to manage a geopolitical game on clay legs. The Syrian government like many other dictatorships has serious deficiencies that severely influence the state’s behavior.

Colonel Dale C. Eikmeier described the power of the state and its weaknesses based on the theory of Center of Gravity (CoG) concept. He defined a state based on the “primary sources of moral or physical strength, power, and resistance.”³ The CoG concept comprises three variables that are essential to understand the center of gravity: “Critical Capabilities, Critical Requirements, and Critical Vulnerabilities.” The lack of one or more variables will make the state weak and vulnerable to domestic or foreign enemies.

It is an obvious fact that the Syrian CoG is weak and is not capable of solving the crisis in a logical manner. The state is under pressure from inside and outside. The inside pressures are the daily demonstrations and unrest. From the outside, the Assad government is facing two different pressures. The first pressure group is the Western countries that are asking for serious democratic changes in Syria, which may help to reshape the Middle East, based on the greater Middle East concept first advocated by President George W. Bush. The other pressure group is made up of Syrian regional allies, who correctly understand that any changes in Damascus will negatively affect their own geopolitical capabilities. Perhaps Iran may be the biggest loser in this geopolitical chess game. Therefore, the Iranian Qods force and IRGC’s specialists are in Syria to help the government put down demonstrations by very brutal methods.

The Geopolitical and Military Implications of the Fall of the Syrian Government

Syrian domestic unrest will dramatically influence the regional balance of power. Syrian has three options to consider: democratic reform, maintain the status quo, or chaos. The first option is a democratic option. Hypothetically there are some more or less democratic forces in Syria to whom power may be transferred in an orderly manner.

Guest Article

Syria and Its Place in Regional Geopolitics (continued).

In this case, the geopolitical chess game will be in favor of the West. With this option, the Syrian government has no choice other than to open the door to negotiate with the West, especially with Israel, in order to have access to Western economic assistance, markets, and technical know-how. In this case, the Syrian government's geopolitical choices would change drastically. Iran would lose its bridge to Lebanon, making assisting Hizbullah a serious challenge. Consequently, both Iran and Hizbullah would lose a significant amount of power and prestige. At the same time, they would become significantly isolated, especially Hizbullah. If Iran became incapable of assisting Hizbullah, then a major geopolitical shift would occur in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Israel would gain more room to deal with Hamas and other Palestinian radical groups. Lebanon would become more independent from foreign influence and pressure. The other development would be the increase of Egypt and Saudi Arabia influence in Syria. The rise of Egyptian and Saudi influence in Syria would assist to dismantle all remnants of Iranian influence in the region.

With the rise of both the regional powers (Saudi Arabia and Egypt) and Western powers (the United States and France), the question is very simple, what would happen to Hizbullah? It is obvious that Hizbullah cannot sustain their operations very long without a patron. Therefore, we would witness an intense competition among Arab countries to become the next patron of Hizbullah, if Iran is not capable of doing so.

The second option is to maintain the status quo. In other words, the current government stays in power. If we have only the balance of power issue in mind, we may say there is no problem if the Syrian government is capable of sustaining their status quo. The problem is not Syria. The major problem is its allies, Iran, and to a lesser extent, Hizbullah.

If the Syrian government survives, it would be very weak, and its institutions would face serious chaos. In this case, the regime's survival would depend on foreign forces, rather than the domestic strength of the government. Here Iran would assume a greater role in the domestic politics of Syria. The growing Iranian influence in Syria would further destabilize the Eastern Mediterranean region.

Lebanon will be fully dominated by Hizbullah and Iran; and Hizbullah will become a stronger threat, not just for Israel, but for all Arab countries as well. The fall of Syria will force Iraq into the arms of Iran. The rise of Iranian power will change the geopolitical chessboard to an extent that the moderate Arab voices will be silenced one by one and replaced by more violent and radical voices.

This situation will be the fulfillment of the Iranian clerics' dream for the "Islamic Middle East." In this case, there is a possibility that Saudi Arabia and Egypt would interfere in Syria in order to prevent an Iranian takeover. However, due to the IRGC and Qods forces' highly organized structure and their operational capabilities, I have serious doubts that the Saudi-Egyptian coalition would be capable of changing the situation on the ground.

The third option is chaos and civil war. This option would be dangerous for all regional and international players. Syrian instability could have long-lasting and unpredictable consequences in the region. However, this option is very unlikely.

Conclusion

This article analyzed the possibilities of political and geopolitical changes in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea due to Syrian political transformation. It is important to note that the above-mentioned scenarios were designed to provide the reader (intelligence community) with some understanding of the problems that we face in the Greater Middle East. It is important to remember that other major players may also have direct effect on Syrian domestic and regional politics, but that's a discussion for a different time.

Guest Article

Syria and Its Place in Regional Geopolitics (continued).

In the end, it is obvious that the existence of democratic forces on the Syrian political landscape is very desirable. This option would assist to reduce radical Islamist activities, give a chance for a meaningful peaceful solution of the Palestinian question, and provide better security for Israel while limiting Iranian reach in the region.

The situation is not hopeful, and the democratic forces are not in the position to win this major battle against Assad's government. Therefore, we have to prepare for other options as well, while remembering that Syria is not Yemen or Tunisia. Syrian instability will have a long-lasting impact on the region; just as the Lebanese war radicalized the region and provided more soldiers for the Holy War against the infidels.

Endnotes:

1. Edited by Nancy L. Rosenblum and Robert C. Post, "Civil Society and Government"; available from <http://press.princeton.edu/chapters/i7214.pdf>; internet; accessed 3 Aug. 2011.
2. Refers to Nebuchadnezzar Dreams of an Image, Daniel 2, Old Testament.
3. Colonel Dale C. Eikmeier, "A Logical Method For Center-of-Gravity Analysis," Military Review Sep.–Oct 2007 P. 63.
4. *Ibid.*

The comments and views presented by the guest author do not necessarily reflect the views of TRISA-Threats or the Department of the Army.





Monthly Wrap-Up of CTID Daily Update

CTID analysts produce a *Daily Update* to help focus our readers on key current events and developments which may be of interest across the Army training community. Each *Daily Update* is organized topically across the Combatant Commands (COCOMs). The following list is a highlight of developments in October 2011. CTID does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of each article. The *Daily Update* is a research tool, and an article's inclusion in the *Update* does not reflect an official U.S. Government position on the topic. The [CTID Daily Update](#) is posted daily on AKO.

- Oct 3: **Al-Qaeda:** [A False Foundation? AQAP, Tribes and Ungoverned Spaces in Yemen](#) (Combating Terrorism Center publication)
- Oct 3: **Mexico:** [Mexico's "narco-refugees:" The Looming Challenge for U.S. National Security](#) (SSI publication)
- Oct 4: **Technology:** ["Invisibility cloak" uses mirages to make objects vanish](#) (includes video)
- Oct 4: **Nicaragua:** [Police arrest three alleged Mexican Los Zetas operators in Madriz, looking for a fourth.](#) (FMSO note: Areas in which Los Zetas are known to be operational in Nicaragua include Esteli, Sebaco, Dario, Matagalpa, and Madriz)
- Oct 5: **Afghanistan:** [Six held over plot to kill Karzai](#)
- Oct 5: **Iran:** [Iran to unveil new submarine](#)
- Oct 7: **Venezuela:** [Venezuela secures \\$4B Russian loan for the military](#)
- Oct 7: **Lebanon:** [Envoy: Threats against UN in Lebanon](#)
- Oct 11: **Cyber Security:** [Computer virus hits U.S. drone fleet](#)
- Oct 11: **China:** [China's military buildup: How far along is it?](#)
- Oct 12: **Paraguay:** [Paraguay sends troops onto streets in state of emergency](#)
- Oct 13: **Bioterrorism:** [Bioterrorism still a major threat](#)
- Oct 13: **Philippines:** [Mopping up Abu Sayyaf](#)
- Oct 14: **Nicaragua:** [Nicaragua swine flu outbreak infects 32](#)
- Oct 14: **Uganda:** [100 U.S. troops to central Africa to hunt down the Lord's Resistance Army](#)
- Oct 17: **Arctic Issues:** [The Arctic in transition: Regional issues and geopolitics](#)
- Oct 17: **Russia:** [Russia successfully tests new anti-missile radar](#)
- Oct 18: **Technology:** [10 technologies the U.S. military will need for the next war](#)
- Oct 19: **Cyber Security:** ["Son of Stuxnet" virus could be used to attack critical computers worldwide](#)
- Oct 19: **Yemen:** [Yemeni tribesman bomb oil export pipeline](#)
- Oct 20: **Kuwait:** [Terror threat closes UK embassy in Kuwait](#)
- Oct 21: **Brazil:** [Military-grade weapons cache found on Brazil-Columbia-Peru border](#)
- Oct 21: **EU:** [Galileo satellite navigation system: EU launches its first satellite navigation system](#)
- Oct 24: **Nigeria:** [Nigerian Islamists claim killing of journalist](#)
- Oct 25: **Pakistan:** [Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan \(TTP\) threatens UK with Christmas suicide bombings](#)

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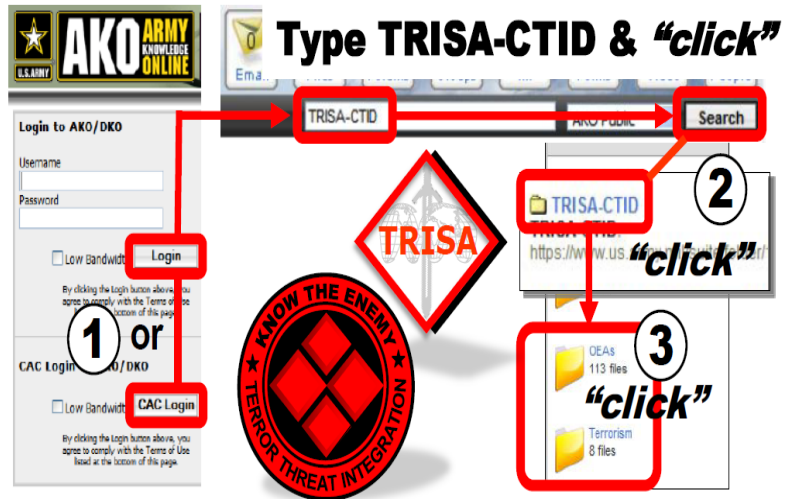
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