

OE WATCH

FOREIGN NEWS & PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT



Special Essay:
The Ansar of Yemen: AQAP
and the Huthis

Special Essay:
Who are Seleka?

Vol. 3 Issue #2 February 2013

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New Hopes for Peace with the PKK

8 January 2013

“...Developments in Iraq and Syria [are] making it an inevitable necessity for Turkey to end its war with the PKK and to solve its Kurdish problem.”

OE Watch Commentary: Turkey has a long and painful history with the Kurdish nationalist terrorist group called the PKK (the Kurdistan Workers' Party), in which almost 40,000 lives have been lost over the last 30 years - a death toll that is at least 10 times greater than that of the Northern Ireland conflict. Efforts to produce lasting peace and cease-fires have not worked until now. The latest initiative in 2009, called the Oslo Process, ended in failure and led to a re-escalation of PKK violence, followed by intensified counterinsurgency operations by the Turkish military.

The first week of 2013 ushered in new hopes for an end to PKK violence in Turkey, following Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan's announcement that fresh talks had been initiated with the group's jailed leader Abdullah Öcalan. The ultimate goal of the talks is to end the armed violence and get the PKK to lay down its arms. Öcalan has been in prison since his capture in 1999, but still has considerable sway over the group, which Erdoğan hopes will prove to be a useful asset in putting a definitive end to PKK terrorism. As the first accompanying passage by the widely-revered Turkish political commentator and writer Mehmet Ali Birand (who passed away suddenly on 17 January 2013, throwing an entire nation into mourning) demonstrates, there is very cautious optimism in Turkey about this process.

The debate in Turkey on the issue has centered mainly on the timing of the initiative. As the accompanying passages point out, analysts point to domestic and international factors that led Erdoğan to make this move at this particular time. Domestically, local and presidential



Demonstrators hold flags of jailed PKK leader Öcalan during a protest.. via Al Monitor.com

Source: “Mehmet Ali Birand, “Aldığım en güzel haber (The best news I received),” Hurriyet.com.tr, 8 January 2013, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/22313294.asp>

“A brand new process is ahead of us. I wonder if we will get any results this time? Will an agreement be reached this time, or are we going to be disappointed again?”

It is pointless to even ask these questions. Such negotiations last years. Disagreements happen, the process is undercut, and then it starts over. Let's not engage in fortune telling. This is a long-term struggle that we are talking about. Kurds have their rightful desires and expectations; and Turks have suspicions and fears. It is very hard to reconcile these things and find a formula that makes everyone happy. Even so, talking and continuing the dialogue is better than having a few funerals each day.

...If Erdoğan plays his card right...and is able to explain his good intentions and establish a healthy dialogue with Öcalan, he will be hailed as the ‘Man Who Is Searching for Peace’. Since this process won't be over before the 2014 Presidential elections, it will allow a bunch of liberal and some Kurdish votes to flow to Erdoğan.

... If you will notice, since the start of the negotiations with Öcalan, there is not any significant reaction from the public. The reason is that people are sick and tired of terror...”

Continued: New Hopes for Peace with the PKK

elections are scheduled for 2014, which Erdoğan would like to see take place without PKK violence; he also hopes that peace would secure his place as Turkey's new President.

*Internationally, Ankara is concerned about developments in both Iraq and Syria. They claim that the PKK is exploiting the chaos in Syria to expand its base and influence there (in addition to its presence in northern Iraq). In particular, Turkish analysts assess that the group has been emboldened by the changes in Syria, which have enabled a PKK-affiliated group (Democratic Union Party, known by its Kurdish initials PYD) to gain control of Syrian Kurdish towns along the Turkish border. Erdoğan realizes that unless the PKK problem is solved now, it will become harder and harder to settle it, given the PKK's increasing clout in the region. In fact, developments in Syria have emboldened the PKK: the group increased its violence to unprecedented levels in 2012, making the resolution of this matter more urgent than ever. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)***

Source: Soli Özel, "PKK görüşmelerinin dış boyutu (The external dimension of the PKK talks)," Haberturk.com.tr, 11 January 2013, <http://www.haberturk.com/yazarlar/soli-ozel/810569-pkk-gorusmelerinin-dis-boyutu>

"...It is relatively easy to see the regional dynamics of this move [aimed at the resolution of the Kurdish problem]. In this year, it is not unlikely that ethnic and sectarian fault lines in Iraq will be broken. An Arab-Kurd war is possible. Meanwhile, in Syria, it is becoming apparent that Bashar Assad will stay in power for a while yet; despite all the blows he's received. Since there won't be a military intervention, Turkey will have to establish a different kind of relationship with the PKK's sibling organization, the PYD. Öcalan has at least a sentimental meaning for Syrian Kurds as well. In short, the possibility of developments in Iraq and Syria focused on Kurdistan; is making it an inevitable necessity for Turkey to end its war with the PKK and to solve its Kurdish problem."

Source: Cengiz Çandar, "Why Now for Erdoğan's Initiative with PKK?" Al Monitor.com, 9 January 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/01/kurds-pkk-turkey-ocalan.html>

"There is also an internal dimension, which concerns Turkey's political schedule, and, more directly, Erdoğan's 2014 timetable. Turkey will hold two consecutive elections in 2014. The first will be a municipal election. To win the local administrations in the east and the southeast, the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) will compete for the Kurdish vote with the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), which is seen as a PKK supporter. Even before the dust settles from the local elections, Turks will go to the polls again for the first popular vote to elect a new president, which requires a majority to win. It is no secret that Erdoğan wants to become the first Turkish president elected directly by the people. A Turkey destabilized by a Kurdish problem and becoming more violent with developments in the Middle East may fail to withstand the jitters of two elections. Erdoğan doesn't want 2013 to be a year of destabilization."

Africa a High Priority for Turkey

12 January 2013

“Ankara’s Africa strategy is related to Ankara’s aspirations to become a political actor in remote lands by utilizing its soft power.”

OE Watch Commentary: Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan made his first foreign visit of 2013 to Africa, conducting a 6-day trip to Gabon, Niger and Senegal in early January. This visit comes within the context of a greater strategy called the African Opening, to expand Turkey’s presence and influence into the continent, like other rising powers such as China and India. This, in turn, is part of a greater initiative at making Turkey a leader in the Middle East and North Africa and a more competitive global player in general.

As the accompanying passages from Turkish commentaries point out, Turkey tries to differentiate its engagement in Africa from that of other actors on the continent by focusing on its lack of colonial history there and emphasizing its cultural, religious and historic links. The commentaries also point out the opportunities that Africa provides for Turkey. In particular, Africa represents both a market and a source of natural resources for Turkey, providing it the opportunity to diversify its trade and reduce its dependency on European markets. Africa also provides Turkey with a set of countries to support it in international platforms. For example, during its quest to win a seat as a non-permanent member on the UN Security Council in 2008, many African countries voted for Turkey, enabling it to secure the seat, which it seeks to win again in 2015.

Turkey’s Africa Opening can most



Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan and his wife during their trip to Gabon, Niger and Senegal, via Radikal.com.tr

Source: “Erdoğan: Biz Afrika’ya Farklı Bakıyoruz (Erdoğan: We View Africa Differently),” Dunyabulteni.com.tr, 12 January 2013, <http://www.dunyabulteni.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=242573>

“Erdoğan said, ‘...During our visit to Gabon, Niger and Senegal with a big group of businessmen, we conducted very productive meetings in Africa...I would like to say this with happiness: In all three countries, we were met with warmth, sincerity and hospitality. We experienced the love and support of the public and managers, like no other country has. In light of this warm interest and sincerity, I once again felt proud to be a citizen of Turkey. I mentioned this in Senegal, but let me repeat. Look, colonial powers come to Africa with lots of ambition, greed and dissatisfaction, and ruthlessly take whatever they can find. Diamond, gold, and other minerals- they fill up their ships and leave. And they are not satisfied with this- they take the people on the continent, fill up their ships and take them to their countries. Much pain and drama is taking place here.

They first took the Ottomans out of Africa, with whom we have lived for centuries in friendship and brotherhood. Then unfortunately they randomly and greedily dried up the continent. Now, as Turkey, we are starting a new process with Africa. We declared 2005 as the ‘Year of Africa.’ ...Today, we view Africa as our ancestors. We don’t see Africa as a continent of diamonds, gold and natural resources, we see it as an important civilization’s continent where our brothers and friends live.’ ”

Continued: Africa a High Priority for Turkey

clearly be seen in its diplomatic presence on the continent. In the last three years alone Turkey's diplomatic representation in Africa has nearly tripled, increasing from 12 embassies in 2009 to 34 by the end of 2012.
End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)

Source: Sami Kohen, "Afrika atılımı (African offensive)," Milliyet.com.tr, 9 January 2013, <http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/afrika-atilimi/dunya/dunyayazardetay/09.01.2013/1652960/default.htm>

"The opening of Africa brings great opportunities, as well as some difficulties. The rich economic potential of the continent, as well as its desire to open up its market to the international business community, provides Turkey a wide range of opportunities. These opportunities include possible cooperation in trade, investment, and tourism and in the construction sector. Turkey's private sector has ample experience due to its history working in many different countries. Another advantage of Turkey in this continent is its positive reputation. Turkey does not have a colonial past and therefore it is not associated with certain stigmas. This in particular facilitates political cooperation between Ankara and Africa, as well as cooperation on regional and cultural matters.

As a matter of fact, Ankara's Africa strategy is related to Ankara's aspirations to become a political actor in remote lands by utilizing its "soft power." Given that the Africa group has important leverage in the international arena, such as at the UN, the importance of the furthering Turkish influence in this continent couldn't be clearer."

Source: Hüseyin Kocabıyık, "Türkiye'nin Afrika seferi (Turkey's Africa trip)," Yenisir.com.tr, 12 January 2013, http://www.yeniasir.com.tr/Yazarlar/huseyin_kocabiyik/2013/01/12/turkiyenin-afrika-seferi

"A true "Turkish opening" to Africa is happening. It is becoming institutionalized as a priority in the government's and the Prime Minister's foreign policy vision. Turkey is taking advantage of the fact that it does not have a colonial history there. In every speech on Africa, the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan talks about how this continent was colonized and points to the difference in Turkey's interest in this geography. It is clear that Africans are taking these messages the right way. There are miraculous developments taking place in Turkey-Africa relations. Countries such as China, India and Brazil are establishing a new colonial system there, but Turkey is trying a relationship model based on humanitarian principles and ideals. It is even conducting its economic relations based on these basic principles."

Iran Seeks to Advance Indigenous Anti-Aircraft Missile Development

1 January 2013

“For all Tehran’s bluster regarding its missile program, it has been not as successful as it claims.”

OE Watch Commentary: On 25 December 2007 Iran’s semi-official Fars News Agency announced that Iranian authorities had signed an agreement with Russia to purchase the S-300 Anti-Aircraft system.¹ The announcement caused alarm in Washington and Tel Aviv because the sophistication of the S-300 system could severely constrain access to Iranian airspace in the event of military confrontation.² While the original models of the S-300 date to the late Soviet period, the system has evolved considerably in subsequent years; experts consider it among the most formidable surface-to-air missile systems.³

While Russia initially denied Iranian reports of the weapons system purchase, Russian press subsequently reported an \$800 million contract.⁴ The Iran-Russia deal sparked a U.S. diplomatic push. Senior Obama administration officials often point privately to Russian slow-balling of the contract as evidence of success for the administration’s signature “Re-Set” policy with Moscow.

Russian delays in delivery of the S-300 system have been the primary irritant in the Iranian-Russian relationship, which otherwise has never been so warm. With the Russians refusing to make good on their contract, the Iranian government filed a lawsuit at the International Court of Justice in Geneva demanding a \$4 billion penalty over the voided contract, although as recently as last August Iranian officials offered to withdraw their claim in return for the S-300’s delivery.⁵

Russia’s refusal to honor its contract encouraged Iran to redouble its efforts to develop its own equivalent system. In December 2012 Iranian Defense Minister Ahmad Vahidi announced plans to create an indigenous S-300, which he named the Bavar [Belief]-373.⁶ Vahidi, a former Qods Force operative given to hyperbole, declared last April that the Bavar-373 would be even more advanced than the Russian S-300.⁷

It is against this backdrop that the excerpted article from Tabnak.ir, a news website close to former President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, should interest analysts.

Firstly, while many English-language reports emanating out of Iran discuss progress on the S-300 system, the Persian-language reports surrounding the same speech speak instead of the S-200 system, which, while having a range up to 250 miles, does not have as advanced a tracking and radar system.⁸ The Soviet Union unveiled the original S-200 system in 1966, making the basic platform almost



Iran’s Ghareh anti aircraft missile, via <http://www.vosizneias.com>

Source: ““Tawseah Rahbari Bar Tahrek Pezir-e Sahmaneh-e Mushaki S-200” (“Recommendations of the Leader Regarding the Mobility of the S-200 Missile System”),” Tabnak.ir, 1 January 2013. <http://www.tabnak.ir>

Iran Seeks to Advance Indigenous Anti-Aircraft Missile Development

...Brigadier General Farzad Esmaili, commander of Khatam al-Anbia Air Defense Base [Islamic Republic of Iran Air Defense Force], speaking at a ceremony to commemorate the anniversary of the martyrdom of the former air force commander [Mansour] Sattari, referring to the meeting of the Supreme Commander held on November 4, 2012, said, “The Supreme Leader of the Revolution at this meeting paid a worthy homage to the Martyr Sattari. Esmaili stated that Sattari was the innovator of defensive mobility systems in the Valfajr-8 operation, and said, “His Excellency said in this meeting said that his legacy will continue in the developing of the S-200 missile system.”

Continued: Iran Seeks to Advance Indigenous Anti-Aircraft Missile Development

a half century old, even though, of course, newer versions of the S-200 are more advanced. The reason for the inconsistency in the Iranian reports may suggest that, for all Tehran's bluster regarding its missile program, it has been not as successful as it claims: successful tests tend to generate consistent reporting.

Secondly, the reference to Mansour Sattari and Valfajr-8 illustrates the legacy of the Iran-Iraq War in contemporary Iranian culture. Valfajr-8 was the name of Iran's successful February 1986 military operation to recapture the Faw peninsula, and Sattari was the father of the Islamic Republic's radar systems and a major air force figure during the Iran-Iraq War, who died in a plane crash on 5 January 1995. In popular Islamic Republic discourse the Iran-Iraq War is referred to often as the "imposed war" (jang-e tahmili), with the subtext being that "arrogant power" (i.e., the United States) collaborated with Iraq or perhaps even ordered the Iraqi invasion. Constant references to the Iran-Iraq War suggest an Iranian desire to wrap people around the flag and to depict Iran's missile development as a necessary action in the face of existential threat.

*The last major analytical point would be the central role of the Supreme Leader in military matters. This raises an issue for negotiation with the Islamic Republic for, while most diplomatic discussion regarding Iran's proliferation and nuclear activities occur between foreign ministries or national security officials, it is the Supreme Leader who sets the tone and calls the shots in Iran. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***

1. "Russia to Deliver S-300 Missile System to Iran," Fars News Agency, December 26, 2007.
2. Kenneth Katzman, "Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses," Congressional Research Service, RL32048, September 5, 2012.
3. Carlo Kopp, "Almaz S-300 – China's 'Offensive' Air Defense," International Assessment and Strategy Center, February 25, 2006. http://www.strategycenter.net/research/pubID.93/pub_detail.asp
4. Andrew E. Kramer, "Russia Ends Talk of Missile Sale to Iran," New York Times, September 22, 2010.
5. "Sardar Vahidi: Shakayat-e Iran az Russiyeh Tabiq-e Qarardad S-300 ast," Kayhan (Tehran), September 7, 2011, <http://www.kayhannews.ir/900616/2.htm>; Dmitry Gorenberg, "Iran's S-300 Lawsuit Against Russia May Backfire," Valdai Club (Moscow), December 14, 2012; "Envoy: Iran to Withdraw Complaint if Receives S-300 from Russia," Fars News Agency, August 1, 2012.
6. "Iran planning indigenous S-300 missile system: Defense Minister," PressTV (Tehran), December 1, 2012.
7. "DM: Production of Iranian S-300 Missile System in 'Good Progress,'" Fars News Agency, April 17, 2012. <http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9101142303>
8. See, for example, "Commander: Iran Testing Subsystems of Home-Made S-300 Air-Defense System," Fars News Agency, January 1, 2013. <http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9107132189>; "Iran testing components of missile system more advanced than S-300," Mehr News Agency, January 2, 2013. <http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1781927>

Internationalizing the Basij

7 January 2013

“Beyond Lebanon, where Hezbollah took root, all Iran’s revolutionary outreach has achieved was bad blood between Tehran and regional capitals.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Basij-e Mostaz’afin, literally “Mobilization of the Oppressed,” is a uniquely Iranian institution. The Basij began as a volunteer militia operating in defense of the Islamic Republic’s revolutionary principles. The iconic image of the Basij in its early years was of unarmed 14-year-olds with headbands singing Imam Hussein’s praises, running across minefields with plastic keys to heaven dangling from their necks. With the Iran-Iraq War over, the paramilitary Basij transformed itself into the chief mechanism for Iranian authorities to indoctrinate a new generation of revolutionary youth who would not receive their education at the front.*

This led to the Basij’s institutionalization: today, Basij chapters exist at most secondary schools, universities, and factories. Professionals, whether they are teachers, craftsmen, or doctors, have their own Basij chapters. Special units exist for women and even nomads. The paramilitary group, merged formally into the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in 2007, even operates summer camps and youth centers.

An article detailing the announcement—an excerpt of which is translated—states that the Basij hopes to expand beyond the borders of Iran. If implemented, this would add a new chapter to Iran’s desire to export its revolution. “Export of Revolution” is the Islamic Republic’s raison d’être. It is enshrined in the Islamic Republic’s constitution and, on 25 July 1981, Payam-e Enghelab defined “the principle of jihad” as, along with defending the revolution, one of the two main tasks of the Guards. In the Islamic Republic’s early years, the IRGC sought to export revolution to Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Pakistan, and Iraq and, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, to Azerbaijan. Beyond Lebanon, where

Source: “Gosteresh-e Fa’liyatha-ye Basij Dar Digar Keshevarzha bara-ye teshkil-e Basij Sad Milyoni” (“The Expansion of Basij Activities into Other Countries to Form a Hundred Million-strong Basij”), Fars News.com, 7 January 2013. <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13911018000531>

The Expansion of Basij Activities into Other Countries to Form a Hundred Million-Strong Basij

According to a Fars News Agency report, Brigadier General Ahmad Miqani, former Commander of Khatam ol-Anbia Air Defense Base, said during a discussion about the activities of the Basij... “It is necessary that we define and organize objectives for those the activities of the Basij in those countries interested in the Islamic Republic and that we expand these activities until there are 100 million Basijis in fulfillment of the 2025 Vision Plan.”



A Basij formation, via <http://www.rahesabz.net>

Continued: Internationalizing the Basij

Hezbollah took root, all Iran's revolutionary outreach has achieved was bad blood between Tehran and regional capitals.

Where Iran hopes to sponsor Basij units is unclear. Iranian officials have said they will found the Basij chapters in "allied countries." Iran, however, has few allies in the Middle East or, for that matter, the Muslim world. With its traditional ally Syria teetering, which makes establishment of "youth camps" there unlikely, Tehran might instead be refocusing its attention on Lebanon. Should President Bashar al-Assad fall in Syria, Iranian officials would have a harder time exerting influence in Lebanon. Creation of a Basij in Lebanon might be a mechanism for Iranian officials to check growing Hezbollah autonomy.

Basij units might also bestow privilege upon dispossessed Iraqi Shi'ites, who might overlook the Arab-Persian ethnic divide if the price is right. As firebrand cleric Muqtada al-Sadr both loses influence and seeks to cast his lot with Kurds and Iraqi Sunni Arab parties skeptical of Iran, Iraqi Basij chapters might help compensate for the decline of the Sadr's Jaysh al-Mahdi militia.

While neither Bahrain nor Kuwait is an Iranian ally, Iranian officials might utilize a new Basij outreach strategy to help the Islamic Republic take its sympathy toward the Gulf emirates' sectarian opposition to a new level. Kuwaiti security officials already warn of sectarian "children's camps" replete with weapons training operating during school holidays in Western Kuwait.

*Regardless, a grand plan to expand the Basij—even if to nowhere approaching a 100 million member mark—suggests that the trajectory of Iran is to redouble upon ideological indoctrination rather than moderate in order to live in peace with its neighbors. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***



Radical Islam's Western Foothold: Hugo Chavez and Hezbollah

By Sam Pickell

"This points to a particularly worrisome possibility: that Hezbollah will move beyond financing and support in Latin America to pursue operational objectives within the Western Hemisphere."

<http://FMSO.leavenworth.army.mil/universities.html>

Iran to Assist Burmese Muslims

12 January 2013

“Iran’s outreach to Myanmar’s Muslims...might also have security implications should Iranian authorities use charities they control to exploit and radicalize displaced persons.”

OE Watch Commentary: In June 2012 ethnic and sectarian violence erupted in Burma’s (Burma’s) northwestern Rakhine state between Rohingya Muslims and the majority Rakhine Buddhists. The spark appears to have been the rape and murder of a Rakhine woman, albeit after the murders of ten local Muslims. Unrest spread quickly: within a week more than 30,000 were homeless. By October that number had grown to 100,000.

The plight of the Rohingya Muslims and their “genocide” became a cause célèbre in the Muslim world. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), for example, condemned the “ethnic cleansing, killings, rape, and forced displacement” of the Rohingya. Against the backdrop of growing violence in Syria, Ahmet Davutoğlu, Turkey’s Foreign Minister, flew instead to Burma “to raise awareness” of the Rohingya Muslims’ plight.

It is against this context that Iran now appears to be involving itself with the Rohingya Muslims. For Iranian officials to remain silent would effectively cede ownership over this populist issue to Sunni powers. Not only does Iran see itself in a sectarian competitor with Turkey, but it also sees the OIC as an extension of this conflict because OIC Secretary-General Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu is a close friend to Turkey’s President Abdullah Gül.

Iran’s outreach to the Rohingya, however, should concern Western policymakers. The delegation described in the excerpted article includes the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (IKRC). At first glance, the IKRC appears to be a legitimate aid organization: it provides food, fuel, and assistance for the disabled, elderly, and orphans in a number of countries. However, with assets supplied by the Supreme Leader and many members veterans of the IRGC, the IKRC has in recent years become involved in activities which concern U.S. policymakers. In 2010, for example, the U.S. Treasury Department designated the IKRC branch in Lebanon as a terrorist entity for its aid and assistance to Hezbollah.

Given that the Rohingya are not the only Muslim community experiencing unrest in the region—the ongoing Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand has been particularly intractable—any involvement of Iranian officials could ultimately prove detrimental to U.S. interests. Seldom do organizations such as the IKRC offer assistance and then leave.



Maps of Burma from CIA World Factbook



Source: “Hayat-e Parlimani Iran Hamrah Ba Komakha-ye Ghaza-ye va Daru-ye ‘Azam Myanmar Mishavad” (“Iranian Parliamentary Delegation with Food and Medical Aid is Headed for Myanmar”), Islamic Republic News Agency, 12 January 2013. <http://old.irna.ir>

Iranian Parliamentary Delegation with Food and Medical Aid is Headed for Myanmar

4 December 2012

A Member of the Foreign Policy and National Security Commission of the Majlis said: The Iranian delegation is headed to help Myanmar’s Muslim refugees and includes a number of representatives from the Iranian parliament, as well as officials from the Red Crescent, the Foreign Ministry, and the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee. The delegation will be headed to Myanmar with food and medicine...

Continued: Iran to Assist Burmese Muslims

That Iran's outreach to Burma's Muslims coincides with a renewed American and, more broadly, Western diplomatic and commercial there might also have security implications should Iranian authorities use charities they control to exploit and radicalize displaced persons as they have in Lebanon. End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)

U.S. TRADOC G2 Intelligence Support Activity

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The New Tunisia at Two

14 January 2013

“When compared to other countries that experienced similar upheavals, Tunisia’s transition has been a smooth one... yet the mood in much of the country is glum.”

OE Watch Commentary: *This past 14 January marked the second anniversary of the overthrow of Tunisia’s Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and the start of the “Arab Spring.” When compared to other countries that experienced similar upheavals, Tunisia’s past two years have gone smoothly: violence and mass dissent have largely been contained, transitional institutions have been functional, nefarious regime practices have been curbed, and democracy appears to have taken root. Yet the mood in much of the country is glum, as indicated by the first accompanying article, taken from Tunisia’s principal French-language daily.*

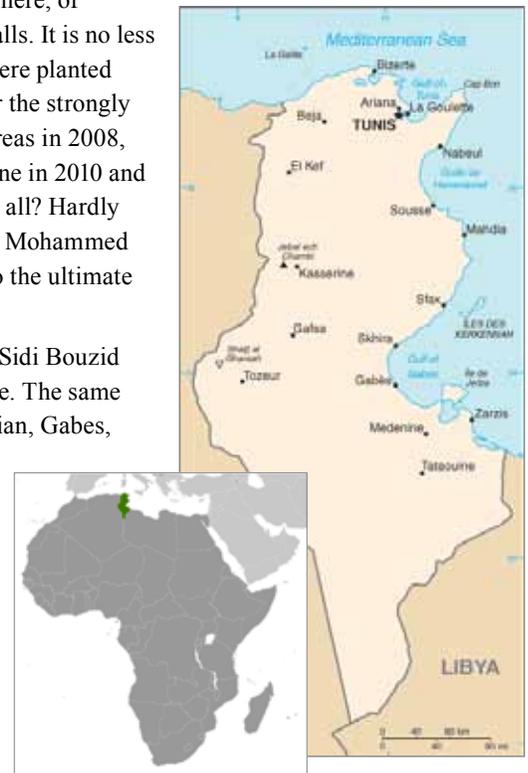
Three major trends will be worth paying attention to as Tunisia enters 2013. The first is the rise of Salafists, whose uncompromising interpretation of Islam has clashed with Tunisian traditions of tolerance and liberalism. Although the ruling al-Nahda party has thus far been able to contain this trend, Salafism will continue to pose a major challenge, in particular to moderate Islamists and potentially to Tunisian society as a whole. The second main trend is political, specifically the appearance of a new, hybrid form of authoritarianism that coexists with electoral democracy. Press freedoms have, in particular, eroded during the transitional period, leading to a general strike by journalists in October 2012. Fears that the previous political order is reconstituting abound. But it is the third trend which warrants the most attention: continued and growing economic grievances throughout the country’s interior, particularly among unemployed youth. It was this, after all, that is believed to have sparked Tunisia’s protests in the first place.

Source: “Dure la transition... (Hard Transition)”, (La Presse), 14 December 2012. <http://www.lapresse.tn/14012013/61080/dure-la-transition%E2%80%A6.html>

...The crisis is more acute elsewhere, of course. But it is also within our walls. It is no less and did not start today, its seeds were planted well before January 14. Remember the strongly suppressed events in the mining areas in 2008, the violent protests in Ben Guerdane in 2010 and the explosive social climate felt by all? Hardly anyone dared retaliate until a poor Mohammed Bouazizi turned his own body into the ultimate spark.

Two years later, the situation in Sidi Bouzid is practically the same, if not worse. The same can be said of Thala, Tatouine, Silian, Gabes, Kerekannah, etc. “There is no magic wand,” we tell ourselves, for resolving the structural problems that have gone on for decades. Political consensus during the upcoming elections will not resolve them, and an even broader coalition government will not satisfy the hungry children and unemployed youth who call for immediate solutions.

That is to say that the transition process that continues along has thus far been unsatisfactory both for citizens and the elite. One need only note that unemployment continues, that culprits have yet to be punished, that the economy is at pains to restart, that the issue of martyrs has yet to be resolved, and that the overthrown system has almost regenerated, for all to see that everything remains to be done. Really, everything.



Maps of Tunisia from CIA World Factbook

Continued: The New Tunisia at Two

Although the Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid has gone down in history as the cradle of the Arab Spring, the town of Ben Guerdane, near Tunisia's border with Libya, certainly has a stake to claim in these momentous events. On 9 August 2010, several months before Mohammed Bouazizi's self-immolation in Sidi Bouzid, protests broke out in Ben Guerdane after Libyan officials unexpectedly closed their side of the nearby Ras Jedir border crossing, which links Tunisia and Libya. Tunisian security forces were unable to quell the protests, and they subsided only after a reopening of the crossing was negotiated with Libyan authorities at the highest levels ten days later.

Are events repeating themselves? In mid-December 2012 Libya's new authorities temporarily closed the border crossing of Ras Jedir. Although it was subsequently reopened, many of Ben Guerdane's residents protested on 6 January by burning tires and blocking off the main highway linking Libya and Tunisia. Four days later a failed security clampdown led to the torching of the town's police station and customs office and the ransacking of the ruling al-Nahda party's headquarters. At the time of writing, the army had been deployed to Ben Guerdane in order to restore order.

The second accompanying article excerpts a letter written by a retired Tunisian general to the republic's presidency and its national council. It provides an eyewitness account of events in Ben Guerdane in 2010 and urges the government to pay greater attention to the town's residents and their grievances.
End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)

Source:

أحداث بن قردان 0102 "مؤامرة" بين المخلوع والقذافي
 "2010 Events in Ben Guerdane a 'Conspiracy' between the Deposed and Qaddafi" (al-Sabah)
<http://www.assabah.com.tn/article-82162.html>

...The odd thing is that the people of Ben Guerdane were honoring the security men by presenting them with food when it was time to break the fast, but after prayers they went back to them and "honored" them by throwing rocks and abuse and insulting the former regime. The atmosphere was primed for a general uprising to explode across the country, but unfortunately there was no response. While Ben Guerdane was having an uprising the rest of the country enjoyed Ramadan parties and evenings, and even the media turned a blind eye and ignored these events. The strange and painful thing is that the citizens of the north, the northwest, the center and even the capital Tunis who would return to Ben Guerdane for business and trade, they left Ben Guerdane and returned to their homes, where they followed events from a distance and monitored the situation until the uprising subsided...

The revolution ended and those who were elected were elected and some emerged victorious while others fell. We entered a transitional phase and visits by officials to the various regions multiplied, especially those where unrest was greatest. Although the promises increased, not a single senior official attempted to cross the border of the "military zone," as Ben Guerdane was known during the occupation, to reassure its people. The exception to this was the president, who flew over its airspace during his visit to Ras Jedir. Today, the region is going through a difficult period, with even some of the residents who cross the border to work in Libya returning due to the lack of security there and attacks against them"...

Today, Ben Guerdane's residents aspire to the creation of economic infrastructure to accommodate its youth, particularly those with university degrees, as well as the launching of projects in various fields, particularly health. Therefore, I urge you to turn to Ben Guerdane and listen to the concerns of its citizens."

Somali and Western Reporting: Different Views of the Same French Raid

12 January 2013

“...the killing of the villagers was a mistake which led Al Shabab to be alerted and prepare for the French commandos.”

OE Watch Commentary: The recent raid by French commandos to free a French intelligence agent held in Somalia by al Shabab since 2009 was an acknowledged failure. One French commando was killed and another is missing. The intelligence agent, according to the French, was likely killed during the raid, though al Shabab claimed he was executed two days later.

Western news media claimed at least 17 Islamists were killed, but like much of the story, including the status of the agent, there are confusing differences between the reports from the Western and Somali media. The accompanying article, “Somalia: What Led the French Commando Raid On Al Shabab to Be a Botched One?” is from Shabelle, a Mogadishu newspaper. It states that the French killed several villagers at their first landing site, approximately three kilometers from where the agent was being held. It is unclear whether or not these villagers were part of the 17 killed as initially reported by the West. Indeed, Western media reports generally refer to the 17 as Islamists, fighters, militants, or terrorists, but not “17 villagers” or “villagers along with fighters.” In contrast, Shabelle clearly identifies some of the dead as villagers, but does not say if they were also Islamists.

Shabelle also paints a picture of the villagers being sympathetic to al Shabab, angry at the French commandos, or both. As the article states, “The sources say that the killing of the villagers was a mistake which led Al Shabab to be alerted and prepare for the French commandos.”



Denis Alex (a pseudonym), the French intelligence agent held hostage by al Shabab in Somalia and now presumed dead.

Source: “Somalia: What Led the French Commando Raid On Al Shabab to Be a Botched One?” Shabelle Media Network, 12 Jan 2013, <http://shabelle.net/details-about-what-led-the-french-commando-to-be-a-botched-operation/>

Excerpts

... the French commandos first landed at a village called Daaydoog which is located at the seaside and three kilometers away from BulMarur where the French intelligence officer was held by Al Shabab militants...

... the French commandos killed some villagers and tied others when they landed at Daaydoog before they headed to BulMarer. But some villagers who survived the French killings at the seaside contacted and alerted Al Shabab fighters in BulMarer telling them that there were at least fifty heavily armed foreign soldiers on their way to BulMarer...

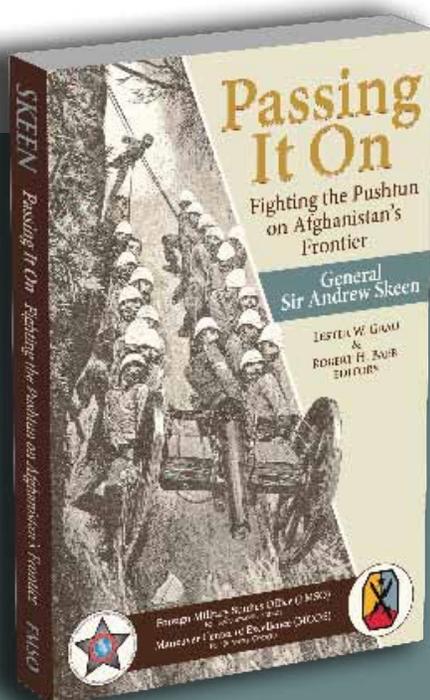
... the survived villagers called particularly the commander of Al Shabab in Bul Shiekh Ahmed who was among those the French killed in the fire fight...

...But before he and his men moved to ambush the coming French commandos, Ahmed is reported to have moved the French captive from the house they were holding into another house...

Continued: Somali and Western Reporting: Different Views of the Same French Raid

Much of Western media reports consider that al Shabab is unwanted and unwelcomed by large swaths of the Somali population, who generally practice a relatively moderate form of Islam, and consequently have illuminated the issue of indigenous support. Generally, Western media also have not carried the Somali government's condemnation of this French commando raid.

Note: The AFP article describing the raid can be found at <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/french-miscalculated-rebel-firepower-somali-raid-052227616.html>. End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)



In resurrecting General Sir Andrew Skeen's *Passing It On*, the Foreign Military Studies Office and the Maneuver Center of Excellence, have provided a detailed look from 1932 that holds valuable lessons and understanding of the Operational Environment in the Af-Pak Theater of today.

Are There Alternative Reasons for Rwanda’s Complaints Against Drones?

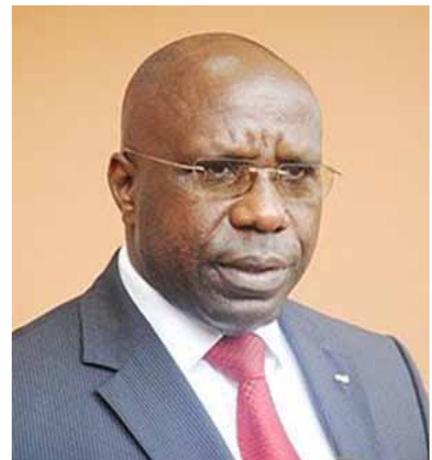
11 January 2013

“...the drones will... potentially supersede African and Asian peacekeepers who now act as the United Nations’ overseers on peace related missions.”

OE Watch Commentary: Using social media, Rwandan Prime Minister Dr. Pierre Damien Habumuremyi, as the accompanying article points out, has raised his opposition to the deployment of drones (also known as unmanned aerial vehicles or UAVs) by the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). To be sure, there are legitimate concerns regarding their use. As Dr. Habumuremyi tweeted, “instead of spending on surveillance drones, it is more logical to invest in supporting the region’s peacemaking efforts.” It is also important to point out that not all African leaders are opposed to drones. The governments of the DRC and Uganda both support their deployment along the DRC’s eastern border, “where rebels have carved out a fiefdom.”¹

The Rwandan Prime Minister raises interesting points regarding the conflict in the DRC in general and the use of drones in particular. As one of the article’s main points states, “Various governments from [the] developing world in which Rwanda belongs fear that the drones will open up a new intelligence-gathering front dominated by Western powers and potentially supersede African and Asian peacekeepers who now act as the United Nations’ overseers on peace related missions.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

Source: “Rwanda Prime Minister Challenges UN’s Drones Use in DR Congo,” News of Rwanda, 11 Jan 2013, <http://newsforwanda.com/featured/16591/rwanda-prime-minister-challenges-uns-drones-use-in-drc/>



Rwandan Prime Minister Dr. Pierre Damien Habumuremyi

Excerpts

...”DRC need good will from leadership, good governance, respect of human rights for all citizens, including Rwandaphones not the use of drones” [Dr. Habumuremyi] noted...

...The Prime Minister’s comments come only three days after the government of Rwanda opposed a proposal that the United Nations had tabled on Tuesday 8th January 2013 to deploy a unit of surveillance aerial vehicles also known as Drones in the Democratic Republic of Congo, arguing that “Africa must not become a laboratory for intelligence devices from overseas”...

...Olivier Nduhungirehe, a Rwandan diplomat at the United Nations cautioned over such Hi-tech military use, saying the Drones could be used to collect intelligence information from “Kigali, Kampala, Bujumbura or the entire region.”... It is even feared that the unmanned drones might be armed, despite UN Officials assurance that there is no intention to arm the drones or to spy on countries that have not consented to their use.

...The action is the first step in a broader bid to integrate unmanned aerial surveillance systems, which have become a standard feature of Western military operations, into the United Nations’ far-flung peacekeeping domain...

...In the 1990s, the United States and other major powers infiltrated the U.N. weapons inspection agency to surreptitiously collect intelligence on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein’s military; one of the reasons why Developing countries shun from any attempt of Drones hovering above their territories...

1. Jonny Hogg and Elias Biryabarema, “Kinshasa, Kampala Back UN Plan for Eastern Congo Drones,” Reuters, 11 Jan 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/11/congo-democratic-drones-idUSL5E9CBCW120130111>.

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Ghanaian Perspective on AFRICOM Efficacy: Break Up Colonial States for Maximum Security

8 January 2013

“Because at the heart of religious insurgencies in Africa are the incongruent colonial state boundaries, it will make more sense if AFRICOM and Africans can redraw the African political map rather than retrain and reequip African armies.”

OE Watch Commentary: African opinions about AFRICOM’s intentions and potential efficacy have long been a source of contention. On one hand, indigenous detractors have argued that the increased U.S. military presence on the continent is emblematic of a new imperial push to both secure African oil and counter a rising Chinese presence; others have suggested that AFRICOM simply represents a normalizing of U.S. relations to treat Africa like any other region of the world. Almost all debate how effective it can be. In the accompanying article, however, one Ghanaian commentator suggests how AFRICOM could potentially be both more effective and considered less imperialistic: by helping African states to redraw their distorted territorial colonial era maps to more accurately reflect ground-level socio-religious realities.

To this end, the author argues that the more or less arbitrarily designed colonial African state boundaries, such as those in Nigeria, are what are compelling religious insurgencies to fight for autonomy. This rationale suggests that by allowing Boko Haram to lead northern Nigeria to break away and form its own Sharia state, the fighting that has plagued the country would subside. As the author himself says with clarity: “Because in the heart of the religious insurgencies in Nigeria and other parts of Africa are the incongruent colonial state



Maps of Ghana from CIA World Factbook

Source: Francois Soudan, “Armées africaines: pourquoi sont-elles si nulles?” (“African armies: why so incompetent?”) Jeune Afrique. 17 December 2012: http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/JA2709p026_033.xml0/.

We want to believe that AFRICOM efforts are not simply to impress the Africans with the military might of the United States. Using Nigeria as the model we know that the cause of the religious tension and most of the other problems there is the direct effect of the colonial state structure of the country. The same is applicable to the other parts of the Continent. Nigeria’s Boko Haram and the rest insurgents’ problems in Africa can be solved through the use of dialog. Talking of dialog, no one is suggesting negotiating with terrorists. The kind of negotiation that will work here is to dialog to renegotiate the issue of the colonial state boundaries in Nigeria and the other parts of Africa.

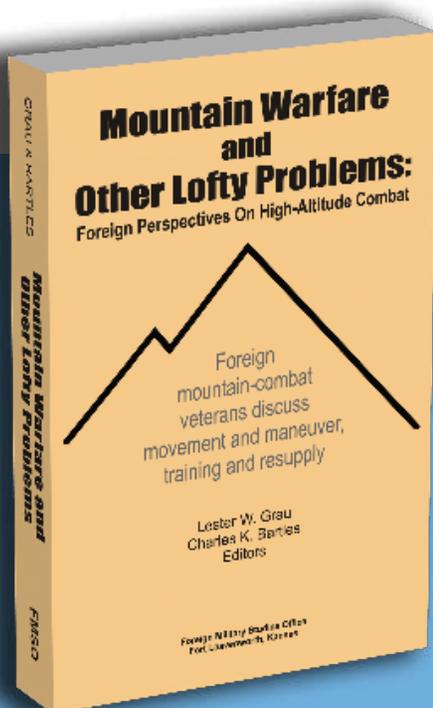


Continued: Ghanaian Perspective on AFRICOM Efficacy: Break Up Colonial States for Maximum Security

boundaries, it will make more sense if AFRICOM and Africans can redraw the African political map rather than retrain and reequip African Armies.” End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)

It is suggested that AFRICOM and other Western interest groups should approach the problem bearing in mind the terrible effect of the defective colonial state structure in Nigeria and all over the Continent. They should instead aid Nigeria and other African countries in adopting a multi-state solution to solve the seemingly endemic problem. With this approach, Africans and their political leadership will not need to be afraid of any imperialistic threat from the United States or any other Western power. And with that as the case, the only real foreign domination and manipulation that should concern Africans and their political leaders is clearly the dysfunctional effect of the extant foreign-imposed state boundaries on their sociopolitical existence.

The United States or any other government does not need to expend any of the resources as are being budgeted to train and equip African national armies. In a multi-state solution the governments can achieve very positive short and long-term results at a very minimal cost and record time. Because in the heart of the religious insurgences in Nigeria and other parts of Africa are the incongruent colonial state boundaries, it will make more sense if AFRICOM and Africans can redraw the African political map rather than retrain and reequip African Armies.



The United States Army has been involved in a mountain war for a decade. After all this time, mountain combat remains a stubbornly difficult mission and technology can offer only modest support to the infantry's mission of closing with the enemy or the logistician's mission of getting support forward. This book by Les Grau and Chuck Bartles covers operations and tactics, artillery, and aviation support, reconnaissance, communications, training, and logistics in the mountains.

This book is not United States Army doctrine. Rather, it is offered as an alternate view to a most-challenging military environment.

Boko Haram Undermines Nigerian Regional Leadership

8 January 2013

“A Ministry of Foreign Affairs source informed ThisDay that for the first time in its history, Nigeria would not be able to meet the original target on the number of soldiers it would contribute to AFISMA [African-led International Support Mission in Mali]...”

OE Watch Commentary: Ever since three Islamist militias, Ansar al-Din, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA), seized control of the three northern provinces of Mali in late 2012, it has been clear that the United States and France would be the two leading Western countries and Nigeria the leading West African country to intervene in Mali. However, the Boko Haram insurgency in northern Nigeria, which is located only 300 miles south of northern Mali, is draining Nigeria’s resources and ability to perform its traditional role as West Africa’s security guarantor. As a result, Nigeria, which has West Africa’s largest economy and a population greater than all of the other West African countries combined, may be unable to respond decisively to the crisis in Mali and support U.S. military objectives in Mali.

On 8 January 2013 a source from Nigeria’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs told Lagos-based ThisDay newspaper that “we have to secure our own country first, so we cannot do more than 450 [troops],” thus reversing a November 2011 decision in which Nigeria’s Deputy Defense Minister said that 600 Nigerian troops would join an all-African military force of 3,300 troops “to ensure that Mali regains her territory in the North.” The source from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told ThisDay that the security challenges in northern Nigeria and other parts of the country necessitated troop deployments domestically, and that Nigeria did not want a repeat of the UN-backed interventions in Liberia in 1999 and Sierra Leone in 1997 and 2003, when Nigeria bore almost all of the costs in lives and treasure to restore order after the civil wars in those two countries.

There is debate in Nigeria about this troop reduction and whether sending even a single Nigerian troop to Mali is wise, with the final decision regarding troop numbers still pending at the Defense Headquarters in Abuja. In



Nigerian peacekeepers were met with joy in Monrovia, Liberia in 2003. via <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2003-08-09/liberian-rebels-threaten-new-attacks/1461824>

Source: Oyedele, Damilola, “With Focus on Homeland Security, Nigeria to Reduce Troops to Mali,” ThisDay, 8 Jan 2013. <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/with-focus-on-homeland-security-nigeria-to-reduce-troops-to-mali/135674/>

With Focus on Homeland Security, Nigeria to Reduce Troops to Mali

...West African leaders on November 11, 2012 had agreed to send some 3,300 troops to Mali in order to assist government-controlled troops regain control of the northern part of the country from a band of terrorists suspected to have links with al-Qaida.

...Nigeria was expected to contribute the highest number of troops to the contingent owing to its reputation as a global peacekeeper, and has led similar missions in the past when it intervened in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Continued: Boko Haram Undermines Nigerian Regional Leadership

“...Because of the security challenges in [northern Nigeria] and insecurity in other parts of the country that have necessitated troop deployments to the affected states, Nigeria will not be able to send more than 450 soldiers to the international military contingent.”

the “charity begins at home” camp, there are Nigerians who view the conflict in Mali as an “external affair” that Nigeria need not get involved in, especially because in April 2012 – the same month Boko Haram fighters were first reported in Gao, Mali, fighting with AQIM and MUJWA – Mali’s coup leader said he did not want troops from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Mali. This camp believes that the West and other African countries never gave Nigeria its fair share of credit for the burden it bore during previous interventions in West Africa, such as Liberia and Sierra Leone. There is also concern about blowback, namely that AQIM and Boko Haram will respond to a Nigerian intervention with more attacks in Nigeria like the vehicle-borne suicide bombing of the UN Headquarters in Abuja in August 2011, which is believed to have been carried out by Boko Haram with AQIM and al-Shabab support. This camp doubts whether 450 or 600 troops make any difference and is pessimistic that the planned 3,300 African troops in Mali can succeed in ousting the Islamist militias from a region as large as northern Mali, which is roughly the size of France.

However, another camp in Nigeria sees the fighting in northern Mali as directly related to protecting the home front, because AQIM and MUJWA are providing Boko Haram a haven to plan attacks in northern Nigeria and likely harboring Boko Haram leader Abu Shekau and his commanders. This camp believes that 450 troops will be sufficient if Nigeria deploys them strategically, such as in special forces operations to gain intelligence on Boko Haram or kill Boko Haram leaders. Moreover, they argue that once the Islamists are ousted from the main population centers in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu, the locals will turn on the Islamists for having imposed harsh Islamic Law inconsistent with Malian traditions on people in the cities they occupied. Finally, this camp believes that Mali does matter, and that, if anything, Nigeria can withdraw troops from the other countries in Africa where it currently has troops stationed, such as Somalia, Congo and Guinea-Bissau, in order to focus on Mali. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

Note: For readers who want additional information, an Arabic language video released by Boko Haram on 29 November 2012, which appears to show Boko Haram leader Abu Shekau in Mali, can be found here (<http://jihadology.net/2012/11/29/new-video-message-from-new-video-message-from-boko-%E1%B8%A5rams-jamaat-ahl-al-sunnah-li-dawah-wa-l-jihad-shaykh-abu-bakr-shekau-oh-soldiers-of-god/>):

Besides, Nigeria’s military, which gets a big defence budget relative to other West African countries, is considered more advanced and experienced in military warfare than its neighbours in the sub-region.

However, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs source informed THISDAY that for the first time in its history, Nigeria would not be able to meet the original target on the number of soldiers it would contribute to AFISMA [African-led International Support Mission in Mali], as its officers and soldiers are engaged in one operation or the other in several parts of the country.

According to him, because of the security challenges in the North and insecurity in other parts of the country that have necessitated troops deployment to the affected states, Nigeria will not be able to send more than 450 soldiers to the international military contingent.

...“We cannot dissipate our energy; we have to secure our own country first. So we cannot do more than 450, other countries would have to step up (their contributions) and the good thing is that the mission involves ECOWAS and the AU, so they would prevail on other countries to step up,” the source said.

Another Boko Haram Militant Arrested in Government Official's Home

13 January 2013

“The manhunt by security operatives for militants of the dreaded fundamentalist Islamic sect, Boko Haram, Saturday yielded results with the arrest of one of the wanted chieftains of the group, Hassan Pagi Bukur in Gwrinpa in Abuja. Bukur was arrested at the residence of the former member of House of Representatives, Hon. Tijani Umar Kumalia.”

OE Watch Commentary: *It is no secret that there are Nigerian government officials, including politicians, employees in the immigration service, and security officers, who collaborate with Boko Haram. Indeed, many of Boko Haram's major attacks have been described as “inside jobs,” from the bombing of the UN headquarters in Abuja in August 2011, to the prison break operation in Abuja in November 2012 (which was claimed by Boko Haram breakaway faction Ansaru), to the 21 December kidnapping of a French engineer in Katsina near the border with Niger, also claimed by Ansaru. When Boko Haram members are captured in the homes of government officials, Boko Haram's infiltration of the government becomes all the more apparent.*

On 13 January 2013 Lagos-based ThisDay newspaper reported that Boko Haram member Hassan Pagi Bukur was arrested at the residence of former member of House of Representatives, Hon. Tijani Umar Kumalia. A Nigerian security source told ThisDay that Bukur admitted that he was a Boko Haram member and that he received vehicles stolen by other Boko Haram members and sold some of them to Kumalia. Among its many criminal activities, Boko Haram is known especially for car theft, and virtually all Boko Haram suicide car bombings have been carried out using stolen cars. Boko Haram leader Abu Shekau, seemingly unable to curb criminal activities by Boko Haram members, issued a statement in April 2012 saying that he would not take action against criminals using Boko Haram's name for financial profit, but that they could face punishment in the afterlife. In contrast, Shekau said he would take action against Christians, government employees and critics of Boko Haram and punish them in this life.

Nigerian government officials like Kumalia have varying motivations for associating with Boko Haram. In some cases, like this one, it appears that Kumalia was motivated



The screenshot is from a video recorded by Boko Haram of the suicide car bombing of ThisDay newspaper in Abuja in May 2012. The car was a stolen Isuzu sports utility vehicle. via <http://www.nigeriadailynews.com/video/34542-video-released-by-boko-haram-of-thisday-bombing.html>

Source: Abonyi, Ike, “Boko Haram Chieftain Arrested in Abuja,” ThisDay, 13 Jan 2013.

<http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/boko-haram-chieftain-arrested-in-abuja/136191/>

Boko Haram Chieftain Arrested in Abuja

The manhunt by security operatives for militants of the dreaded fundamentalist Islamic sect, Boko Haram, Saturday yielded results with the arrest of one of the wanted chieftains of the group, Hassan Pagi Bukur in Gwrinpa in Abuja. Bukur was arrested at the residence of the former member of House of Representatives, Hon. Tijani Umar Kumalia.

A security source told THISDAY in Abuja last night that part of Bukur's brief was to receive stolen vehicles from two of the sect's most wanted members, including one Babwo and Senior. He was arrested at the residence of the ex-lawmaker alongside his security guard.

Continued: Another Boko Haram Militant Arrested in Government Official's Home

by the financial benefit he gained from his association with Bukur. In other cases government officials have been ideologically sympathetic to Boko Haram's vision of creating an Islamic State in northern Nigeria. Still other government officials have cooperated with Boko Haram because of coercion and fear after having received text messages from Boko Haram that threatened their lives or the lives of family members, or when they saw that colleagues who thwarted Boko Haram operations were subsequently murdered by Boko Haram—often in their homes and in front of their families.

Another factor that needs to be considered is kinship. Before Boko Haram launched its insurgency in July 2009, many politicians in northern Nigeria were already related to Boko Haram members, such as Borno State Senator Ahmed Khalifah Zanna. Khalifah Zanna's nephew is Shuaibu Bama, who became a Boko Haram commander and was wanted for his involvement in the Christmas Day church bombings near Abuja in 2011, which killed more than 30 worshippers. Bama was arrested in Khalifah Zanna's home in October 2012. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

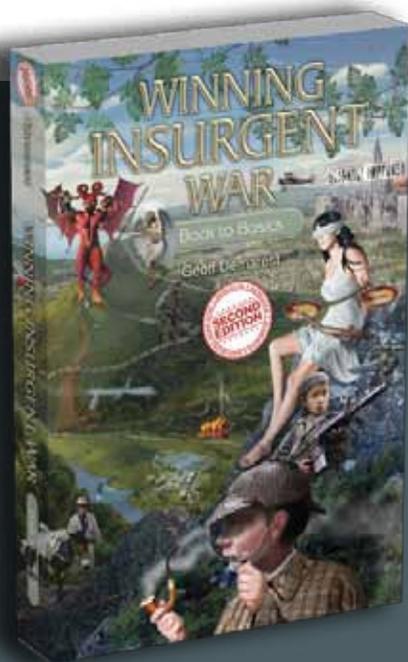
Note: For readers who want more information about Boko Haram's use of stolen cars in suicide car bombings, an article detailing captured Boko Haram spokesman Abu Qaqa's interrogation in which he discussed this topic can be found here (<http://allafrica.com/stories/201202210271.html>):

For readers who want more information about the Boko Haram faction Ansaru, which has carried out several attacks that were described as "inside jobs", an article profiling the group and providing a threat assessment can be found here ([http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=40287](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=40287)):

...THISDAY source also said that Bukur has admitted to being a member of the sect but added that his host, the ex-lawmaker, also buys some vehicles from him.

...Security agents before Saturday's arrest had established that almost all the vehicles used for suicide bombing, including the Isuzu jeep used to bomb THISDAY Abuja office by the sect, were stolen.

The former lawmaker from Borno State increases to three the number of top politicians accused of collaborating with the militant sect, whose insurgency since 2009 has caused the death of thousands of Nigerians.



Geoff Demarest's *Winning Insurgent War* is about a broader set of conflicts than just 'insurgency.' In its 144 sections, Geoff Demarest raises new and overlooked concepts related to modern conflict in a provocative manner designed to stir up debate and critical thinking. As Geoff Demarest puts it: "I hope that some of the ideas in it will be contagious."

2013: Southeast Asian Insurgency - Thailand

January 2013

OE Watch Commentary:

Southeast Asia is increasingly recognized as a competitive arena for global influences in both commercial and political realms. The US, China, and India are seeking new ventures for investments and business cooperation, as well as bilateral agreements regarding the issues of the day.

For over a decade the Thai provinces bordering Malaysia in the south have been known for an increasingly violent separatist campaign. A long history of ethnic, religious, and economic discrimination of the non-Buddhist population has fueled grievances and continuous calls for more equal treatment. Since 2001 the violence has been characterized by small-scale, yet coordinated armed attacks on police stations, security personnel, and government personnel such as teachers. 2012 has seen over 500 killed and many more wounded in bombings and shootings. The compilation of articles from the Bangkok Post captures the ongoing strife and concern of the past two months. The governments of Thailand and Malaysia continue to downplay the violence and seek economic growth in the border provinces to mitigate the separatist concerns. The most recent insurgent attack is reported in the online Thailand Nation newspaper.

OE Watch Commentary
(Welch)

“...He had taken several bullets and died on the spot...”



Maps of Thailand from CIA World Factbook

Source: The Bangkok Post, “Pattani defence volunteer slain,” November 17, 2012, <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/321767/defence-volunteer-slain-in-pattani>

A defence volunteer was killed and a villager injured in a drive-by shooting in Pattani’s Kapo district late Saturday afternoon, police said.

...The victims were identified as Sakip Balaki Dengla, 24, a defence volunteer attached to Kapo district office, and a villager, Sa-uding Jehdo.

...Witnesses told police that the victims were sitting at the pump when a gunman on a pickup truck fired on them with an M16 assault rifle. The attacker then fled....

Source: The Bangkok Post, “Bomb blast hits train, killing 3, injuring 36,” November 19, 2012, <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/local/321919/bomb-blast-hits-train-killing-3-injuring-36>

NARATHIWAT : Three people were killed and 36 injured, many seriously, in a bomb blast that hit a local train in Rueso district of Narathiwat yesterday.

The bomb went off hours before US President Barack Obama’s arrival in Thailand. Some observers believe it was intended to embarrass Thailand in the eyes of the international community.

Deputy national police chief Pol Gen Worapong Chiewpreecha insisted the bombing was not related to Mr Obama’s visit. Attacks like this occur almost every day, he said.

Pol Lt Col Jakrit Wongprommet, deputy chief of Rueso police station, said the incident occurred about 7.30am. A bomb planted on the railway track near the Salo Bukit Yure station detonated while the Yala-Sungai Kolok train was pulling away from the station.

Authorities say the militants hid nearby and opened fire on the train after the explosion. The bomb was planted in a gas cylinder and weighed about 100kg, officials said....

... Several lost their legs or arms as shrapnel ripped through the railcar.

...The explosion left a hole about 3m wide and 2m deep. Two passenger cars were derailed. Train

Continued: 2013: Southeast Asian Insurgency - Thailand

services along the route were suspended....

....Meanwhile, a woman was killed and her son seriously wounded by gunmen in Narathiwat's Rangae district Sunday morning.

The incident occurred about 8am on a road near Ban Luk Khao in tambon Tanyong Limo. Police said Halimo Royi, 53, and her son Abdulloh, 25, were returning home from work at a rubber plantation at Ban Lubo Diyae on a motorcycle. Two men followed them on another motorcycle and the pillion rider opened fire at them with an AK-47 assault rifle.

The mother was killed instantly, and her son was seriously wounded....



State Railway of Thailand governor Prapat Chongsanguan inspects a wrecked train carriage after a bomb attack. The Bangkok Post.

Source: The Bangkok Post, "Men in uniforms slay 2 teachers," December 11, 2012, <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/325606/gunmen-in-police-uniforms-kill-2-in-south>

PATTANI - Gunmen dressed in police uniforms attacked a school in Pattani's Mayo district on Tuesday, killing the school director and a teacher.

....They shot and killed Tiyarat Chuaykaew, the school director, and Somsak Kwanma, a teacher, before stealing a pickup truck belonging to a teacher and departing in it....

“...Insurgents have withstood and adapted to the military's tactics.”

Source: The Bangkok Post, "Toddler, two teachers among six killed in brazen shootings," December 12, 2012, <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/local/325668/toddler-two-teachers-among-six-killed-in-brazen-shootings>

Six people have been killed, including a toddler and two teachers, and five others seriously wounded in two brazen shooting attacks in the deep South.

The first incident took place in Narathiwat's Rangae district Tuesday morning when gunmen on a pickup truck fired AK-47 and M16 assault rifles into a tea shop, killing three people instantly including a toddler, and wounding six others at the scene....

... a team of soldiers and police to the scene and found at least 40 spent cartridges from AK-47 and M16 assault rifles scattered in front of the teashop.

Security forces were hunting for the attackers, believed to be members of a separatist group led by Amran Ming which is thought to have been responsible for much of the violence in tambon Bor-ngor of Rangae district....

Since the latest spate of violence flared up in the deep South in January 2004, 157 teachers have been killed....

Security forces have now introduced stricter safety procedures to protect educators from attacks.

....Insurgents have withstood and adapted to the military's tactics, growing more proficient and daring in the process, it said.

Continued: 2013: Southeast Asian Insurgency - Thailand

While there is greater pressure on leaders to reduce violence and seek a resolution, political infighting and bureaucratic inertia continue to impinge on a comprehensive approach.

Source: The Bangkok Post, "Woman slain in Narathiwat," December 17, 2012, <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/326578/woman-slain-in-narathiwat>

A Buddhist woman was killed in a drive-by shooting in Narathiwat on Sunday night, ...

She was identified as Jiraporn Lekkrasan, 26, ...

Witnesses told police that the victim was travelling on a motorcycle on the road to Narathiwat when a gunman riding a pillion on another motorcycle fired at her with a 9mm pistol.

Mrs Jiraporn was hit by five bullets - in the face and torso - and died on the spot.

Police blamed separatist militants....

“...Insurgents have withstood and adapted to the military’s tactics.”

Source: The Nation, "Pattani Blast Kills 2 Soldiers," January 12, 2013, <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/national/Pattani-blast-kills-2-soldiers-30197751.html>

Two soldiers were killed and two others wounded in a bomb attack in Pattani’s Yarang district yesterday as they headed out to provide protection for teachers and to deliver presents for children in advance of National Children’s Day today.

The victims were identified as Sergeants ... of the Pattani Special Forces. Both were killed instantly.

The initial police investigation revealed that insurgents had placed explosives in a concrete water pipe under a road ... and then hid in a rubber plantation nearby. They triggered the explosives as the military pickup in which soldiers were travelling passed the spot. The explosion destroyed the pickup.

The soldiers had already delivered presents at Ban Prachan School and were on their way to provide security protection and more gifts at Ban Buenae Pinae School, which was holding activities for Children’s Day. The explosion took place about a kilometre from the school.

“...More than 5,000 people have been killed and over 9,000 hurt in more than 11,000 incidents, or about 3.5 a day, in the three southernmost provinces and the four districts of Songkhla since the violence erupted afresh in January 2004, according to Deep South Watch.”



Officials Inspect Site of bombing http://www.nationmultimedia.com/new/2013/01/12/national/images/30197751-01_big.jpg

Los Zetas Recruit MS-13 Members in Guatemala

7 April 2012

Source: "Los Zetas reclutan a maras Salvatrucha, dicen autoridades de Guatemala."

Animal Politico. <http://www.animalpolitico.com/2012/04/los-zetas-reclutan-miembros-de-la-mara-salvatrucha-dicen-autoridades-de-guatemala/>;
Accessed on 05 January 2013.

OE Watch Commentary: *US DEA agents and Italian authorities conducted Operation Solare in 2008 in an attempt to completely dismantle a transnational drug trafficking operation run by Los Zetas and The Ndrangheta (the Italian Mafia). Although 175 individuals were arrested during the operation, cocaine shipments supplied by Los Zetas and distributed by The Ndrangheta continued to flow from New York to Italy and throughout the rest of Europe.*

Another factor that makes the presence of Los Zetas in Europe noteworthy is that this market was previously dominated by Colombian drug cartels, just as the US market was. By gaining ground in the European market, Mexican drug cartels have demonstrated their adaptability in seizing control of all markets previously dominated by the Colombians. Still, Mexican cartels are not without competition in Europe, as Serbians are also heavily involved in the international cocaine-trafficking market. Nonetheless, the additional income earned by trafficking cocaine in Europe is key to Los Zetas operations, as it represents the means to carry out recruitment/distribution operations in Mexico, the United States, and Europe. It also gives Los Zetas the ability to corrupt national and international authorities. End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)



Los Zetas Recruit MS-13 Members in Guatemala

According to Guatemalan authorities, Los Zetas are looking to recruit and train 5,000 MS-13 members in Guatemala. Los Zetas are currently operational in areas within Guatemala including Zacapa, Izabal, Coban, and Peten. Previously, these sectors were virtually ignored by authorities, but due to high profile violent events perpetrated by Los Zetas, rural police forces are now operational in many previously unmanned sectors of the country. A turning point for the Guatemalan government in implementing rural security was spurred by the 14 May 2011 murder of 27 campesinos at the hands of Los Zetas operators in the Peten province.

Los Zetas have chosen to train MS-13 members at camps in Mexico in states including Nuevo Leon, Veracruz, Sonora, Chiapas, and San Luis Potosi. Once trained, most MS-13 members are sent back to Guatemala City where they are responsible for local drug trafficking activities and causing chaos to distract authorities that have been tasked to provide security in Los Zetas dominated rural areas.

However, it is not uncommon for MS-13 members to stay in Mexico as evidenced by a PGR report indicating that an estimated 1,373 Mara Salvatrucha members are thought to be active in the country. Those Mexican states with the highest presence of MS-13 gang members include Baja California, Tamaulipas, and Chihuahua.

(continued)

Continued: Los Zetas Recruit MS-13 Members in Guatemala

How Los Zetas Benefit from Recruiting Maras:

As it currently stands, Los Zetas and the Beltran Leyva Organization (BLO) are working together to counteract the Gulf Cartel and the Sinaloa Cartel. In order to efficiently coordinate and control drug shipments through Central America into Mexico, Los Zetas and the BLO are working directly with MS-13 members as they have a better working knowledge of Guatemala's geography, political, and police system.

MS-13 vs. MS-18

The Mara Salvatrucha consists of two rival factions, the MS-18 and the MS-13. These groups control criminal operations in most Guatemalan cities and are responsible for criminal activities including extortion, kidnapping, robberies, drug trafficking activities, and murders.

Los Zetas are known to recruit MS-13 members over MS-18 members because of differing levels of sophistication between the groups. The MS-18 gang is characterized by smaller operations, poor coordination between group members operating in separate sectors, and a lacking organizational structure. Additionally, the MS-18 gang is said to have a lacking intelligence system when compared to that of the MS-13. For example, the MS-13 has successfully corrupted police, mayors, and judges as evidenced by the seizure of payroll books from arrested gang members.

The MS-13 gang is also known to maintain contact with gang members operating in different states, cities, and countries. This has benefited Los Zetas in the sense that they are able to coordinate with MS-13 members operating in other Central American countries including Honduras and El Salvador to deal drugs and steal shipments from rival criminal groups operating in Los Zetas territory.

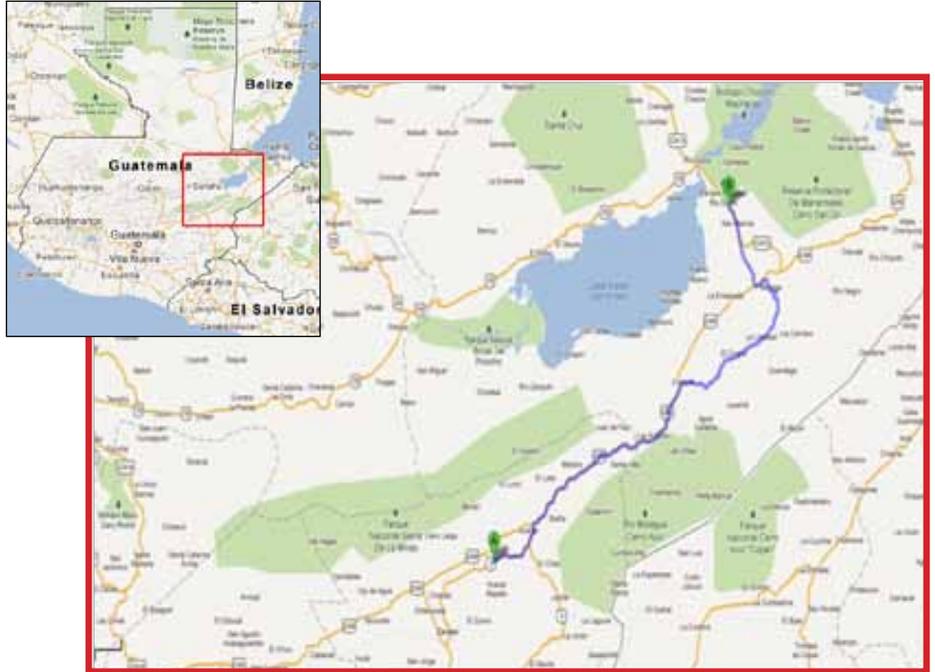
Why Las Maras Have Benefited from Working with Los Zetas:

The MS-13 gang has benefited from joining up with Los Zetas in the sense that they have enhanced their operations through advanced military and weapons training. They are also said to be earning more money. Los Zetas have also convinced MS-13 members that it is in their best interests to coordinate with them to gain complete control of criminal activities in Guatemala. The end result of this cooperation is enhanced strategy, manpower, and coordination between the two groups to conduct criminal activities.

Changes in Central American Gang Activity following Alliance with Los Zetas

While Mara gang members remain loyal to their own gang leaders, Los Zetas have asked for proof to assure that new recruits have learned kill techniques taught to them at Mexican training sites. Hence, Las Maras are showcasing their training by dismembering their murder victims, carrying out kidnappings, and using military style weaponry including AR-15's, AK-47s, M-16s, and fragmentation grenades.

Historically, Las Maras have been known to carry out brutal murders against rival gangs in Central America, but since joining up with Los Zetas, authorities in Guatemala claim that violence levels between rival gangs has increased. This tendency is due to the fact that in most Central American countries, police presence is scarce, impunity is rampant, and the prison/judicial system is virtually failed.



Death of a “King” and the Future of an Insurgency

January 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *OE Watch readers will want to maintain awareness of two interrelated stories from Latin America: the Colombian “peace process” and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez’ declining health. Numerous other matters, including the balance of the Mexican drug war, maturation of Brazilian war industries, or the Foro of Sao Paulo’s increasing weight within formal international organizations might interest regional specialists, but the headline issues will be the FARC peace talks and Chavez’ mortality. How these unfold could impel near-term changes in US policies and DoD resource allocations. The Colombian peace process will also be of interest to military instructors, planners and strategists as an example of the possibilities and potential pitfalls of amnesty plans and negotiations in irregular war. What do the sides really have to give, or feel they have to give?*

Chavez’ health has been deteriorating, such that New Years Eve festivities in “Caracas were cancelled to make room for prayer, and he could not attend his inauguration, which was conducted anyway, in absentia, on 10 January. In the midst of the inevitable constitutional argument sits Cuban influence and interests.

*Many Colombians recognize how difficult Chavez’ Venezuela has made military victory over the FARC, given the geography of guerrilla sanctuary. It seems that the peace process could scarcely have begun but for Chavez’ personal intervention, which involved the good offices of Cuba’s leaders, as well as of other members of the Foro of Sao Paulo. Public commentators ask what President Manuel Santos ceded to Chavez, and what Chavez’ demise might do to the continuity of those deals. It appears to some Colombians close to the matter that the back-room deals may have much to do with land ownership, and Colombian land at that. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)***

Sources:

1. Natalia Springer, “Chávez y la paz de Colombia” El Tiempo 1 January 2013 online, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-12288106>
“It is, clearly, a vision of the peace [process] as a power negotiation, which goes beyond the mere renunciation of arms and submission [to the State], and understands that the conflict plays part in a complex sub-regional dynamic. For those in agreement, this peace [process] requires the political will of the neighbors.”
2. Jesús Antonio Petit da Costa 20 de diciembre de 2012, <http://jesuspetitdacosta.blogspot.com>
“If the President of the Republic absents himself from the national territory and the Executive Vice-President is not called to substitute, taking the legal oath, it must be understood that there exists an ‘acephaly’ or power vacuum. There is no president in exercise [of that power]. It follows, consequently, that the vacuum will fill.”
3. Carlos Alberto Montaner, ‘Fidel Castro se despide de su amigo Hugo Chávez’ Libertad Digital 24 de diciembre de 2012, <http://www.libertaddigital.com/opinion/carlos-alberto-montaner/fidel-castro-se-despide-de-su-amigo-hugo-chavez-66860/>
“Obviously, there are symptoms that the death watch over Chavez will start a serious crisis among his lieutenants. No consensus exists regarding who should be his heir or by what process lies the determination of Chavez’ spawn. What everyone does know, Hatfields and McCoy’s, is that the country is going down a bad road.”
4. Contexto Ganadero, “José Félix Lafaurie ratifica su posición frente a los diálogos de paz” Contexto Ganadero, Bogotá 28 de diciembre de 2012, <http://contextoganadero.com/ganaderia-sostenible/jose-felix-lafaurie-ratifica-su-posicion-frente-los-dialogos-de-paz>
“Very surely because, when the State, facing its incapacity to confront the guerrilla, authorized the creation of the “Convivir” [authorized local rural militias], many ranchers, under the tutelage of the armed forces, collaborated with them [the paramilitaries] as the only means of survival. Nevertheless, the reality is that we are facing a phenomenon of massive land dispossession, and an authentic cattle genocide, committed by the FARC.”
5. Comunique of the FARC-EP: “Una paz mal construida es peor que una guerra” (allegedly written by the FARC peace delegation in Havana on 21 December 2012, <http://anncol.eu/index.php/colombia/insurgencia/farc-ep/comunicados-de-las-farc-ep/1137-dec-21-comunicado-farc-ep-una-paz-mal-construida-es-peor-que-una-guerra>)
“The FARC is not in a process of negotiation, given that we have nothing to offer, and indeed much to demand as part of that enormous mass of dispossessed that clamours for land, housing, health, education, bread, liberty and true democracy.”

Growing Concern Over China Anti-Satellite Tests 13 December 2012

“The US advantage is overwhelming. Before strategic uncertainties between China and the US can disappear, China urgently needs to have an outer space trump card.”

OE Watch Commentary: A number of articles have come out recently discussing concern over future Chinese anti-satellite tests. China has already conducted several anti-satellite tests in recent years and is believed to be preparing for another.

The following articles originate from four different Asian countries and present different viewpoints. The first article is from the standpoint of a Russian military expert, but originates from Taiwan. It explains how China test-firing an anti-satellite missile could prompt an arms race with the United States and Russia. The second article, originating from Singapore, reports that “as China’s reliance on orbiting satellites grows to match that of the U.S. and Russia, their mutual interest in stability may prevent conflict in outer space, just as fears of mutually assured destruction have helped to prevent nuclear warfare since 1945. In the third article, originating from India, the author expresses concern over the safety of its space assets in light of China’s anti-satellite tests in 2007. The last article, which originates from China, puts the blame for its need to have anti-satellite technology on U.S. actions. The title suggests that U.S. worries are overblown; in the body of the article the author explains why China needs to be prepared to conduct anti-satellite operations. While the article highlights China’s desire to use space peacefully, it also points out that the United States has an overwhelming advantage. According to the author, “China urgently needs to have an outer space trump card.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**



Depiction of possible use of Chinese anti-satellite (ASAT) positioning in relation to U.S. GPS satellites produced by Anytical Graphics Inc. (AGI)

Source: Charles Kang and Maubo Chang, “Beijing to Trigger Arms Race by Testing Anti-Satellite Missiles,” Central News Agency (Taipei), January 15, 2013, <http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/etn/news_content.php?id=2122405>.

Beijing to Trigger Arms Race by Testing Anti-Satellite Missiles

China’s imminent test-firing of an anti-satellite missile is set to prompt an arms race with the United States and Russia, a Russian military expert (Vasily Kashin) has warned.

In light of the fact that the U.S. depends heavily on the system to train its strategic missiles on targets and to move its troops, the DN-2 will be a serious threat to the U.S. military edge, said Kashin. Noting that Russia is also actively developing its own anti-satellite weaponry, both missiles and lasers, Kashin predicted that Beijing’s test, if successful, will force the U.S. to take counteractive measures and intensify an arms race among the three.

Source: Michael Richardson, “Opinion: China’s Joust for its Place in Space,” The Straits Times Online, January 14, 2013, <<http://www.straitstimes.com/the-big-story/asia-report/china/story/chinas-joust-its-place-space-20130114>>.

China’s Joust for its Place in Space

The Chinese test ended a long period of restraint by the main space users. Only two

Continued: Growing Concern Over China Anti-Satellite Tests

Source: Radhakrishna Rao, "The Indian Space Programme in 2012: A Review," Political and Defence Weekly, January 1-7, 2013, Vol 12, Issue 12, pp 18-20, <http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/TheIndianSpaceProgrammein2012_rrao_020113>.

The Indian Space Programme in 2012: A Review

In the context of fast expanding space missions resulting in a growing constellation of satellites, there is a concern in India over the safety of its space assets. This concern assumed serious dimensions in early 2007 when China successfully carried out an anti-satellite test followed by a well-conceived plan for mastering the techniques of a full-fledged space war...

nations, the former Soviet Union and the US, had previously destroyed spacecraft in anti-satellite tests. America's last test was in the mid-1980s.

China plans to put many more satellites into low, medium and high orbit above earth, for civilian and military purposes, consolidating its place with the US and Russia as one of the world's three leading space powers.

In an effort to break the deadlock between the US on the one side and China and Russia on the other, the European Union has drawn them and about 40 other countries into negotiations on an international code of conduct for outer space activities.

The EU wants to finalise the voluntary code, which would not be legally binding, this year. The aim is to limit further space debris, improve international cooperation and create a "peaceful, safe and secure outer-space environment".

Whether such a code could by itself prevent an arms race in space is doubtful.

However, as China's reliance on orbiting satellites grows to match that of the US and Russia, their mutual interest in stability may prevent conflict in outer space, just as fears of mutually assured destruction have helped to prevent nuclear warfare since 1945.

Source: "Satellite Test Sparks Overblown Worries," Global Times Online, January 6, 2013, <<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/753925.shtml>>.

Satellite Test Sparks Overblown Worries

China's public policy is peaceful use of space, which is also China's real desire. China has no interest in launching a large-scale space race with the US. China and Russia jointly initiated a program to avoid an arm race in outer space in 2008, but this proposal was refused by the US. Against this background, it is necessary for China to have the ability to strike US satellites. This deterrent can provide strategic protection to Chinese satellites and the whole country's national security.

... China should continue substantive research on striking satellites.

... The US advantage is overwhelming. Before strategic uncertainties between China and the US can disappear, China urgently needs to have an outer space trump card.

Security interests are the most important national interests...

It is key for China to have the ability of strategic retaliation... consolidating China's strategic security is the foundation of long-term development. We must dedicate a portion of our resources and energy to the construction of advanced defense capabilities.

Therefore, hopefully, the speculation about China's anti-satellite tests is true.

Thousands Protest Ma Government and Increasing Ties with Mainland 13 January 2013

OE Watch Commentary: While protests occur often in Taiwan, the latest drew a crowd of over 90,000 (confirmed by policing forces), where emotions were strong and cries from the leaders' bullhorns could be heard from half a mile away.

Since Taiwan's President Ma was re-elected last January, several hot-points have arisen that have drawn citizens' ire. Domestically, citizens are feeling the burn of a stagnant economy in conjunction with significantly increased commodity prices (which have traditionally been heavily subsidized). With regard to foreign affairs, citizens are cringing with each new link created between the island and the mainland. Most recently, the media consolidation under the supposedly pro-mainland Tsai Eng-Meng, Chairman of WantWant Times, gained angry attention from the academic community, who accuse the government of allowing the demise of Taiwan's free press and speech.

Further, as a result of Ma's policy of increasing ties with the mainland, as of January 2012 Chinese tourists are permitted onto the island as individual tourists, marking the first significant entrance from the mainland ever. According to a recent report by the National Immigration Agency, the number of Chinese tourists doubled from last year to reach 2.23 million. The influx of Chinese has led to concerns that medical and tourist facilities and businesses will suffer, not to mention the very real concern of the free movement of Chinese intelligence agents. **End OE Watch Commentary (Faruolo)**



Signs held by protesters read "Fury" in Mandarin (literally "Big Fire"), Source via cropped from http://www.theasian.asia/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/NISI20130113_0007571387_960-620x930.jpg

Source: "150,000 protest against Taiwan President Ma Ying-Jeou's policies," Taiwan News, 13 January 2013, http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/etn/news_content.php?id=2120533.

"An estimated 150,000 angry Taiwanese marched through the center of the capital Taipei Sunday to give expression to their fury against the alleged incompetence of President Ma Ying-jeou and his government.

The opposition Democratic Progressive Party, which organized the event, had earlier said it was expecting at least 100,000 people to brave the relatively cold weather and walk the 5 kilometer across town to the Presidential Office Building. By the time most of the marchers had reached the end point, the party estimated the total amount at 150,000.

The main demands of the protest were the replacement of the Cabinet in order to save the country's parlous economy, action against the concentration of media in the hands of pro-China business leaders, and the holding of a National Affairs Conference to discuss how to solve the grave financial problems facing social security and pension systems.

... 'Taiwan cannot just have one kind of voice,' a huge red banner proclaimed in a reference to the takeover of Next Media's Taiwan operations by a group of tycoons, some of whom already own a major share of the country's newspapers and TV stations. Media specialists, students and the opposition have accused Ma of not taking any action to stop the deal."

Source: "Taiwanese protest against policies of China-Friendly President Ma in Taipei," The Asian, 14 January 2013, <http://www.theasian.asia/archives/55430>.

China Reacts to Japan's Increased Military Budget

10 January 2013

OE Watch Commentary: In response to the increasingly tense situation between Japan and China over the Senkaku Islands (Diaoyutais in Mandarin) and an increasingly unpredictable North Korea, Japan has announced its decision to increase its military budget for the first time in 11 years, including a stimulus package to purchase advanced equipment such as PAC-3 surface-to-air missiles, and an upgrade of 4 F-15s, and other surveillance equipment. The exact budget is not yet confirmed.

This new budget, brought forth by the Liberal Democratic Party, led by newly elected Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, will complement a revised Japan National Defense Forces strategy which has redefined itself to act as a “dynamic defense force” that is capable of responding to existing, newly emerging, and future threats in a more timely and effective manner.

Both the announcement to increase funding and the shift towards a dynamic defense force have drawn criticism from China. Accordingly, China has issued statements warning Japan and pointing to the concerns of other countries that consider a militarized Japan an indication of Japanese military aims to return to the days of colonizing the Asia-Pacific region. China has also directed statements against the United States in its criticisms, identifying the United States' role in Japan's military situation, warning that, should the United States fail to “rein in the Japanese,” US-China relations will undoubtedly suffer.

Note: To read Japan's redefinition and evolution of its National Defense Forces, please see “Basic Concept for Developing a Dynamic Defense Force” within “The New National Defense Program Guidelines,” published by the Japanese Ministry of Defense, located here: http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2011/07_Part2_Chapter2.pdf. **End OE Watch Commentary (Faruolo)**



Flag of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces

Source: “¥180 billion in extra defense outlays eyed,” The Japan Times Online, 10 January 2013, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20130110a1.html>.

“The government plans to spend an extra ¥180.5 billion on missiles, fighter jets and helicopters as an “emergency economic measure” under the supplementary budget, Defense Ministry officials said Wednesday as Japan looks to boost its capabilities with concerns growing over a rising China.

The cash injection over the next few months comes on top of regular defense spending for 2012-13 and is separate from a request for an increase in the budget for the next fiscal year that policymakers called for Tuesday.

Japan is involved in a territorial tussle with China over a group of uninhabited islands and nerves have been rattled by an unpredictable North Korea, which lobbed a rocket over Okinawa last month.

The additional spending request will bring the ministry's total requests in the extra budget to a record ¥212.4 billion, the officials said.”

Source: Zhao Jinglun, “Why the US should rein in Japan,” China.org.cn, January 12, 2013, http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2013-01/12/content_27666711.htm.

As the Chinese saying goes: ‘A person's ill intent is known to all.’ The Obama administration wants to use its key Asian ally to counterbalance China.

But there is another Chinese saying: ‘To rear a tiger is to invite disaster.’ Even though Barack Obama was born after Pearl Harbor and the Bataan Death March, he certainly knows the treachery and extreme cruelty of Japanese militarism.

It is exactly the intent of superhawk Shinzo Abe, Japan's new prime minister, to revive Japanese militarism.

Continued: *China Reacts to Japan's Increased Military Budget*

... He wants to turn Japan from a defeated aggressor in the anti-fascist war to a “normal nation”, with the right to collective self-defense. During his first term as prime minister in 2006-2007, he upgraded Japan's Defense Agency to full ministry status, and revised a key education law to whitewash Japan's war crimes in government-approved history textbooks used in high schools.

Unlike Germans, who have genuinely repented for their war crimes, the Japanese have never fully dealt with their past...

... Abe has repeatedly called for upgrading Japan's Self Defense Force to a full national defense force by revising the country's pacifist constitution, imposed on Japan in 1947 by none other than the United States.

Now the U.S. is aiding and abetting the Japanese right wing in its fight with China over the Diaoyu Islands (the Americans turned over the administration of those islands to Japan in the first place). It declares Article Five of U.S.-Japan Security Pact applies to the disputed islands. That fateful act emboldens Japan's right wing government to pursue an even more dangerous course of action.

...That brings war closer. ... China will never fire the first shot. But it will certainly shoot back when attacked. Is that what the U.S. wants?

Thus, the U.S. faces a dilemma. Its policy of enabling Japan to counterbalance China is a double-edged sword.

... What is Abe up to? The Japanese right wing wants to use the support of the United States to enhance its own power, not only to check China, but also the U.S. Abe's potential ally, the arch-hawk Shintaro Ishihara, made no secret of his desire to throw the U.S. out of Japan.

It is in America's own interest that it should rein in these Japanese right wing interests.”

Source: Zhang Yunbi, “Japan's defense budget plan concerns neighbors,” China Daily, 8 January 2013, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2013-01/08/content_16093257.htm.

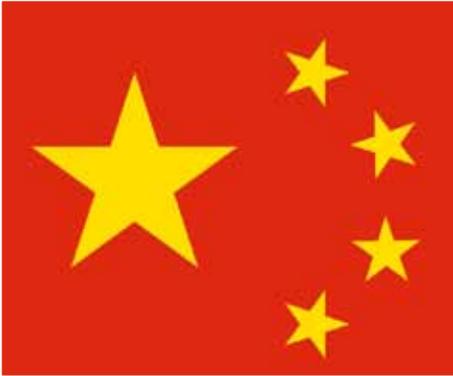
“Tokyo's plan to increase its defense budget for the first time in a decade has concerned its Asian neighbors.

Observers warned that a hike in defense spending is in keeping with the unwavering intention of the new Japanese cabinet to maintain a tough position on Japan's territorial disputes, which in turn may lead to escalating tensions in the region.

...Japan's Jiji Press News Agency said Shinzo Abe, the hawkish new Japanese prime minister who won a landslide election victory at the end of 2012, has based his budget policy on plans to rein in China's patrol of the waters off the Diaoyu Islands, which have belonged to China for centuries. Wang Ping, a researcher in Japanese studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said removing obstacles that confine Japan's military expansion is a key ambition of the Tokyo government, which is heading toward its goal ‘step by step’.”

China: Improving External Military Propaganda

17 February 2013



“We can employ a ‘soft communication’ approach, highlighting the narrative appeal and employing narrative methods in a rational manner, putting an interpretation that is rich in human kindness on military behavior and getting image information to slip lightly and softly into the minds of the audience. With regard to Western audiences, we need to conscientiously filter the content of communication, finding more points of resonance and common ground.”

OE Watch Commentary: *There have been many reports touting China’s interest in becoming better at using “soft power.” For example, China has acquired the American Multi-Cinema (AMC) chain, taken out center page ads in the Wall Street Journal and New York Times, introduced numerous Confucius Institutes across the US, and opened a new CCTV broadcasting studio in Washington, DC.*

Over the past five or so years, there has been a growing interest in spreading military diplomatic activities as well. The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is involved in putting together a diplomatic offensive to increase its soft power potential in what it terms the omnipresent network age. One officer has stated that the goal of this offensive is to “take over the international culture market.”

PLA analysts are studying topics such as the similarities and differences in public opinion (media) warfare and psychological warfare in order to uncover challenges to military propaganda and military soft power. But the West should not be overly optimistic about the degree of transparency in the release of military information. Some officers assert that the PLA must insist

Source: Xu Sen, Deputy Chief of the Propaganda Department of the Political Department of China’s National Defense University, “Communicating Our Military’s Advanced Military Culture to the World,” in *Junshi Jizhe*, 17 February 2012, pp. 4-6.

Communicating Our Military’s Advanced Military Culture to the World (excerpt only)

We Must Attach Importance to Content and Means

Along with the unprecedented expansion of the role of China’s military on the world stage, it is subject to an ever-higher degree of scrutiny in the area of international public opinion, so we should learn how to strengthen the ability to express ourselves on that stage, communicating China’s advanced military culture to the world and employing diverse means to improve the international image of our military.

First, do a good job of integrating the mass culture and traditional culture with high-end values and the cultural essence.

There are various and sundry methods for the external communication of China’s culture and the platforms for external propaganda by our military are becoming more and more extensive. For example, by actively participating in major international cultural and sports activities, and major commemorative celebrations, and holding photo exhibitions and showing documentaries, etc., we can show the fascination of China’s military culture. By using opportunities such as participation by our military in joint exercises and joint training overseas, in international relief, peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, and stability-maintenance [efforts], etc., and by organizing get-togethers, cultural and sports activities, and interactive performances by Chinese and foreign officers and men, we can communicate our military’s advanced culture and moral customs and expand the awareness and influence of foreign military services and the public toward our military.

Second, do a good job of integrating new media communications with the traditional media and traditional communication methods.

With the emergence of the new media, as represented by the Internet, there have been profound changes in communication vehicles. The open and interactive nature of the

Continued: China: Improving External Military Propaganda

on following the principle of “letting no one know” and adding stricter controls. The rationale for this is that each geopolitical move has advantages and disadvantages. Advantages in releasing information include advantages in producing important images, advantages in producing an important psychological effect, advantages in producing important military advantages, and advantages in producing political advantages. The disadvantages of stricter control, of course, include losing the momentum in achieving a psychological advantage over an opponent in geopolitical affairs; fostering an attitude of mistrust in opponents; and causing opponents to unite against a specified lack of transparency and become united in their suspicion of intent.

*Some officers note that disseminating important military information in time of peace is ultimately for the goal of influencing all relevant governments, military forces, and popular psychology to serve the needs of the nation’s political benefit. An ability to infiltrate during times of peace helps carry out psychological attacks and the attainment of geopolitical superiority. This means that China must possess the ability to control the effects of military diplomacy, which includes the methodology and sequencing of the appearance of information. **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)***

Internet makes it possible for everyone to take part, post follow-up notes, and express their views, and the new media has become an important channel for the officers and men to come in contact with external information. The introduction to the course on “The Military and the Media” set up by the National Defense University in the United States says that “Whether or not you like the media, you will all have to learn how to use it...” Under the new situation, external propaganda concerning military affairs must adapt to the background of the times, in which information technology is highly developed, and to the reality in which the world’s demand for news about China’s military is growing every day.

We Must Not Only Attach Importance to Planning and Communication at the National Level With Regard to the Right to be Heard, We Must Also Attach Importance to the Active Participation of Non-Governmental Organizations, Think Tanks, and Even Public Individuals

Elevating the military’s right to be heard and even the “soft power” of the state is a systems engineering project. It is top-level design and an integral part of the state’s planning at the strategic level, and it should be incorporated into the overall strategic planning of the state, establishing from a national strategic perspective a strategy for China’s right to be heard and a strategy for the military’s right to be heard. This is also to say that it requires top-level design at the national level, and it also requires the active participation of think tanks, non-governmental organizations (including groups and enterprises, etc.) and public individuals, bringing their respective strengths to bear, occupying different channels and “positions,” and initiating the establishment of a “three-in-one” multi-level, three-dimensional communication structure involving the state, think tanks (non-governmental organizations), and the people. For many years most of China’s communication has involved further explanations and propagandizing on our part after others have come around to find fault with China, and the Chinese people are entirely capable of taking the initiative to become the topic setters, public-opinion leaders, and critics.

We Should Attach Importance To Studying Popular Cultural Concepts and Language Habits in Other Countries, Communicating By Using Methods That Are Easily Accepted by the Other Side

The “five innovations” stressed by President Hu Jintao at the World Media Summit, namely, innovative concepts, innovative content, innovative forms, innovative methods, and innovative means, pointed out the direction for China’s right to be heard in military affairs in the full-media age.

First, external military propaganda must communicate using methods that are readily accepted by the customs of those receiving it, limiting the use of “officialese” and “idiomatic expressions.”

To communicate a favorable international image for our military, we must insist on focusing on the audience, paying attention to overcoming a “stereotyped tone” or “propaganda pitch,” changing the attitude of an aloof propagandist and acting as a news provider and someone engaged in equal exchanges, closing the psychological gap with the object of the propaganda. Only by targeting the psychological situation of those the communication is aimed at, their doubts, emotional needs, interest demands, and things

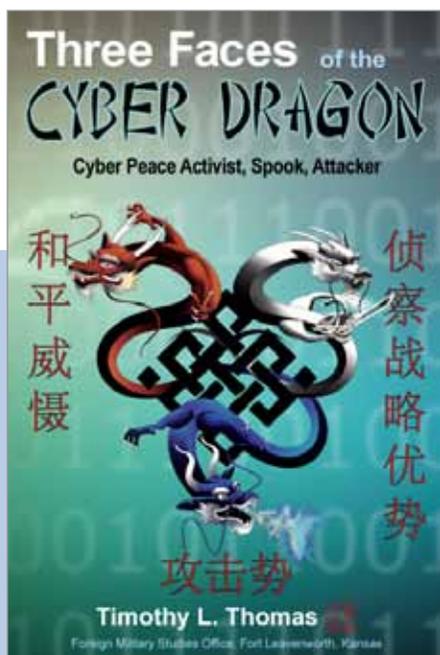
Continued: China: Improving External Military Propaganda

that concern and excite them, will our words be able to touch their hearts, win their approval, resonate with them, and reap the maximum results.

Second, we need to screen the content of communication conscientiously, getting the overseas audience to accept our viewpoints subconsciously.

We can employ a “soft communication” approach, highlighting the narrative appeal and employing narrative methods in a rational manner, putting an interpretation that is rich in human kindness on military behavior and getting image information to slip lightly and softly into the minds of the audience. With regard to Western audiences, we need to conscientiously filter the content of communication, finding more points of resonance and common ground. Not only must we not try to deal with large and small matters all at once, we must also avoid monotonous content and a single channel, and we need to employ more vivid and image-related approaches.

Third, external propaganda concerning military affairs must employ news, the arts, and other such diverse cultural forms to meet the requirements of the public at different cultural levels.



China’s cyber policy has become partly visible to foreign nations through observation, tracking, and interference. The policy appears to have three vectors. *Three Faces of the Cyber Dragon* is divided into sections that coincide with these vectors. It attempts to provide context to the unfolding nature of China’s cyber policy, and gives the analyst a more penetrating look into unconsidered, under “advertised” aspects of Chinese security thinking.

Burma: Asia's Next Strategic Pivot?

14 January 2013

“Burma, because of its geographic location and corresponding national interests, is gradually becoming an important new arena of the great powers game.”

OE Watch Commentary: This report on the website of the Global Times, a nationalist paper with ties to the Party-mouthpiece People's Daily, cites a Hong Kong editorial which proclaims Burma (Myanmar) as an “important new arena of the great powers game.” The article begins with brief mention of the violent conflict with Kachin rebels, which is creating instability on China's borders and testing China's long-standing policy of nonintervention. The focus of the article, however, is a recent shift in US relations with Burma from diplomatic isolation to increasing engagement, as well as increased diplomatic focus from Asia's other major powers, US allies India and Japan.

While the US claims this shift is a natural response to democratic reforms in the nation, China views diplomatic engagement as part of the “strategic framework” of the US pivot towards Asia. An isolated Burma was heavily reliant on China, and this gave China significant diplomatic leverage in South East Asia. A broadly engaged Burma could be strategically problematic for China's interests in the region, and the article asserts that increased US engagement is part of a broader attempt to isolate China.

The article notes that seeking balance among great powers with interests in the region, is an important long-term strategy for South East Asian nations. As China asserts that mode of government should have no bearing on economic or diplomatic engagement, increased US engagement with Burma is acceptable,



PLA troops stationed along the Chinese border with Myanmar in Yunnan, in response to recent conflict between Kachin Rebels and the Burmese Military., via <https://mil.cnr.cn>

Source: “Gangmei: Miandian yijing chengwei daguo boyide xin wutai” (Hong Kong media: Myanmar already becoming the next arena for the great powers game) Huangqiawang Baodao (Global Times Web Reports – China) 15 January 2013 <http://world.huanqiu.com/exclusive/2013-01/3494922.html>

According to a 15 January editorial by Hong Kong's Zhong Ping She, Myanmar, because of its geographic location and corresponding national interests, is gradually becoming an important new arena of the great powers game.

...Myanmar has once again become the focus of international attention. Fighting has intensified between government troops and the Kachin Independence Army, and even China has been dragged into the conflict. Japan has strengthened its strategic interests with a great increase in aid, as well as the removal of debts. At the same time, Indian Defense Minister A.K. Antony has said he hopes to counter China's deep strategic influence over Myanmar on his upcoming visit. Set against President Obama's groundbreaking visit [last year], it is clear that Myanmar has become a new arena for the great power game.

...Geographically, Myanmar has an extremely significant strategic location, bordering China, India and Bangladesh in the north, and Thailand and Laos in the south, as well

Continued: Burma: Asia's Next Strategic Pivot?

*so long as it “does not harm China’s interests.” This final statement about the primacy of Chinese interests implies that China sees South East Asia as its own diplomatic backyard, and views Chinese dominance over the region as “natural.” The Chinese thus take exception towards US attempts at strategic rebalancing through increased engagement, which they view as part of a broader attempt to isolate China and undercut the region’s ‘natural’ geopolitical order. **End OE Watch Commentary (Moskowitz)***

as the vital maritime transport channels of the southern Indian Ocean. For China, Burma is an important strategic pivot, a land region over which China can gain direct access to the Indian Ocean through its Southwestern hinterland, so as to avoid the South China Sea and the Straits of Malacca. Myanmar’s security and stability is thus directly related to China’s own domestic security, as well as the security of its energy supply channels.

The US already has strategic political, economic and security partnerships with South East Asian nations including Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines and Singapore. With its goal of controlling political influence and leadership in the Asia-Pacific region, the US will naturally not just ‘abandon’ an important strategic asset in Myanmar.

Despite a policy of diplomatic isolation and sanctions in place since the 1988 Burmese military junta, with the US ‘turn towards Asia’ strategy, Obama suddenly needed to discard this high-handed policy approach for one of engagement.

...Increased US attention on Myanmar is mostly due to this new Asia-focused strategy...In order to contain China and control the Asia-Pacific, the US needs to weaken the influence of China in the region [Southeast Asia] and drive a wedge between China and Myanmar.

...[As US allies] Japan and India’s attempts to strengthen relations with Burma are actually tied into this US strategic framework as part of a broader attempt at rebalancing in the region, though these countries have individual goals in Myanmar as well.

Seeking a balance between major powers is an important survival strategy for Southeast Asian nations including Myanmar. Increased contact between the US and Myanmar will further expand the international community, and we hope the US will consider lifting sanctions. At the same time, there is no denying Myanmar’s current dependence on China. China is Myanmar’s largest investor and second largest trading partner.

Confronted with US attempts to drive a wedge between neighbors and sow discord, China must exhibit strategic confidence and calm. The peaceful influence of China’s development will not be lost or curbed by US attempts at containment. As a neighbor, Myanmar obviously has important strategic value for China, but China is by no means seeking to establish spheres of influence. China is happy to see the US improve its relations with Myanmar, so long as this does not harm China’s interests. Ultimately, China must enhance public diplomacy in South East Asian countries, including Myanmar, so as to advance its soft power in the region, and strengthen mutual relationships.

Contested Camouflage in Kashmir: Secret Troops or False Alarm?

16 January 2013

“This is simply a case of India...misinterpreting evidence because of an extremely suspicious mindset. Misguided fears of Chinese troops stationed in Pakistan have been one of the driving forces behind the modernization of India’s defense program.”

OE Watch Commentary: This article comes as a response to a recent article in the Indian press that raised concerns about Chinese military aid to Pakistan, and especially about claims that 11,000 regular troops from the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) are secretly stationed in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. This rebuttal claims that Chinese aid to Pakistan is justified, especially in helping the Pakistani army to combat terrorism, and no more of a cause for concern than US aid to Pakistan.

The article specifically rebuts claims that 11,000 Chinese regular troops are secretly stationed in Kashmir. While Indian analysts claim to have photographs of the troops in question wearing distinctive PLA training camouflage, the article dismisses this as a case of mistaken identity. The anonymous author argues that these photographs actually show Chinese construction crews wearing imitation army uniforms. If there were really 11,000 troops stationed in Pakistan, there should be significant infrastructure, including barracks and heavy weaponry, of which the Indians have no evidence. (Though unmentioned here, India has recently accused China of storing military equipment in a series of mysterious tunnels.)

The article notes that fears over Chinese troops supposedly stationed in Kashmir have been frequently leveled over the years and have served



An image of supposed PLA-built tunnels near the Chinese border in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. Source: Sina Military Forum.

Source: “Yindu zhengjing wanming jiefangjun mimi jinzhu Bajisitan” (India outraged over 10,000-plus troops secretly stationed in Pakistan) Zhanlüe Wang (Strategy Net – China) 16 January 2013, <http://finance.stockstar.com/FB2013011600004455.shtml>

According to the website of India’s Daily News and Analysis, Indian military intelligence has identified significant logistical and technical support given by Chinese soldiers and military engineers to the Pakistani Army in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. During the past few years China has contributed weapons, infrastructure and financial aid to the Pakistani Army. Since a major landslide in 2010, there have also supposedly been about 11,000 regular PLA troops stationed within this region of Pakistan.

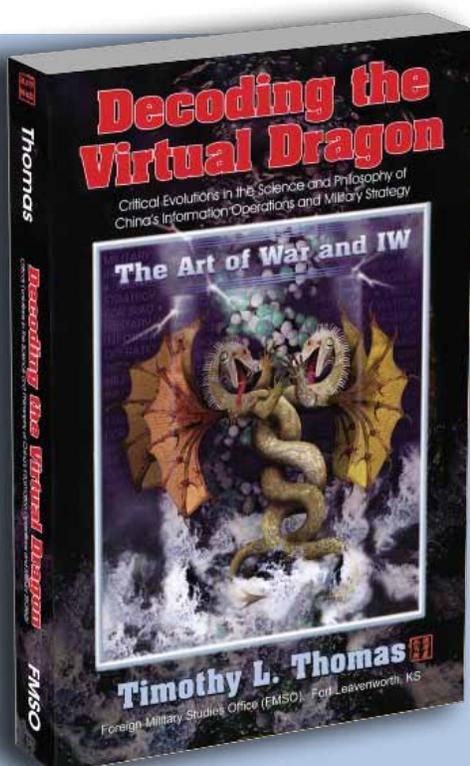
High-level military observers have identified claims about weapons, infrastructure and financial aid [but not troops] to be accurate, but this aid is no different than the aid that the US regularly gives Pakistan. As this is a matter between Pakistan and China, even though India may feel uneasy, they have no right to criticize. This [aid] is a key part of China’s Western strategy, and especially part of China’s efforts to combat terrorism.

Continued: Contested Camouflage in Kashmir: Secret Troops or False Alarm?

as one of the driving forces behind the modernization of India's defense program. The article chalks current claims up to a "suspicious mindset" and need to justify such growth. **End OE Watch Commentary (Moskowitz)**

...Kashmir was the main battlefield in the conflict between India and Pakistan and is still at the center of their dispute. Unsurprisingly, India is highly sensitive to the possibility of Chinese military action in this area. India has frequently accused China of stationing troops within Pakistan but these accusations have no substance or supporting evidence. India supposedly has photographic evidence of 11,000 troops in PLA training uniforms featuring distinctive camouflage... But if these pictures are accurate and China really had 11,000 troops stationed in Kashmir, there would be significant evidence of support infrastructure including barracks and heavy weaponry, all of which are difficult to hide.

As China has explained, these photographs do not show PLA soldiers, but merely engineers and workers wearing imitation soldiers' uniforms... Recent investigations have unveiled large-scale commercial operations in China selling fake military uniforms. Surplus and imitation military uniforms are extremely popular with building and road construction crews. They are durable and very easy for companies to buy in bulk. This is simply a case of India not understanding a situation and misinterpreting evidence because of an extremely suspicious mindset. Misguided fear of Chinese troops stationed in Pakistan have been one of the driving forces behind the modernization of India's defense program... India's attempts to explain the lack of barracks, however, are nonsense.



Tim Thomas's *Decoding the Virtual Dragon* explains how Chinese information warfare (IW) concepts since 2003 fit into the strategic outlook, practices, and activities of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The book offers IW explanations directly from the pens of Chinese experts. The Chinese authors discuss the application or relation of IW to strategic thought, the transformation plans of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the revolution in military affairs (RMA), and the revolution in knowledge warfare and cognition.

Tim Thomas provides an indispensable source for understanding the fundamentals of Chinese military thought and demonstrating how IW/IO has been integrated into the art of war and strategy.

North Korean Space Race

29 December 2012

OE Watch Commentary: *As the excerpt from the article illustrates, North Korea argues that it has a sovereign right to peaceful space development. While the North Korean leadership understands that its missile program may jeopardize assistance from the US and the South Korea, it also believes that national security must take precedence over economic reform.*

From the North Korean perspective, successful nuclear and long-range missile programs are not only useful negotiation tools against the US, Japanese, and South Korean governments, but also a fundamental principle for regime survival.

*Having been indoctrinated for the past sixty years on the aggressive plans of Washington and Seoul (and the previous perfidy of the Japanese), most North Koreans truly believe that robust defense forces, to include long-range missiles, are absolutely essential for the country's defense. Their arguments are strengthened when they can find willing clients (e.g., Nigeria and Indonesia) to support their claims of "peaceful" missile development. Regardless of international pressure, the North Korean leadership will not stop its nuclear and space development because these two programs have been keystones of national defense and self-reliance (Juche). **End OEW Watch Commentary (Kim)***



Source: Kim Chong-son, "Peaceful Space Development Is an Exercise of Dignified Sovereign Right"; Rodong Sinmun, 29 December 2012.

North Korea's Right to Peaceful Space Development

As is already reported, the successful satellite launch that our Republic carried out this time is a peaceful work based on a science and technology development plan for economic construction and the improvement of people's living standards.

The United States and its follower forces, however, try to unjustly take issue with our satellite launch which is for peaceful purposes.

Our satellite launch is something that is legitimate and not disputable by any means in any case.

That is just because our satellite launch is an exercise of a sovereign right fully conforming with the Space Treaty stipulating the use of outer space for peaceful purposes as a right of all countries....

In order to promote international trust and strengthen cooperation in the fields of space science researches for peaceful purposes and satellite launch, our republic acceded to international space treaties including the Space Treaty in March 2009, and since then has strictly observed the rights and duties of the treaties.

Our republic notified international organizations of the satellite launch carried out in April this year and invited competent experts in space science and technology sector and reporters of different countries to the General Satellite Control and Command Center as an exception....

Syafril Arsyad, the chairman of the Indonesian Transportation Trade Union, said, "We recognize that the successful satellite launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea [DPRK] is an important contribution to the country's economic, scientific and technological development and world peace and stability, totally supporting the satellite launch this time."

Dr. Aba Sadik Abubakr, who is a professor at the University of Abuja, Nigeria,

Continued: North Korean Space Race

emphasized, “[The fact] that the DPRK launched a satellite on a means of carriage built with 100 percent indigenous strength and technology is an epoch-making event that gives confidence and courage to all countries of the world intent on utilizing space for common civilization and development.”

If our launch of a satellite for peaceful purposes were illegal, all international space treaties would be wrong and all satellite launches carried out by the treaty member countries after their accession to space treaties should be denounced as illegal acts.

Our satellite launch is legitimate also because it is a legitimate exercise of dignified sovereign right.

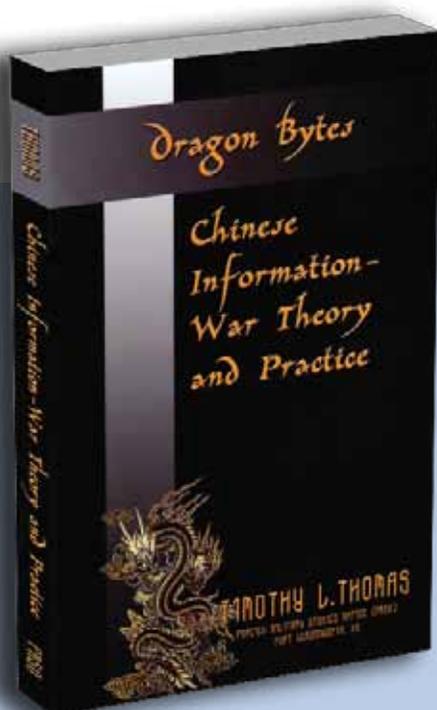
Sovereignty is a sacred right of all countries and nations aspiring to independently live and develop. It is, in its intrinsic content, a right to establish lines and policies in line with the interest of their people and the circumstances of their own, and a right to resolve all problems in accordance with the demands and reality of their people....

Our satellite launch followed the principle of independence in every respect.

Sovereignty is the life of a country and a nation. Countries and nations that have lost sovereignty are no different from dead men. This is why our Republic struggles now as before with indomitable faith and will that one cannot abandon the sovereignty of the country and nation though one may give up one’s life, and [we] launched a satellite for the second time after April this year....

In one word, our Republic’s satellite launch is a legitimate exercise of a sovereign right which conforms with international law....

Our Republic will continue exercising the independent right to launch satellites which conforms with international law and the global trend no matter what others may say.



***Dragon Bytes* by Tim Thomas examines China’s information-war (IW) theory and practice from 1995-2003. Some specialists may be surprised that the Chinese openly discuss not only computer network attacks and electronic preemption but also the development of IW units and an “integrated network-electronic warfare” theory (which closely approximates the US theory of “network-centric warfare”). The Chinese development of an IW theory is representative of their country’s philosophy and culture. By creating an “IW theory with Chinese characteristics” the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has offered an alternate way of viewing the application of IW than in the West.**

Improved Serbian-Russian Relations

5 October 2012

OE Watch Commentary: *Sharing a similar orthodox faith, Russia and Serbia have enjoyed a long history of good relations, and today they are embarking on increased trade and defense cooperation. Warmer relations with Moscow should come as no surprise, as they were a key part of Serbian President Tomislav Nikolić's campaign platform. Indeed, in May 2012 Nikolić's first visit abroad was to meet colleagues in Moscow, where they discussed greater economic and military cooperation.*

Nikolić was able to tap into the growing disenchantment among many Serbs toward possible EU membership, who instead see greater trade and partnership with Russia as an answer to their economic doldrums. Better relations with Russia will allow Serbia access to Russia's expanding market, particularly within the fields of energy, agriculture and defense.

Kremlin leaders have their own calculus in expanding ties with Serbia. Besides the domestic PR gleaned from helping its Orthodox Serbian brothers, Moscow is hoping to improve its economic and military prowess in the Balkans. Serbia figures prominently in the proposed Southstream gas pipeline, which will bring Russian gas into Europe. As the excerpt from the article points out, the Russian leadership plans to offer Belgrade significant assistance in selling them modern military aircraft and air defense systems. After the trauma of NATO bombing in 1999, obtaining advanced air defense systems and fighters continues to touch a sensitive Serbian nerve. By providing these sophisticated weapons to its brothers in Belgrade, Moscow could halt Serbia's turn toward greater EU integration and also complicate US plans to field a ballistic missile defense system in Europe.
End OE Watch Commentary (King-Savic)

Source: R. Kantar, "Rusija naoružava Srbiju?" [Is Russia Arming Serbia?], Alo!, 23 December 2012.

Serbian Analysts Believe Arms Deal With Russia to Harm Relations with EU, NATO

If reports are true that an agreement with Russia on new aircraft included a strategic air defense system with modern missiles (with very favorable Russian loans), Serbia will enter into an open conflict with the EU and NATO who will see Serbia as arming the country seriously and deliberately, military experts cautioned.

Military analyst Miroslav Lazanski recently disclosed that Serbia had ordered from Russia 12 MiG-29M2 aircraft and with the package Serbia would be getting the Pantsir and Buk modern missile systems, as well as the S-300 strategic air defense system with missiles of the S-400 system.

"That will significantly boost air defense troops and defense of parts of our territory, definitely," said Lazanski.

A source of Alo! from the general staff agreed that Serbia needed to buy military aircraft urgently as most of the aircraft it had would be of little use next year.

"Serbia has the shortest air corridor connecting east and west, therefore many aircraft fly over our country every year and a lot of money is made from it. However, we have to honor an international obligation to own a number of aircraft to protect our own airspace. If a country has no aircraft of its own, it has to pay for aircraft that belongs to others," explained the source and confirmed that serious negotiations with Russians were in progress on the matter.

Air force journalist and analyst Petar Vojinovic warned that the West would not look on benevolently if Serbia and Russia made a deal that included missiles and an air defense system.

"Serbia does not have the cash to buy state-of-the-art military aircraft. Since we have nothing to offer in particular, it is unlikely that we will pay Russia in kind. Therefore the only option is to get a loan from Russians, which the West will view as a political decision in the context of arming Serbia. Purchase of aircraft and a modern air defense system would put out of balance forces in the region, and the EU and NATO will not just stand by and watch," believes Vojinovic.

Military analyst Bosko Jaksic agreed and said that Serbia could not afford aircraft nor weapons, and had no need for them in the present geopolitical circumstances.

We received no official reply from the Defense Ministry as to whether such a deal had been made with Russians, how many aircraft and other weapons had been ordered, at what price and terms of payment. The Serbian Army has four MiG-29 aircraft of the first generation and 28 MiG-21 aircraft...

The Killing of an Interior Ministry Officer in Kyrgyzstan

12 January 2013

“However, in the wake of the murder, the issue of weapons taken from military, security service, and police facilities during the June 2010 violence in the southern part of the country has resurfaced...”

OE Watch Commentary: *The killing of an officer in the Department of Combating Organized Crime and Corruption (within the Interior Ministry) is certainly brazen, particularly the circumstances of the murder as the following article mentions. The article includes a quote from a political scientist in Kyrgyzstan who believes that the officer, Shonoev, was killed by people involved in organized crime. While it appears for now to be the most likely reason for the murder, there is one additional consideration.*

The weapon allegedly used in the murder of Shonoev, a Makarov pistol (or some variant of it), is a common weapon across the former Soviet Union; it would not be difficult for anyone involved in criminal activity to obtain one. However, in the wake of the murder, the issue of weapons taken from military, security service, and police facilities during the June 2010 violence in the southern part of the country has resurfaced (for more on this see the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission report, <http://reliefweb.int/report/kyrgyzstan/report-independent-international-commission-inquiry-events-southern-kyrgyzstan>).

*The government is continuing with its investigation of those behind the killing, (for more on the ongoing investigation, see: <http://fergana.akipress.org/news:206632/>), and has offered a reward of one million Som (around \$21,000) for information about the killers (see: <http://www.knews.kg/ru/action/26491/>). Since the June 2010 incident the government has offered amnesty to those who turned in weapons voluntarily, but the program achieved only limited success. Many of the stolen weapons were not recovered, and as the government moves forward to combat organized crime, it will likely have to revisit the number of small arms available in the country. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)***



The head of the southern department for fighting organized crime and corruption in the Interior Ministry, Tolkunbek Shonoev, via <http://www.rferl.org>

Source: Grebneva, Mariya. “Ош: Составлены фотороботы убийц высокопоставленного чиновника милиции (Osh: Sketches of the killers of the senior officer),” Kloop, 12 January 2013., <http://kloop.kg/blog/2013/01/12/osh-sostavleny-fotoroboty-ubijts-vy-sokopostavlennogo-chinovnika-militsii/>

Osh: Sketches of the killers of the senior officer

The head of the southern department for fighting organized crime and corruption in the Interior Ministry, Tolkunbek Shonoev, was shot in the evening on January 11 as a result of an armed attack... a criminal case has been opened on the charges of “murder” and “killing a member of the military and security services,” this was reported by the head of the Interior Ministry Press Service, Ernis Osmonbaev...

...He said that five cartridges found at the scene, allegedly from a Makarov pistol, are in evidence. Shonoev received five bullet wounds, four in the chest and one in the neck... Osmonbaev added that sketches were drawn up and they were questioning witnesses...

«The victim of organized crime»

Political scientist Toktogul Kakchekeev believes Shonoev is a victim of organized crime. “It was a targeted killing,” he said in an interview. Kakchekeev suggests that the perpetrators could be involved in drug trafficking... According to the Ministry, Tolkunbek Shonoev was killed at 19:30 on January 11 in his car...

Incident in Uzbekistan's Sokh Exclave

8 January 2013

“The lack of clear borders (including the borders of the enclaves and at a number of other areas) is already well known in the region, but the fact remains that border disputes remain unresolved.”

OE Watch Commentary: In early January an incident, similar to what took place on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border in July 2012 (see: August 2012 OE Watch, “Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan border shooting”), took place over the course of a few days in Uzbekistan's Sokh exclave. In both instances, construction work on the “wrong” side of the border led to arguments which escalated into a violent situation. The latest incident appears to have started because of a disagreement over the placement of concrete poles that were erected for power lines running to a Kyrgyz border post (Charbak). Citizens of Sokh believed that the poles were erected on the Sokh (Uzbekistan's) side of the border. The following article tries to recount what took place using sources from both sides of the incident and eyewitness reports. As of 14 January the border remains closed (see: <http://www.knews.kg/ru/action/26425/>), which means that part of the Batken Province (essentially anything west of Sokh) remains cut off from the rest of Kyrgyzstan. The main road from Osh to the city of Batken runs through Sokh; other roads are available to drive around Sokh, but are not good quality and require considerably more time to circumnavigate.

Perhaps the most notable quote from the article is how close, six meters (just under 20 feet), the concrete poles were to being placed on the “right” side of the border. If the last quote is true, the entire incident could have started because of a mistake by construction workers. This also brings up an important issue of borders in Central Asia.

It is certainly possible that the construction workers did not know where the border is demarcated. There is no mention of a foreman or government official on site who should have known. Regardless, this incident is a reminder of the border demarcation disputes that remain among Central Asian governments. The lack of clear borders (including the borders of the enclaves and at a number of other areas) is already well known in the region, but the fact remains that border disputes remain unresolved. There are several organizations that work to improve border security in Central Asia (the Border Management Program in Central Asia, <http://www.bmpan.org/>)



Source: Kislov, Danil. “Кыргызстан-Узбекистан: Десять столбов и шесть метров от границы (Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan: Ten poles and six meters from the border),” Fergana, 8 January 2013., <http://www.fergananews.com/articles/7591>

Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan: Ten poles and six meters from the border

...“At 18:00 on the 5th, 50 men (citizens of Uzbekistan) came up to the Charbak border post (Kyrgyzstan),” recounted a resident of the Batken Province (Kyrgyzstan). He noted that the group acted under an informal leader. A road runs along the border and is open to public use. Several concrete poles were erected on the Uzbek side (where the border is marked). People came up and said that the poles are not in (correct) marked place...When the poles were installed, that support the power line, has not been reported.

“On the morning of January 6 about a thousand people came,” the resident continued, “They were aggressive and started to break the poles. They did not react to warning shots of the Kyrgyz border guards.”... However, the crowd did not stop at the destruction of the poles. The source continued, “Then, it is not clear why, the crowd began to break into houses and take hostages.”...According to various sources, around 30-40 hostages were taken. Sixteen women and children were released on the night of January 6-7 and on the evening of the 7th, the rest were released...

As it turns out, citizens of Kyrgyzstan, angry with the actions of their

Continued: Incident in Uzbekistan's Sokh Exclave

*www.bomca.eu/; the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre, <http://www.caricc.org/index.php/en/>; the Council of Commanders of Border Troops, <http://www.skpw.ru/index.htm>. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe is also involved, <http://www.osce.org/tajikistan/bmsc>, but resolving any border demarcation issues must take place bilaterally with the two countries directly involved. This incident serves as a reminder that demarcation is just as important an issue in border security as protecting the border from drug trafficking, smuggling, and illegal immigration, and preventing the spread of violence from extremism or terrorism. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)***

neighbors, took similar measures and seized hostages from among Uzbeks... As reported by “Vecherniy Bishkek”, a wave of indignation at the actions of the Uzbek side reached Bishkek. On the afternoon of the 7th, dozens of people from Batken gathered near the parliament building. They urged authorities to take quick action to protect their fellow citizens... It should be noted that the authorities of Uzbekistan have only released one message (<http://www.12.uz/#ru/news/show/official/12730/>) from the State Border Protection Committee...

According to Topchubay Mavlonov, a UNDP expert working in southern Kyrgyzstan, “...About ten poles fell on an undocumented section of the border...as the construction workers were visitors, they did not know about it or realize that they had to move the poles six meters and they would have been on the Kyrgyz side.”

Fergana as FATA?

Central Asia after 2014 – Outcomes and Strategic Options

By Ted Donnelly

The analysis presented in this essay describes the most likely effects of the 2014 U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan on the Central Asian States, focusing on the Fergana Valley – the strategic center of gravity of the region.



Uzbekistan 'Officially' Leaves the CSTO

19 December 2012

“Some experts believe that Uzbekistan will continue to switch its allegiances and given its track record with membership in the CSTO, this is a possibility. However, there is more to this than Uzbekistan being aligned with or against the interests of Russia.”

OE Watch Commentary: Uzbekistan's request to suspend its membership in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was accepted at the organization's summit on 19 December in Moscow. The following articles offer some analysis, from a Russian and Tajik perspective, on what this means for the CSTO and Uzbekistan's relationships with Russia and the United States. The suspension does leave open the possibility that Uzbekistan could rejoin the organization in the future, although it is likely that the government would have to ratify CSTO agreements and become an active participant to the organization. Both articles mention how Uzbekistan quit the organization in 1999 and rejoined in 2006, but never fully participated in the CSTO's activities.

Some experts believe that Uzbekistan will continue to switch its allegiances, and, given its track record with membership in the CSTO, this is a possibility. However, there is more to this than Uzbekistan being aligned with or against the interests of Russia. The first article mentions that relations between Uzbekistan and Russia are friendly despite the former's issues with the CSTO. The article might not be just a pro-Russian viewpoint: despite suspending its CSTO membership, Uzbekistan has maintained membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Both organizations include Russia as a member and, essentially, a leader.



Source: Dubnov, Arkadiy. “К чему приведет уход Узбекистана из ОДКБ (What the departure of Uzbekistan from the CSTO will lead to),” RIA Novosti, 19 December 2012. <http://ria.ru/analytics/20121219/915462042.html>

What the departure of Uzbekistan from the CSTO will lead to

...Obviously, what happened on Wednesday in Moscow will bring relief to all partners consolidating around the Russian military-political structure. It eliminates the problems associated with the inability to reach a consensus within the ranks of the CSTO on various issues because of the special position of Uzbekistan... It is possible to understand the decision today in Moscow by the heads of member states of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to withdraw Uzbekistan from the organization.

...On Tuesday in the Uzbek capital, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met with his counterpart, Abdulaziz Kamilov, and stated that Putin's visit (to Tashkent) was one of his first overseas visits... It was important to both parties to emphasize that in spite of the second separation (the first happened in 1999) between Tashkent and the Moscow led collective security organization, the relationship between Russia and Uzbekistan is friendly.

Continued: Uzbekistan 'Officially' Leaves the CSTO

*Uzbekistan participates in several bodies within the CIS (a full list can be found here: <http://www.e-cis.info/page.php?id=2374>), including the CIS Antiterrorist Center (<http://www.cisatc.org/>) and the Council of Commanders of Border Troops (<http://www.skpw.ru/index.htm>). It is likely that because these organizations do not have the same function or participation demands as the CSTO, Uzbekistan continues to participate in them. The relationship between Uzbekistan and Russia may not be all or nothing. Ultimately, as the second article notes, Uzbekistan's problem with the CSTO was not necessarily because of Russia, but because of the terms that the organization mandated. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)***

...Six years ago in Sochi I observed how Islam Karimov announced the return of his country to the CSTO (the decision appeared to be a “thank you” to Moscow for its support of Uzbek leadership in Andijan), and stood next to a senior Russian official, who said quietly that Uzbekistan drags its problems into the organization. He was right.

Source: Shodiev, Khaydar. “Узбекистан отстранился от ОДКБ. С чего бы? (Uzbekistan withdrew from the CSTO. What for?),” Asia-Plus, 24 December 2012. <http://www.news.tj/ru/newspaper/article/uzbekistan-otstranilsya-ot-odkb-s-chego>

Uzbekistan withdrew from the CSTO. What for?

How to explain the official decision of Tashkent of withdrawal from the CSTO, considering Karimov's opinion of the possible difficulties in the region related to the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan? What are the possible consequences of this action for Uzbekistan, the region, the CSTO, and Tajikistan?

Bitter Pill for the Kremlin

On June 28 (2012) Tashkent sent a note to the CSTO Secretary regarding the suspension of its participation in the activities of this organization. Many experts attributed the decision to an interest of Uzbekistan to again allow an American base on its territory...Uzbek diplomats have stated that U.S. military facilities in Uzbekistan are rumors. What then, is the reason of this step by Uzbekistan?

“The fact is that in Central Asia there appears to be a government that talks to the Kremlin with a firm «no»” – according to the chairman of the Association of Political Scientists of Tajikistan Abdulgani Mamadazimov...“For Tajikistan it is necessary to remain faithful to the obligations of the CSTO, to maintain regular dialogue with the Kremlin on refurbishing its military and the removal of customs duties on oil products.”

A cat that walks alone

According to the head of the Russian Institute of Strategic Studies, Alexander Kononov, Uzbekistan for the CSTO was always a problem country. “Uzbekistan never agreed with evaluations from outside its borders which were made with regard to its internal policy, it did not want to conduct joint exercises or to delegate units to the joint forces of the CSTO. Uzbekistan has always been a cat that walks by itself,” said Kononov.

...According to analyst Rashid Gani Abdullah, the main reason Uzbekistan does not want to participate in the CSTO – the terms on which the organization operates, in particular those terms that Tashkent believed challenged the independence of the country...“On the issue of the possible opening of a U.S. military base in the country, the Senate in Uzbekistan voted that no foreign military bases can be located in the country.” – said R.G. Abdullo

Increased Russia-Iran Cooperation in Context of Syrian Conflict

4 January 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *With all eyes on Syria, mainstream media tend to overlook Russia's connection with Iran and this relationship's role in the Syrian conflict. The following excerpts from two articles by Russian Middle East experts explain the nature of the Russia-Iran alliance from a Russian and Iranian perspective and how this is reflected in context of the current situation in Syria.*

Nikolai Bobkin, chief editor of the magazine Delovoi Iran (Business Iran), who holds a Ph.D in military science, published an article on 4 January in Mir-politika.ru (World-politics), a scientific-political journal. Anton Evstratov, a historian and political scientist, whose interests include Iran's relations with countries of the former Soviet Union, wrote an article on 25 December 2012 in New-Asia.ru, a Central Asian information portal.

Both authors explain how close Iran and Russia have become since the Syrian conflict, which stems mainly from a desire to counterbalance the West in the region, and that Russia's and Iran's positions on the conflict are the same, i.e., in favor of an "internal" diplomatic solution without outside interference. Both authors explain that Russia-Iran cooperation extends beyond Syria to a wide range of issues, and Evstratov argues in particular that it is the Syrian conflict that brought Syria and Iran closer together; both authors note that Russia-Iran cooperation has been growing.

Bobkin and Evstratov feel that Russia and Iran together have been successful in creating a counterbalance in the Middle East against the West, whose role they present negatively. Bobkin argues that 95 percent of those fighting against Bashar al-Assad in Damascus are "foreign mercenaries," and Evstratov argues



Source: Nikolai Nikolayevich Bobkin, "Сирийский конфликт: Иран – союзник России (Syrian conflict: Iran—Russia's Ally)," Mir-politika.ru (World-politics), 4 January 2013. <http://mir-politika.ru/2971-siriiskiy-konflikt-iran-soyuznik-rossii.html>

Syrian conflict: Iran—Russia's Ally

... Moscow and Tehran believe that the [Syrian] crisis should be resolved internally, without foreign intervention, the presence of which is now beyond doubt. The failure of the U.S. and NATO efforts to present the conflict as a political struggle and not foreign invasion, which it is in reality, is becoming increasingly apparent... The New York Times directly names Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar as a major supplier of arms, but the CIA coordinates the logistics of the so-called Syrian rebels... In fact, 95 percent of the opposition are foreign mercenaries....

Russian Foreign Ministry does not rule out that if the government in Syria is removed, the next target of such an intervention by the U.S. and the West may be Iran. In Tehran, with unusual for official circles candor, Russia is called "the most important ally of the Syrian government" and Iran's reliable partner in the peaceful resolution of the crisis in Syria. Iranian sources stress the close political, economic and military relations between Moscow and Damascus, which have forced Russia, in their view, to exercise the right of veto in the UN Security Council, and thereby neutralize the international pressure on the Syrian government. Here they particularly stress the desire of the Russian Foreign Ministry to resolve the Syrian crisis through diplomacy... According to some well-known Iranian political analysts, Russia has returned to its national priorities, and took this step because of Putin's the return to the presidency.

Continued: Increased Russia-Iran Cooperation in Context of Syrian Conflict

the West and Syrian opposition have consistently rejected Russia's and Iran's "balanced" solutions to the conflict.

Bobkin explains the hope Tehran places in Russian President Vladimir Putin's return to the presidency; that Russia will, under Putin's leadership, "resist" the West and reject its "reset" policy with Russia. An editorial in Iranian newspaper Resalyat, according to Bobkin, concluded that the Obama administration has failed in its calculation that Russia has accepted Washington's position on Syria and will implement a course consistent with the U.S.

Iranian officials clearly like Putin's current "anti-American" stance, writes Bobkin. Although they still doubt that Russia will remain resolute on Syria, they say, "with unusual for official circles candor," that Russia is Iran's closest ally.

*Bobkin's and Evstratov's articles suggest that Russia will grow more aggressive and anti-Western in the coming years. The relationship between Russia and Iran that they describe adds to reasons why Putin is unlikely to back down on Assad. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***

Iran holds special hopes for a Russia led by Putin. Iran predicts that the Russian leader will reject the reset policy with the United States and will not allow a dismissive tone from Washington in a dialogue with Moscow, including on Syria. "Russia is likely to return to the hard line, and will not allow the West alone determine the fate of countries in the region," stated in an editorial in the newspaper Resalyat. It also concluded that the Obama administration's calculation that Russia has accepted Washington's position on Syria and implemented a course consistent with the U.S., has failed.

As a whole, the leadership of Iran, of course, right now would like to see a strong Russia, and one that is able to resist the United States, including with regard to the military... Iranian leadership clearly likes the anti-American tendencies in Russian diplomacy, and they allow it to hope for closer bilateral cooperation with Moscow on a number of other regional issues. In Tehran, the latest initiatives of the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation are not just listened to, they are heard, they responded to positively, they are reflected in the decisions of Iranian diplomats, who, however, still doubt the Kremlin's determination to defend its position on Syria and not deviate from the selected course. The development of the situation in Syria continues to cause grave concern to the Iranian leadership, which is willing to cooperate with Russia and hopes for the immutability of the Russian position.

Source: Anton Evstratov, "Сирия сплотила Россию и Иран (Syria United Russia and Iran)," News-Asia.ru, 25 December, 2012. <http://www.news-asia.ru/view/ru/topical/4059>

Syria United Russia and Iran

Confrontation between the regime of Bashar al-Assad and the opposition on Syria's territory, as well as the international pressure on this country, forced the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran to speak in Syria's defense with one voice.

For both states the Arab Republic became a "last bastion" of sorts. For Russia – of a direct military presence in the Middle East... For Iran - the only true ally in the Arab world... Both Russia and Iran are in favor of a peaceful resolution of the conflict and Syria, and in contrast to their Western "colleagues" have already prepared a range of balanced and comprehensive proposals for a peace settlement... Unfortunately, all Russian Federation's and Iran Islamic Republic's proposals have been consistently rejected both by the Syrian opposition, and their Western backers...

At the moment, Russia and Iran are once again raising their level of political, economic, and even cultural interaction, becoming a kind of a second "pole," opposing to the spread of U.S. and E.U. expansion in Syria. At the moment this opposition looks very effective- Syria continues to fight and even political pressure on Iran weakened somewhat.

At the same time, Syria is not the only arena where geopolitical interests of Russia and Iran are the same. According to the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Russian Federation, Mr. Mohammad Reza Sajjadi, "Today there is almost no other state like Russia, one which would have as many common interests and views with Iran."...

Moscow and Tehran...seriously improved their interaction precisely as a result of the "struggle for Syria." In the case of further improvements of relations between the two countries and bringing into the alliance of players such as China, Pakistan and some Central Asian states, this can create a new pole, capable if not to counterbalance the West's influence in the world, then to truly resist its expansion in a number of regions.

Year End Summary; Future Priorities for Russian Defense

24 December 2012

OE Watch Commentary: From a Kremlin perspective, 2012 was a challenging year for Russian foreign policy, especially in the realm of defense. In these excerpted remarks, Deputy Defense Minister Anatoliy Antonov spells out how the Kremlin looks at the international situation and what the country must do to strengthen its defense posture in the upcoming year.

As background, Antonov remarks that the global situation is becoming ever more unstable, and that, given this growing uncertainty (and the temptation among some to use unilateral force), Russia must redouble its efforts to strengthen its defense posture. Besides strengthening military cooperation with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the deputy defense minister lists developing strategic partnerships with China, India and other countries. Antonov makes special mention of growing military cooperation with China, stressing “the positive dynamics in bilateral cooperation.”

The Russian leadership has expressed considerable concern over the possibility of increased instability in Afghanistan as international/NATO forces begin to withdraw after 2014. As such, they are working to strengthen their military presence in both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

With regard to greater military cooperation with the West/NATO/US, Antonov points out that Cold War stereotypes continue to hinder progress. Chief among these obstacles is the continued insistence on the part of the US to field a European-based ballistic missile defense (BMD) system. Antonov



The first Russian-Chinese “Morskoye Vzaimodeystviye” [Naval Cooperation] naval exercise that was held in the Yellow Sea in April 2012., via <http://russian.china.org.cn>

Source: “Заместитель Министра обороны Российской Федерации Анатолий Антонов рассказал об итогах работы военного ведомства в рамках международной деятельности в 2012 году и задачах на 2013 год.” [Russian Federation Deputy Defense Minister Anatoliy Antonov Outlines Results of Military Department’s Work Within Framework of International Activity in 2012, Tasks for 2013], Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, 24 December 2012

Russian Deputy Defense Minister Outlines 2012 International Activity, 2013 Plans

The Russian Ministry of Defense’s international activity is part of the overall constructive efforts to modernize the Armed Forces, to strengthen international stability, and hence to cement Russia’s national security.

As Russian President V.V. Putin noted in his Address to the Federal Assembly, in a 21st century world set against the backdrop of a new order of economic, civilizational, and military forces, Russia must be a sovereign and influential country. In this context, we see one of our main tasks as being to create Armed Forces which are capable of guaranteeing Russia’s sovereignty, partners’ respect, and lasting peace....

The past year [2012] was anything but simple for the Russian Armed Forces. Work was concentrated on completing specific tasks related to their modernization, to resolving social problems, and to equipping units and formations with modern weapons and military equipment.

As for the international backdrop against which the Russian Armed Forces have carried out their tasks, it is possible to characterize it in one word -- instability. We saw

Continued: Year End Summary; Future Priorities for Russian Defense

maintains that the Russian military leadership has clearly demonstrated how this system, once fully developed, has the potential to weaken their nuclear retaliatory capability. Finding a resolution to this issue will likely be a high priority for the Russian security establishment in 2013. End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

(For a brief synopsis of Russian concerns over the BMD system, see Antonov's interview to Vesti TV from May 2012, available at: <http://rutv.ru/brand/show/episode/128702>)

the development of the tendency toward the expanding role of force in the resolution of international problems. In this context, Russian President V.V. Putin's words about the importance of strengthening the country's Armed Forces become even more relevant.

What kind of priority tasks in international activity does the Russian military department have today?

First, to guarantee favorable foreign policy conditions for the continued modernization of the Armed Forces.

Second, to strengthen cooperation and interoperability between the Russian Armed Forces and the armed forces of our allies and partners in the CIS area, primarily within the CSTO [Collective Security Treaty Organization] format.

Third, to develop a pragmatic partnership and remove irritants in mutual relations with NATO countries.

Fourth, to develop a strategic partnership with China, India, the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, and Latin American and African states.

Fifth, to further national interests through military-technical cooperation and assistance on military organizational development.

Sixth, to search for appropriate responses to new challenges and threats and to increase the effectiveness of implementing disarmament, nonproliferation, and arms control treaties and agreements.

And, finally, to form a positive international image of the Russian Armed Forces...

...In 2012, agreements strengthening the legal status governing the presence of Russian military bases in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were signed. This is not simply international military cooperation. Our military facilities on the territories of these states are a part of the overall relationship between our states and are a guarantor of the national independence and sovereignty of these states. These agreements confirm the mutual

aspiration to develop long-term alliance relations.

In light of the impending withdrawal of international NATO forces from Afghanistan, these agreements have particular significance for us and the Central Asian countries. The possibility of a joint response to potential security threats in this region near the Russian borders could become extremely relevant....

...We attach particular importance to Russian-Chinese military and military-technical cooperation. Over the course of past contacts, our countries succeeded in consolidating the positive dynamics in bilateral cooperation.

Joint exercises (including those involving SCO [Shanghai Cooperation Organization] member-countries' military forces) are the most important aspect of military cooperation with China. In June 2012, the latest "Mirnaya Missiya" [Peace Mission] exercise was successfully conducted on Tajikistani territory.

It is necessary to note the first Russian-Chinese "Morskoye Vzaimodeystviye" [Naval Cooperation] naval exercise that was held in the Yellow Sea in April 2012. We intend to continue such exercises in the future....

...What is preventing more productive cooperation with European countries? Here, it is appropriate to single out three factors:

- mutual distrust from the Cold War era;
- supposed "Atlantic solidarity," which sometimes takes grotesque forms and leads to the abandonment of mutually beneficial bilateral projects;
- serious bureaucratic difficulties on the part of partners in implementing joint projects, especially in the sphere of military-technical cooperation. This creates the impression that Cold War era restrictions continue to exist.

...In many ways, the topic of missile defense determines the future of our relations with NATO and the United States.

In May 2012, the Russian Ministry of Defense held an international conference on missile defense. More than 200 representatives from the military departments of foreign states participated in it. The speeches of the chief of the Russian Armed Forces General Staff

Continued: Year End Summary; Future Priorities for Russian Defense

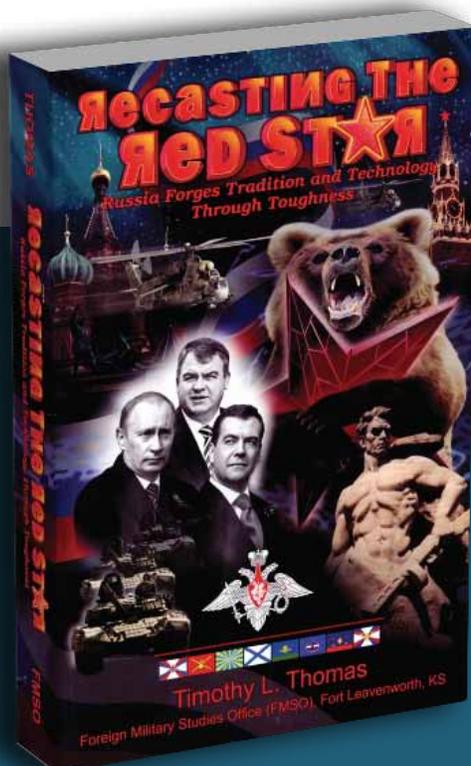
and of leading Russian Defense Ministry experts gave detailed appraisals of our view of the situation which is being brought about by the large-scale implementation of plans to create a missile defense system in Europe. In our opinion, this system has global coverage and threatens Russian deterrence forces, and we will be forced to develop countermeasures, some of which were set out in the Russian Federation president's speech on 23 November 2011.

It is extremely indicative that in the six months since the conference, we have not received a single offer from partners to discuss our arguments.

We intend to continue this work at the expert level, as envisaged in the statement of the Russian and US presidents following the meeting in Los Cabos. We will consistently explain what consequences could result from the implementation of the missile defense plans.

Work on missile defense within the framework of the Russia-NATO Council is not developing easily. In essence, it has not been possible to implement the instructions from the presidential-level Russia-NATO Council session that took place in Lisbon. With the exception of one element -- resumption of cooperation on a theater missile defense system -- there were no results in other areas....

We will continue to cooperate with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other departments to secure expert support in solving missile defense problems, to create a new mechanism for arms control in Europe, and to ensure security in the Asia-Pacific region. We will pay particular attention to problems of the Arctic and of security in the Near East.



Tim Thomas's *Recasting the Red Star* describes Russia's culture of military thought through its modernization effort. Adding to his robust library of work on the subject, Tim Thomas illuminates Russia's Defense Ministry reform efforts, the Russian national security strategy take on the operational environment, and a relevant review of the Russian military doctrine.

Return of Strategic Railroad Forces?

26 December 2012

“...the current condition of the military-political situation in the world is, to a large degree, characterized by uncertainty with a markedly negative tendency towards complications and the growth of tensions.”

OE Watch Commentary: In May 2012 the Russian Ministry of Defense hosted an international conference in Moscow dedicated to spelling out Russia's objections to US plans to construct a European-based ballistic missile defense (BMD) system. The conference was designed to influence NATO decision makers ahead of a NATO summit scheduled later that month. Despite assurances from the US that the system will not be directed against Russia, Russian political and military leaders maintain that the fully developed system has the potential to weaken their nuclear retaliatory capability. From the Kremlin's perspective, their concerns have been largely ignored by the US and, consequently, Russian military officials continue to announce their own reciprocal measures.

In the mid-1980s, during one of the frostier periods of the Cold War, the USSR fielded a rail-mobile ICBM missile system. Since fixed silos could be targeted, Soviet weapon designers created special trains armed with ICBMs which could be moved to avoid detection, ensuring a land-based retaliatory capability. The system was actually operational until 2005, when it was finally decommissioned. As the excerpt from the article points out, there are now plans to resurrect the system to counter the European-based BMD system.

There are likely a couple of other factors driving this train. Given the Kremlin's political rhetoric over Western plans to weaken their country, plans to modernize Russia's military play well with the electorate, particularly those



RT-23 ICBM railroad-based complex in Saint Petersburg railway museum, via <http://www.palba.cz>

Source: “Америке объявят рельсовую войну,” [Rail War Declared on America] Moskovskiy Komsomolets Online, 26 December 2012.

Leadership Said To Favor Revived Rail-Based ICBM in Response to US BMD

Because of the contentious “Anti-Magnitskiy Law” that became the central theme during Vladimir Putin's latest exchange with journalists, few people noticed how forcefully the president formulated his position with regard to the Americans' missile defense. Once again he stated that their missile defense “nullifies our nuclear missile potential,” and he actually declared that our response will be “the development of nuclear missile strike complexes.”

As of today it is known that Russia is creating two such types: one with a heavy liquid-fueled missile comparable to the legendary Satan missile, and one with a lighter solid-fuel missile, testing of which is already proceeding successfully. Moskovskiy Komsomolets has learned, however, that a political decision to create one further type of complex has recently been taken at the very highest level. Moskovskiy Komsomolets has endeavored

Continued: Return of Strategic Railroad Forces?

*working in defense enterprises. Russian defense officials like to quote Bismarck's aphorism that capability is more important than intention. They fear that the final phase of the BMD system could upset the nuclear balance of power. According to some Russian experts, this rail-based system caused great consternation in the West when it was initially fielded, and there may be hopes that reintroducing this system will force the US to reconsider its BMD plans. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)***

to ascertain just what sort of complex this is....

According to a Moskovskiy Komsomolets source in the missile sector, the complex in question is a BZhRK [Military Railroad Rocket forces], a rail-mobile missile complex. And the scientific research into its creation is already under way.

Up until 2005, the BZhRK was already a part of the RVSN [Strategic Missile Troops] inventory. The lead developer in the USSR was the KB [Design Bureau] Yuzhnoye (Ukraine). Pavlogradskiy Mekhanicheskiy Zavod [Pavlograd Mechanical Plant] was the sole manufacturer of the missiles.

Tests of a rail-based modification of a BZhRK armed with an RT-23UTTKh Molodets missile (NATO classification -- SS-24 Scalpel) began in February 1985 and were concluded by 1987, when the first BZhRK was placed in alert status in Kostroma. In 1988, five regiments (totaling 15 launchers) had already been deployed, and by 1991 -- three missile divisions: at Kostroma, Perm, and Krasnoyarsk, each comprising four missile regiments (12 BZhRK trains in all).

The BZhRK complexes looked like standard railroad trains made up of refrigerator, mail and baggage, and passenger cars. Each train contained three launchers armed with Molodets solid-fuel missiles, along with an entire support system for them incorporating command post and combat crews.

The missiles could be launched from any point along the route. For this purpose, the train would be halted, the power lines of the overhead catenary moved aside by a special device, the launch container placed in a vertical position, and the missile launched.

...And now, it appears, the States may again be getting a headache -- but this time in the shape of new rail-based missile complexes.

...According to the Moskovskiy Komsomolets source, however, the problem in question is now irrelevant. The fact is that the new BZhRK will not incorporate heavy missiles. It is proposed arming them with something lighter that will fit into a single car, like the Bulava, the Topol-M, and, best of all, the Yars, which carries several warheads (this feasibility has already been corroborated by design work conducted by the Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology).

There is no doubting the fact that a new BZhRK grouping can be a far more effective response to the US missile defense than the previously promised deployment of our Iskander operational-tactical missiles at Europe's borders.

Nor is there any doubt that the Americans will definitely not be happy about the BZhRK idea (although theoretically speaking, their creation will not breach the latest Russian-American accords). In their time the BZhRK formed the basis of a retaliatory strike grouping within the RVSN inasmuch as they possessed increased survivability and could with a large degree of probability remain intact following an adversary's delivery of a first strike. The United States feared it no less than it did the legendary Satan, because the BZhRK was a real factor of inevitable retribution.

And now, as Moskovskiy Komsomolets has learned from the source in the missile sector, not only has scientific research on the creation of such a complex been initiated, but the sources of financing for its creation have also been identified. The Armaments Program through 2020 contains no provision for this money. But, as reported by our source, funding of a BZhRK program is to be denoted by a separate line in the classified section of the military budget. The political decision on this score has reportedly already been taken, because the Russian leadership believes that the BZhRK is the most powerful argument and essentially our trump card in the dispute with the Americans regarding the advisability of deploying a US global missile defense system.

The Ansar of Yemen: AQAP and the Huthis

“The future of Yemen will be fiercely contested over the next several months and perhaps years, and both the Huthis and AQAP will seek a favorable result.”

The Arabic word “ansar” is usually translated as “partisans” or “supporters.” In its original context it referred to the residents of Medina (Yathrib) who hosted, supported and fought alongside the Prophet Muhammad, following the hijrah from Mecca to Medina. The term served to distinguish the early Medina converts from the Prophet’s Meccan companions. In the contemporary context it has been adopted by several militant groups, gaining particular traction since the Arab Spring. One of the major Islamist armed groups in northern Mali, for instance, calls itself “Ansar al-Din” (Partisans of Religion). It is the name “Ansar al-Shari’a,” however, that has served as a focal point for a scattering of Sunni groups inspired by or sympathetic to a vision of society ruled by a simplistic and fundamentalist vision of Shari’a.¹

One of the most prominent such groups is Yemen’s “Ansar al-Shari’a.” This group rose to prominence in the summer of 2011 after overrunning several towns in the southern Yemeni provinces of Abyan and Shabwa, including Abyan’s provincial capital of Zinjibar. With Yemen’s political crisis severely limiting the state’s retaliatory capacity, the group was able to hold on to several towns until the summer of 2012, when a concerted military campaign finally drove them out. “Ansar al-Shari’a” is considered to be an alias for al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), “simply AQAP’s effort to rebrand itself.”²

Far from these events, in Yemen’s northwest corner, a different non-state actor with a similar name operates: the “Ansar Allah,” more commonly known as “the Huthis” (see Table 1 below). The Huthis subscribe to a doctrine of Zaydi fundamentalism (see below) and are the outgrowth of a revivalist movement that eventually coalesced around the leadership of Husayn al-Huthi, who was killed by Yemeni government forces in September 2004. Now led by Husayn’s younger half-brother Abd al-Malik, the Huthis replaced the central government as Sa’dah province’s main powerbrokers in the spring of 2011, and have worked to consolidate their position ever since. The Huthis have sent mixed signals on their willingness to participate in Yemen’s national dialogue and, more broadly, their intentions during Yemen’s transitional period. What is clear, however, is that they have successfully translated their military and ideological strengths into an advantageous position at the bargaining table.

In early 2011 AQAP’s deputy leader Said al-Shihri declared jihad against the Huthis. The announcement came nearly two months after back-to-back suicide attacks in Huthi-controlled parts of al-Jawf and Sa’dah killed several Huthi followers. One of the victims was allegedly Badr al-Din al-Huthi, father of both the group’s leader Abd al-Malik and its founder and revered martyr Husayn al-Huthi. More recently, according to allegations by Jalal al-Marqashi, Ansar al-Shari’a leader in Abyan Province, Huthi partisans were found fighting



ANSAR ALLAH (HUTHIS)

1. For an overview on the phenomenon see Aaron Zelin, “Know Your Ansar al-Sharia,” *Foreign Policy*, 9/21/12. Available at: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/09/21/know_your_ansar_al_sharia (accessed 1/10/13).
2. See: US State Department, “Terrorist Designations of Ansar al-Sharia as an Alias for Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula,” 10/4/12. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/10/198659.htm> (accessed 1/10/13).
3. See “Al-Qaeda commander and leader in Abyan Jalal al-Marqashi speaks of al-Qaeda’s new strategy,” *al-Wasat*, 1/25/12. Available (in Arabic) at: http://alwasat-ye.net/index.php?ac=3&no=32303&d_f=21&t=5&lang_in (accessed 1/10/13). In addition to their northern strongholds, the Huthis have a presence in Yemen’s major cities, as well as parts of Mareb Province. The extent of their presence in the provinces of former Southern Yemen is unknown. There are some indications of Huthi presence in the security apparatus; for instance a video aired on al-Masirah TV (the Huthi channel) showing an American military aircraft and filmed inside the al-Anad military base. The footage can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1tUyVztJM> (accessed 1/10/13).

Continued: The Ansar of Yemen: AQAP and the Huthis

alongside the military to regain Zinjibar from Ansar al-Shari'a. The proof, he claimed, was in documents found on several of those who had been killed; such allegations are impossible to verify, but, if true, would be indicative of a broader Huthi presence than otherwise believed, both in terms of geographical scope and presence within the security apparatus.³ Regardless, the Huthis appear to be on AQAP's mind.

The most obvious difference between the Huthis and AQAP is that the former are Shi'a and the latter are Sunni.⁴ The general (Sunni) Salafi doctrine that frames AQAP's ideology is influenced by Saudi Arabia's militant Wahhabism. For reasons of both traditional doctrine and contemporary geopolitics, Wahhabism is particularly hostile to Shi'a Islam, Zaydism included. The influx of Salafi-Wahhabism into the Zaydi heartland in the 1990s was therefore accompanied by a rhetoric disparaging of the Zaydis and other Shi'as. This proved an important catalyst in the birth of the Huthis.

Zaydi revivalism first manifested as a network of education camps aimed, in part, at countering the spread of Salafism among the disgruntled youth and tribal members of this peripheral and underdeveloped region. Partisans and members of this network called themselves the Believing Youth (Shabab al-Mu'min). Alongside appeals to indigenous tradition in the Zaydi heartland, the Believing Youth effectively applied the Salafist methodology of textual fundamentalism to Zaydi doctrine. What became Huthi Zaydism thus mirrors Salafism in harkening to the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad; it complements this with a return to the fundamentals of Yemeni Zaydism as formulated over one thousand years ago.⁵ There is, in short, an element of Salafism within the Huthi movement, a parallel with AQAP that is obscured by the basic Sunni-Shi'a dichotomy.

At the level of organization and goals, Lebanon's Hizbullah, on the one hand, and the Taliban in Afghanistan, on the other, represent useful reference points, possibly even models for the groups to emulate, to better understand the Huthis and Ansar al-Shari'a. Roughly speaking, Hizbullah has become a group with tight control over a stable and demographically circumscribed territory. Within its areas of control Hizbullah's power is comparable to, if not greater than that of the state; furthermore, the party is deeply involved in national politics, arguably playing an outsized role. Hizbullah has nurtured an effective media machine, centered on the TV Channel Al-Manar, through which its positions are presented within the discourse of "resistance." Finally, Hizbullah retains a major weapons arsenal beyond state control and which is comparable, if not superior, to that of the state itself. All of these characteristics are, to different degrees, shared by the Huthis.

The Taliban, in contrast, extended their control across a demographically diverse area of Afghanistan by relying on a group of young men who had been indoctrinated into the group's ideology, the essence of which consisted of a vision of society ruled by a fundamentalist version of Shari'a. These men would be called on to act brutally when necessary, but also honestly and with discipline. Shari'a courts were created to prosecute those who broke laws, and they were better functioning, more consistent, and less corrupt than what preceded them. They would bring order to unruly places in exchange for the total submission of the citizenry. Broadly speaking, this model applies well to Ansar al-Shari'a and their brief stint as rulers of parts of Shabwa and Abyan.

These analogies raise a key question concerning future interactions between the two groups. Do the Huthis, as their detractors have claimed, hope to eventually restore the imamate and rule over the whole of Yemen? Or are they content having their own enclave in Sa'dah Province, as they seem to indicate? Does AQAP, meanwhile, hope to do in all of Yemen what the Taliban did in Afghanistan?



ANSAR AL-SHARI'A (AQAP)

4. It should be emphasized that the Huthis are Zaydis, a unique branch of Shi'a Islam endemic to Yemen and historically distinct from the more prevalent form followed in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon, among others. Zaydism is in many ways doctrinally close to moderate Sunnism, although the Huthis have "Salafized" Zaydi doctrine in many ways.
5. The foundations of Yemeni Zaydism were laid down by Imam al-Hadi ila al-Haq, who ruled over parts of Yemen's north as the first Zaydi Imam at the turn of the 10th century. Although his brand of "Hadawi" Zaydism was moderated and updated over the subsequent thousand years, the Huthis have in many ways returned to his basic teachings.

Continued: The Ansar of Yemen: AQAP and the Huthis

What, in short, does each group consider its natural sphere of influence?

Amidst their differences, the two groups converge in their disdain for foreign actors intervening in Yemeni affairs, in particular Saudi Arabia, the United States and Israel (and, in the case of AQAP, Iran). Opposition to Israel and the United States is a key element to Huthi group identity. Unlike AQAP, however, the Huthis have not targeted American or other Western interests in Yemen. The Huthis, however, were publicly critical of the recent drone strike in Sa'dah province targeting AQAP operatives, seeing it as yet another example of American meddling in Yemen.⁶ As for AQAP, while their agenda of global jihad is well known, their Ansar al-Shari'a franchise appears largely focused on seizing and holding territory and only subsequently getting foreign powers out of Yemeni affairs, rather than vice-versa.⁷

The future of Yemen will be fiercely contested over the next several months and perhaps years, and both the Huthis and AQAP will seek a favorable result. Their improved position in Sa'dah province allows the Huthis to benefit from the status quo, making them unlikely to endorse major change. With their longtime foes in the Islah Party and Ali Muhsin⁸ having gained state power, the Huthis will be loath to endorse any formula that devolves power to the center without safeguarding local autonomy. Yet the idea of an institutionalized semi-independent Huthi territory is anathema for many parties in the region, chiefly Saudi Arabia. The more conspiratorial voices, or at least those allied with Islah, see the potential for Ali Abdullah Saleh and his loyalists to join forces with the Huthis and play politics by force.⁹ In the broader picture, the strength and intentions of the Huthi movement remain, as they have since

Table 1:
Key Differences between ANSAR ALLAH and ANSAR AL-SHARI'A

	Ansar Allah	Ansar al-Shari'a
Alias	The Huthis	AQAP
Denomination	Shi'a (Zaydi)	Sunni
Doctrine	Zaydi Revivalist	Salafi-Wahhabi
Potential Referent	Hizbullah (Lebanon)	Taliban (Afghanistan)
Sphere of Influence	Sa'dah Province and its environs	Abyan, Shabwa, and parts of other provinces
Stated political aims	Greater control over own affairs	State ruled by fundamentalist vision of Shari'a
Leadership (martyred) figure	Husayn al-Huthi	Osama bin Laden

6. See for instance: "Houthi leader condemns US drone attack in northern Yemen," available at: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/30/269595/yemeni-leader-condemns-us-drone-attack/> (accessed 1/10/13).

7. Ansar al-Shari'a, it should be emphasized, is only one part of AQAP's multi-pronged Yemen strategy, which also includes acts of sabotage and destabilization, including the targeting of government facilities and figures, as well as foreign interests.

8. Ali Muhsin was former president Ali Abdullah Saleh's long-time right-hand military man. He led the unsuccessful military campaigns against the Huthis in the second half of the 2000s. In March 2011 he split from the regime and aligned himself with the Sunni-tribal Islah Party, now Yemen's dominant political party.

9. For more on this see: "Yemen: Enduring Conflicts, Threatened Transition," Crisis Group Middle East Report N°125, 3 July 2012. Available at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iran%20Gulf/Yemen/125-yemen-enduring-conflicts-threatened-transition.pdf> (accessed 1/10/13).

Continued: THE ANSAR OF YEMEN: AQAP AND THE HUTHIS

the group first gained international notoriety fending off the Saudi Arabian military in 2009, a mystery.

AQAP/Ansar al-Shari'a, on the other hand, exhibits no interest in playing politics and may be content continuing to build its grassroots support until it can attempt to retake and hold more territory. The group has made efforts to implant itself within local society; AQAP leader Nasir al-Wahayshi was Osama bin Laden's longtime personal secretary and is considered a highly effective organizer.¹⁰ Crucial to its success will be AQAP's ability to blur the line between itself and other strains of Sunni militancy operating in Yemen, as this can immediately give it a vast pool of support, including groups led by influential political figures such as Abdul Majid al-Zindani and Salafists throughout northern Yemen.¹¹ For the moment, except under unique circumstances such as those of the summer of 2011, AQAP may not have the capacity – shown by the Huthis in the 2000s – to seize territory from the Yemeni state and hold it. More important than their ability to hold territory, however, is whether or not local residents embrace that which AQAP represents as a preferable alternative to the modern Yemeni state. At present, the idea of al-Qaeda remains more important than its physical manifestation.

10. For more on al-Wahayshi and AQAP in general, see the very readable: Gregory Johnsen, "The Last Refuge: Yemen, al-Qaeda, and America's War in Arabia," New York: W.W. Norton, 2012.

11. See Casey Coombs, "Hot Issue — The Ansar al-Shari'a Insurgency in Southern Yemen: The View from the Ground," The Jamestown Foundation. Available at: http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5btt_news%5d=39348 (accessed 1/10/13).

The Kazakhstan-Russia Axis: Shaping CSTO Transformation

By Roger N. McDermott (United Kingdom)
Senior International Fellow,
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“Viewed from Kazakhstan’s perspective, the need to transcend the symbolism of the CSTO’s collective defense theme and promote ways in which it might meet real transnational and emerging security challenges is both real and urgent.”



<http://FMSO.leavenworth.army.mil/International.html>

Who are Seleka?

17 January 2013

“Seleka...has no concept or structure of a political program, no clear or coherent ideology, no precise demands”

No sooner had the U.N Security Council approved an intervention in Mali than a potential coup cropped up across the African continent in the landlocked and impoverished country of the Central African Republic (CAR).

Last December, a group of rebels operating under the banner of Seleka launched a lightning offensive, marching across the country and threatening to overthrow the regime of President François Bozizé for allegedly failing to follow through on promises he made to them during peace accords signed in 2007.

Meaning “coalition” in Sango – one of two official national languages in the CAR – the Seleka insurgency is an alliance of an estimated 1,000 to 3,000 former rebels. In the face of virtually no opposition from the disorganized and poorly trained CAR army, Seleka tore towards the capital of Bangui, occupying numerous towns on its way. For weeks after, it camped outside of the capital threatening an invasion.

But it is not exactly clear who makes up Seleka’s membership.

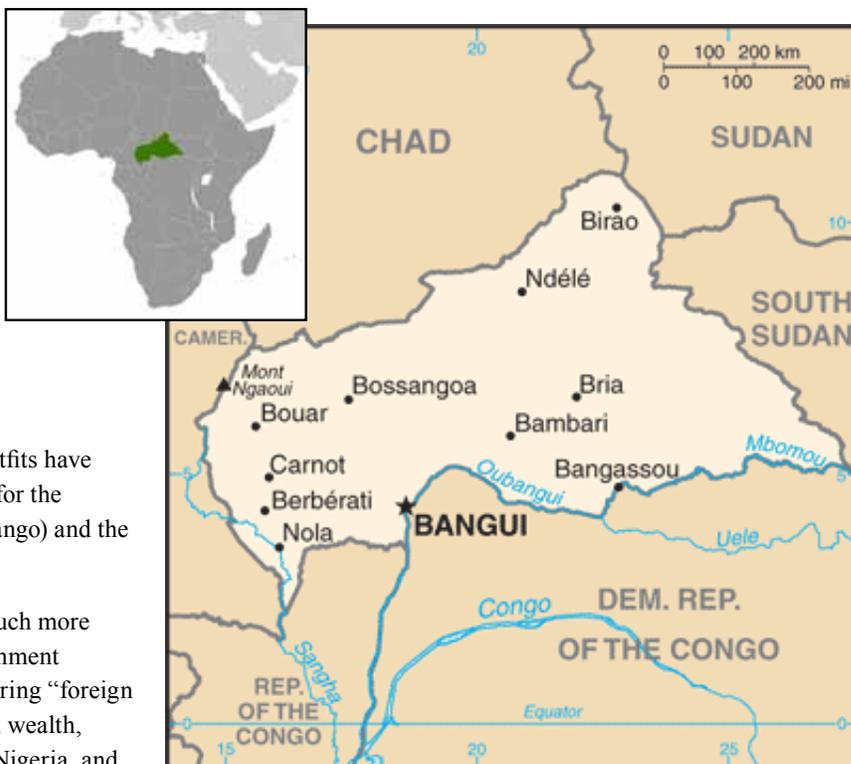
Officially, Seleka is the title given to the broader alliance of smaller groups – some a decade old, others having emerged just months ago – that have qualms with Bozizé’s government. Indeed, Seleka is thought to have come into existence only last September, making its coalition official last month when three of the country’s rebel groups – The Patriots’ Convention for Justice and Peace (CPJP), The Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR), and The Democratic Front of Central African People (FDPC) – allied themselves in opposition to the Bozizé regime.

To these previously known groups, two newer outfits have reportedly joined forces: The Patriotic Convention for the Salvation of Kodro (“kodro” means “country” in Sango) and the Alliance for Renaissance and Reorganization.

Unofficially, however, observers believe that a much more diverse cast of characters is at Seleka’s core. Government officials from Bangui have accused Seleka of harboring “foreign provocateurs” greedy for the country’s vast mineral wealth, and there are suspicions that nationals from Chad, Nigeria, and



President of the Central African Republic François Bozizé, via <https://eliesmith.blogspot.com>



Continued: Who are Seleka?

Sudan also make up Seleka's ranks. Others have noted that rather than being a simple revolt by CAR's civil society, money to pay Seleka's soldiers may originate from the same sources that funded the Malian, Libyan, and Tunisian revolts: amongst others, this would imply Chad and possibly al Qaeda.

How effective is this force? Again, analysts are split.

Some are impressed. As one commentator from the CAR remarked: "The Seleka combatants are more motivated, and, at this point, more disciplined than their adversaries [the CAR army] who fight in retreat, relinquishing their positions in the face of a dazzling advance by the enemy." Researcher Roland Marchal asserts that Seleka's "decorous behavior" towards citizens in overtaken towns suggests that the group indeed has "a true chain of command, and, without a doubt, a strategy."

But others have questioned whether Seleka has a coherent political agenda. In an oft-cited op-ed, CAR expatriate Alain Lamessi has written that Seleka "has no concept or structure of a political program, no clear or coherent ideology, no precise demands," and that, "in its current form, Seleka is not and cannot be considered a credible alternative to the Bozizé regime." A French diplomat, meanwhile, has reportedly dismissed the group as comprising "a spokesman seeking personal revenge against Bozizé, greedy foreign soldiers seeking pillaging concessions who don't even speak the national language, and some mid-level 'political-military' personnel."

Bozizé is for his part used to having a tenuous grip on power. Having served in the CAR army under the reign of the country's monarchical President Jean-Bédél Bokassa in the 1970s, Bozizé came to power in 2003 after launching a rebellion with Chadian assistance and capturing the government while then-President Ange Félix-Patassé was outside of the country. Bozizé has weathered waves of opposition since then.

In addition to facing widespread accusations of fraud in presidential election wins in 2005 and 2011, Bozizé's position has been threatened by subnational insurgencies.

Shortly after his ascension to the presidency, in 2004, a civil conflict broke out in the country that has come to be known as the Central African Bush War. Under the leadership of Michel Djotodia, and working under the banner of the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR), was a coalition of various rebel groups. Ultimately, neighboring Chad helped to broker a deal between the CAR government and the UFDR.

At the center of Seleka's contemporary anti-government agenda is Bozizé's alleged failure to follow through on the terms of the 2007 ceasefire of the Central African Bushwar, also known as the Global Peace Accord.

Seleka did agree on January 11 to form a unity government with Bozizé to end the month-long standoff, but peace is far from assured, and Seleka warned that it would resume fighting if the terms of the ceasefire were not fully fulfilled.

As Seleka spokesman Eric Massi ominously told a reporter: "We will judge Mr. Bozizé's sincerity in the coming days." With a reputation for shifting positions, Bozizé's next moves are unclear – as is the future of the ceasefire.

