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Turkish Responses to the Iran Nuclear Deal

December 2013

“Economically, Turkey stands to benefit. ...[W]ith the lifting of sanctions, Iranian oil and natural gas might reach Europe through Turkey, and Iranian trade with the rest of the world increasing through Turkey is a win-win situation for all.”

“Turkey might lose some of its strategic regional importance as a result of the U.S. having closer relations with Iran.”

OE Watch Commentary: *In the wake of the interim deal concluded on 24 November between the P5+1 and Iran, commentators in Turkey have been discussing what the deal means for Turkey. The accompanying passages from the Turkish press provide insight into this debate. While most agree that the deal presents an opportunity for Turkey to become an important energy trade route, some also question whether an increased status for Iran in the Middle East will come at the expense of Turkey’s standing in the region.*

As the passages point out, if the deal proves successful, Turkey will have to accept that Iran will play a larger regional role, giving Iran a new status, sphere of influence and room to maneuver in the Middle East. As a result, Iran might become a more effective actor in the region on issues such as the Syrian crisis and Iraq, at a time when Turkey has lost ground in the Middle East.

Despite this, many point out that the deal is a positive development for Turkey. If successful, the deal would free Turkey of having to live with a potentially nuclear neighbor and bring stability to the region. As the passages point out, Turkey also stands to benefit economically. With the easing of sanctions Iranian oil and natural gas would reach Europe through Turkey, and Iranian trade with the rest of the world might also increase through Turkey, benefiting all. Moreover, Turkey would be able to buy energy from Iran instead of having to buy it at higher prices from Russia, Kuwait, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Commentators also lament that Turkey has lost the chance to be a trusted partner in the process. They contend that Turkey’s recent foreign policy has embraced a Sunni Islamic



Representatives from Iran and the P5+1 meet in Istanbul, Turkey, April 14, 2012.

Source: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/07/10/313122/west-should-be-moderate-in-iran-ntalks>

Source: Uğur Özgöker, “ABD-Iran Cenevre Nükleer Anlaşması ve Türkiye’ye Muhtemel Etkileri (“The U.S.-Iran Geneva Nuclear Agreement and Possible Effects on Turkey),” Euractiv.com.tr, 5 December 2013, <http://www.euractiv.com.tr/politika-000110/analyze/ugur-ozgoker-abd-iran-cenevre-nukleer-anlasmasi-ve-turkiyeye-muhtemel-etkileri-028817>

“When we look at the issue from Turkey’s perspective, it is totally natural for Turkey to approve the deal. Nobody wants a neighbor with nuclear weapons and one who enriches them at their will. Proliferation in the region is a threat to Turkey, but a diplomatic solution is one that Turkey supports. However, it should be noted that this deal will give Iran a new status in the international arena.

Particularly on the issue of Syria-- an issue which Turkey and Iran are on opposite sides—Iran might become a country that has an important voice in overcoming the crisis.

Economically, Turkey stands to benefit. In the coming era, with the lifting of sanctions, Iranian oil and natural gas might reach Europe through Turkey, and Iranian trade with the rest of the world increasing through Turkey is a win-win situation for all.

Economically, we will be able to buy energy sources for cheaper and at lower transport cost. Currently due to the international sanctions, we are not able to buy oil and natural gas from Iran even though they are selling at lower prices. Instead we are having to buy them from Russia, Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia at higher prices. Thus our budget deficit and foreign trade deficit will go down.... In summary, the results of the Geneva agreement will be very positive for Turkey.”

(continued)

Continued: Turkish Responses to the Iran Nuclear Deal

foreign policy as opposed to its traditional non-sectarian foreign policy, preventing Turkey from playing a more constructive role. The final passage points out that in order for Turkey to regain the trust of all sides in the Middle East, it must return to a non-sectarian, secular foreign policy. The author claims that, by placing itself within the Sunni camp in the sectarian divides in the Middle East, Turkey has lost the chance to be a trusted actor between the West and Shia Iran. End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)

Source: Bora Bayraktar, "Iran'la Cenevre Anlaşması dengeleri nasıl değiştirdi? (Commentary: How did the Geneva Agreement with Iran change the regional balances?)," Energy Institute, 28 November 2013, <http://enerjienstitusu.com/2013/11/28/yorum-iranla-cenevre-anlasmasi-dengeleri-nasil-degistirdi/>

"How will a U.S.-Iran rapprochement effect Turkey? Some say that an Iran that has good relations with the U.S. might lead Turkey to lose some of its importance in the eyes of the West. But when you think of the region as a whole, one can also say that Turkey's potential to become an energy transit country will increase.

As the Iraq wars have shown, war and crisis in Turkey's region directly threatens its security and territorial integrity. So, the fact that a possible military strike against Iran is becoming more unlikely, is a positive development for Ankara. The loosening of the sanctions will revive Turkish-Iranian trade, which has been in trouble for over a year. Oil prices going down will also have a positive impact on the Turkish economy."

Source: Sami Kohen, "Iran ortak mı, rakip mi? (Is Iran a partner, or a rival?)," Milliyet.com.tr, 29 November 2013, <http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/iran-ortak-mi-rakip-mi-dunya/ydetay/1799496/default.htm>

"Would a stronger Iran be a rival to Turkey? Would Turkey stand to lose from this?... Some speak of the possibility that Turkey might lose some of its strategic regional importance as a result of the U.S. having closer relations with Iran. Iran might use its initiative on certain issues (like Syria) and look nicer to the West. In the eyes of Washington, Iran might start to be seen as an actor that certain roles can be shared with."

Source: Sami Kohen, "İran'la anlaşma Ortadoğu'yu nasıl etkileyecek? (How will the deal with Iran effect the Middle East?)," Milliyet.com.tr, 26 November 2013, <http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/iran-la-anlasma-ortadogu-yu-nasil/dunya/ydetay/1797846/default.htm>

"[The deal with Iran] is a positive development for Turkey. It will enable Turkey to develop relations with Tehran more easily. A positive dialogue has already been established with Ruhani's administration. Economically, the relaxing of the sanctions will lead to increased trade with Iran and a lifting of the pressure on Ankara. The [Turkish] government would be wise to seek new balances by getting closer to Iran at a time when its relations with some Middle Eastern countries have been suffering."

Source: Kadri Gürsel, "Nükleer anlaşma laik dış politikaya zorluyor (The nuclear deal is forcing a secular foreign policy)," Milliyet.com.tr, 25 November 2013, <http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/nukleer-anlasma-laik-dis/dunya/ydetay/1797292/default.htm>

"An Iran that has solved its problems and assured the P5+1 about its peaceful nuclear program, will be able to follow its regional policies more easily since it will be free of isolation and sanctions. When this happens, the new tension axis in the region will be between Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shia Iran. In this environment, the only way Turkey can have an effective role accepted by all sides is to follow a secular foreign policy in its region. Unfortunately our current foreign policy-makers lack this capacity."

“We’ve gone from where to where within six-seven years. We’ve approached a point where we are having to choose Erbil [the KRG’s capital] to Baghdad.”

OE Watch Commentary: On 27 November the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and Turkey signed a multimillion dollar energy deal regarding oil, natural gas exports, pipelines and payment methods. While this is an important step in turning the Iraqi Kurdistan Region into a strategic energy partner for Turkey, it increases tensions between Turkey and the central Iraqi government in Baghdad. The accompanying passages from the Turkish press discuss the deal, Turkey’s energy needs, and how shifting regional dynamics have led Turkey to become closer to the KRG at the expense of its relations with Baghdad.

Baghdad claims to be the sole authority over Iraqi oil exports and fears that the KRG’s growing economic autonomy will pave the way for KRG independence and fracture the country. The Kurds say that their exports will benefit all of Iraq and that they will share the revenues with Baghdad.

For decades Turkish foreign policy towards Iraq was dictated by Turkey’s fear of Kurdish political ambitions for federalism and autonomy, and thus entailed support for the central Iraqi government, which it saw as the best defense against the political ambitions of Iraqi Kurds. Following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Turkey felt threatened by the Kurds’ new autonomous region, fearing that it would embolden its own Kurds. The Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), found a safe haven for itself in the Qandil Mountains in this region, adding to the fears. Turkey periodically conducted cross-border operations into northern Iraq, striking PKK targets there. Fearing the rise of Kurdish nationalism, Turkey worked hard to prevent any efforts or bids for greater autonomy for the Kurds in Iraq.

In recent years shifting regional dynamics have brought about a close relationship between Turkey and the KRG. As the accompanying passages point out, the KRG is energy-rich, and Turkey needs this energy, while the KRG needs a way to get its oil to world markets. Moreover, the Kurds in Iraq want to balance Iranian influence there and counter Baghdad’s centralizing tendencies. Thus, Kurds have offered Turkey various enticements, such as granting major construction projects to Turkish companies (such as the Erbil and Sulaymaniyah airports). In addition, regional instability unleashed by the Arab Spring has led Ankara to look for allies to counter the Iranian-led Shiite axis that Turkey believes is forming to its south, extending from Iraq into Syria. Thus, the Turkey-KRG link can be seen as a political alignment against Tehran, Damascus and Baghdad. Meanwhile, the central Iraqi government sees Turkey’s rapprochement with the KRG as an affront to its authority, damaging Ankara’s ties with Baghdad. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

Source: “Kürt petrolü Türkiye’ye gönderildi (Kurdish oil has been sent to Turkey),” Milliyet.com.tr, 15 December 2013, <http://ekonomi.milliyet.com.tr/kurt-petrolu-turkiye-ye-gonderildi/ekonomi/detay/1807753/default.htm>

“The central Iraqi administration had declared that it was illegal for KRG oil to be sent to Turkey and that this would hurt relations between the two countries. [KRG Prime Minister] Nechirvan Barzani noted that it is their constitutional right to sell oil to Turkey and rejected claims that they were trying to convince the central Iraqi government.”

Source: Sami Kohen, “Bağdat’sız olur mu (Is it possible without Baghdad?),” Milliyet.com.tr, 30 November 2013, <http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/bagdat-siz-olur-mu-/dunya/ydetay/1800120/default.htm>

“For Baghdad, the core of the issue is territorial integrity and the right to sovereignty, whereas for Erbil, this issue is the broad autonomy and authority of the Kurdistan region. From Turkey’s point of view, importing oil and gas from the Kurdish region is a trade that is meant to satisfy Turkey’s energy needs. The oil pipeline that will extend from Kurdistan to Turkey has a capacity of carrying 2 million barrels. The natural gas pipeline that is expected to become operational at the end of 2016 is expected to have a capacity of 10 billion cubic meters. These will enable Turkey to fulfill its energy needs from different sources.”

Source: Cengiz Çandar, “Kürdistan petroleri ve Türkiye’nin tercihleri... (Kurdistan oil and Turkey’s choices),” Radikal.com.tr, 15 December 2013, http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/cengiz_candar/kurdistan_petroleri_ve_turkiyenin_tercihleri-1166257

“We’ve gone from where to where within six-seven years. We’ve approached a point where we are having to choose Erbil [the KRG’s capital] to Baghdad. Such a choice, which makes us resist Washington, is partly because of the [need to] stand against the Tehran-Baghdad axis, ‘regional competition’ and Turkey’s increasing energy needs...”

“..Turkey need(s) to revisit its Syria strategy and make the necessary adjustments.”



Source: <http://blogs.aljazeera.com/topic/syria/map-border-points-seized-turkey-and-iraq>

OE Watch Commentary: On 10 December a new group in the Syrian civil war, the Islamic Front, a coalition of seven Islamic rebel factions, seized control over an important border crossing between Turkey and Syria. The Bab al-Hawa border crossing is also the main entry point for supplies to the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and the headquarters of its commander, General Salim Idris. Commentators in Turkey are expressing alarm at the reality that Turkey is now neighbors with this new Islamic Front, and calling for an adjustment to Turkey's Syria policy.

As one of the accompanying passages points out, the Islamic Front sends the Syrian opposition and the FSA, which Turkey was supporting, into further disarray. In addition, the U.S. and the U.K. have suspended nonlethal support to the opposition, which not only weakens the FSA, but also strengthens Bashar Assad's hand. These developments come one month before the Geneva II conference is set to convene.

Despite its constant denials, Turkey's pro-Islamist government has been accused of providing logistical support to al-Qaeda-linked groups against the Kurds. Many analysts in Turkey have

Source: “Bab-ı Hava Sınır Kapısı, İslam Cephesi'nin kontrolüne geçti (Bab al-Hawa Border Gate is now in the Islamic Front's control),” Zaman.com.tr, 7 December 2013, http://www.zaman.com.tr/dunya_bab-i-hava-sinir-kapisi-islam-cephesinin-kontrolune-gecti_2179173.html

“Today, the Syrian side of the Cilvegözü Border Gate has come under the control of the opposition Islamic Front... In addition to the border gate, it is reported that all equipment depots are also under their control. It is reported that Free Syrian Army (FSA) commanders in the region have left their offices and crossed into Turkey.”

Source: Sami Kohen, “Suriye'de cephe üstüne cephe! (In Syria, front after front!),” Milliyet.com.tr, 13 December 2013, <http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/suriye-de-cephe-ustune-cephe-/dunya/ydetay/1806618/default.htm>

“Units from 7 radical groups have separated from the FSA and started a new front under the name Islamic Front, with the goal of establishing an ‘Islamic State’ in Syria. The first victory for this front came when they took over warehouses that held American and British military equipment, and the FSA headquarters in Bab al-Hawa, near the Turkish border. Thus, the military assistance made to the FSA, that was meant to topple Assad, has fallen into the wrong hands. The situation is a heavy blow to the opposition forces that the West and Turkey supported.

Following the Islamic Front's taking control over Bab al-Hawa, the U.S. and England decided to stop the military assistance being made through Turkey to the FSA. Turkey closed its Cilvegözü border gate. The reasoning for this decision was that the military equipment sent to the FSA had passed into the hands of radical Islamic groups, who are trying to sideline the FSA... In practice, this reaction leads to the FSA becoming weaker and less able to fight! At this point in the Syrian civil war, the West and Turkey are facing such a predicament. The situation shows the reality that radical Islamic groups are stronger than fragmented opposition

(continued)

Continued: Turkey's New Neighbor: The Islamic Front in Syria

long argued that supporting jihadists in Syria is short-sighted and will eventually come back to haunt Turkey in the long-run. The government officially denies any claims of arming such groups or facilitating the passage of jihadi fighters. However, Kurdish groups in northern Syria who have been fighting jihadi groups accuse Turkey of supporting jihadists against the Kurds. Faced with the prospect of becoming neighbors with al-Qaeda-linked groups, many are calling for an adjustment in Turkey's Syria policy. End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)

groups, and it strengthens Bashar Assad's hand. Right at a time when diplomatic efforts for the Geneva-2 Conference were being stepped up...

At this point, both the West and Turkey need to revisit their Syria strategy and make the necessary adjustments."

Source: Cengiz Çandar, "U.S., Turkey to rethink Syria policies," Al-monitor.com, 15 December 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/12/turkey-syria-kurdish-pyd-policy-united-states-redefine.html>

"At this point, another country that needs a new Syrian policy as much as the United States must be Turkey."

Turkey and Africa: A Rising Military Partnership?

By Karen Kaya and Jason Warner

Like many other aspirant emerging countries such as China, Brazil, and India, since 2002, Turkey has unleashed a charm offensive in Africa, deepening bilateral ties with African states in the realms of economics, politics, and more notably, defense and security affairs.

This paper considers the implications from this ever-growing relationship between Turkey and Africa for the U.S.. Where do Turkey's interests in Africa converge with those of the U.S. and where do they diverge?

Given that Turkey's military and security interests and goals in Africa largely parallel those of the United States, the U.S. stands to benefit from the unique chance to partner with a Muslim ally whose presence in parts of Africa appears to be more welcome than those of other Western countries due to its shared religion, cultural ties and lack of imperial history.



<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Turkey-Africa.pdf>

“420 individuals were forbidden to travel abroad after the events of 2009.”

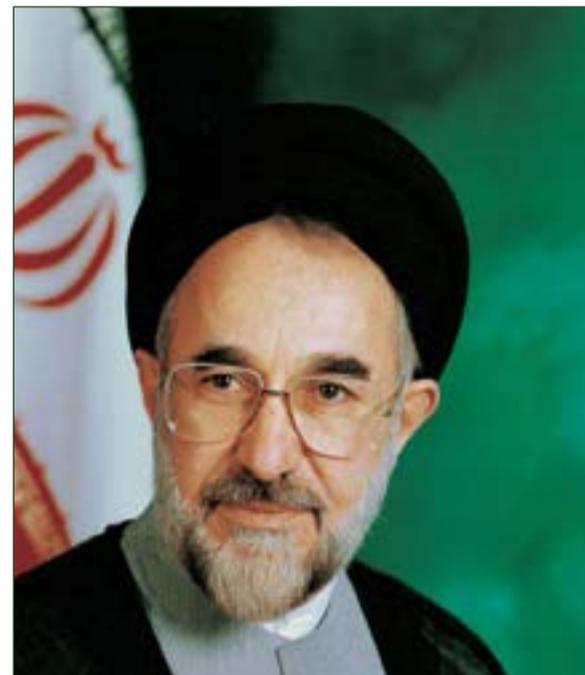
OE Watch Commentary: Mohammad Khatami, perhaps the Islamic Republic's best known reformist, served as Iran's president between 1997 and 2005, even if he was largely constrained by the Supreme Leader and the regime's hardline militias in the wake of the 1999 student uprising. During his successor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's first term as president (2005-2009), Khatami became an increasingly vocal voice of dissent against Ahmadinejad's often caustic hardline antics and rhetoric. In the wake of the 2009 post-election unrest, however, such criticism from within the regime became too great for the Supreme Leader and his allies to tolerate. Both Khatami and other prominent reform-leaning politicians found their passports revoked and/or their adult children jailed in order to control their actions and to temper their statements to foreign media.

While the June 2013 election to the presidency of Hassan Rouhani heralded, according to some analysts, the return of the reformists, in practice the security forces continue to control the movements of many prominent regime officials. In the selected excerpt Mashallah Shamsolvaezin, the founding editor of many of the regime's flagship papers, describes how his own travel ban was recently lifted, but how the ban remains on Khatami because, he says, of the complexity of protocol. That the impetus for the query about travel status was Khatami's desire to attend the funeral of former South African President Nelson Mandela is an irony that will not be lost on Iranians who rightly or wrongly liken the detention, harassment, and restrictions so many former officials endure to those once borne by the South African dissident-turned-leader. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

Source: “Shamsolvaezin: Digar Mamnu'eh Al-Kharuj Nistam / Dalil Adam Kharuj Khatami, Mosayel Protokol Bud” (“Shamsolvaezin: I am not banned from Traveling Abroad; Khatami Can't Travel for Reasons of Protocol”) Iranian Students News Agency, 16 December 2013. <http://goo.gl/BU2fcM>

Khatami Can't Travel for Reasons of Protocol

This political and media activist [Mashallah Shamsolvaezin] in a conversation with the political correspondent of the Iranian Student News Agency, announced the news that hours before, the Ministry of Information was contacted and they said that I am not forbidden to travel. He continued, I met approximately two months ago with the deputy minister of information regarding the problem of being forbidden to make foreign trips, and he promised to address the issue, and today the problem is resolved... The media activist [Shamsolvaezin] said that after the events of 2009, a list had been prepared with the names of 420 individuals who were forbidden to travel abroad... He also reported that Mohammad Khatami had been forbidden to travel, and the reason why [he was told] Khatami had not been able to leave the country was because of reasons of protocol, that is, they had said that if the former president wanted to travel to another country, security issues must first be addressed.



Mohammad Khatami.
Source: <http://www.nndb.com/people/430/000025355/>

“The amount of revenue from oil sales exceeded the level at which the budget was set.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Iranian economy is dominated by oil. While the country also exports carpets, pistachios, and caviar, petroleum comprises 80 percent of Iranian exports. The problem for successive Iranian governments is that while the budget depends on oil revenue, it is impossible to know the price of oil a year in advance of when parliament is putting together the budget. Indeed, one of the key questions that must be considered when gauging stability in and around Iran is whether the price of oil is sufficient for Iran to meet its budget for social services and subsidies. The fact that in Iran’s statist system oil supports the treasury more than customs or tax income simply adds to the government’s financial uncertainty.*

If the price of oil falls below the level at which the budget is set (\$92 per barrel this year), then either the Iranian government risks domestic unrest or it must come up with a way to increase the price of oil. Threats leveled on the international stage or sponsorship of unrest in the Persian Gulf often are sufficient to create a momentary spike in oil prices.

*According to the article excerpted, the price of oil has remained significantly above the level at which Iranian officials set their budget. This means that the Iranian government will have excess cash at its disposal. What Tehran does with its surplus will reflect a great deal on both the internal power and character of the new leadership: if the government invests its windfall profit into its nuclear and ballistic missile program, that would indicate either that newly-elected president Hassan Rouhani is not so much of a reformist as he and his supporters claim, or that he does not have the power to change substantially the character of the Islamic Republic. If, however, he applies such money to restore and diversify Iran’s moribund economy, then it would suggest that he is serious about fulfilling some of his campaign pledges. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***

Net oil export revenue



80% Iran’s export earnings from oil

50% Government’s revenue is from oil

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit

Source: “Dar Amad Forush-e Naft Bishtar az Budjeh Masub Ast” (“Oil Revenues Are Higher Than the Approved Budget”) Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, 14 December 2013. <http://www.iribnews.ir/NewsText.aspx?ID=2185308>

Oil Revenues Higher Than Approved Budget

The Deputy for planning and supervision of hydrocarbon resources at the Oil Ministry referred to the readiness of the Oil Ministry to increase export capacity. He said oil exports have exceeded the figures estimated in the budget approved by parliament this year. According to the Petroenergy Information Network (Shana),¹ Mansour Moazzami reported increasing exports of crude oil was among the oil industry’s priorities, and reiterated that increased production by various means was underway. Moazzami stated that the amount of revenue from oil sales exceeded the level at which the budget was set: “While the budget law fixed oil prices at 92 dollars per barrel, the average oil price has been 103 dollars so far...”

1. <http://www.shana.ir/fa/home>

“Supreme Leader Khamenei...noted the importance of strengthening political and economic relations with Iraq.”

OE Watch Commentary: *With the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq in 2011, Iran became by default Iraq’s primary partner. As sectarian tensions with Turkey took their diplomatic toll, Iran became Iraq’s primary trading partner. Moreover, the Iranian frontier represents Iraq’s largest border. For all these reasons the two-day official visit of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to Tehran is normal in the context of Iraqi politics and diplomacy. Maliki met with President Hassan Rouhani, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Supreme National Security Head Admiral Ali Shamkhani and, of course, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, from whose meeting the article excerpt is taken.*

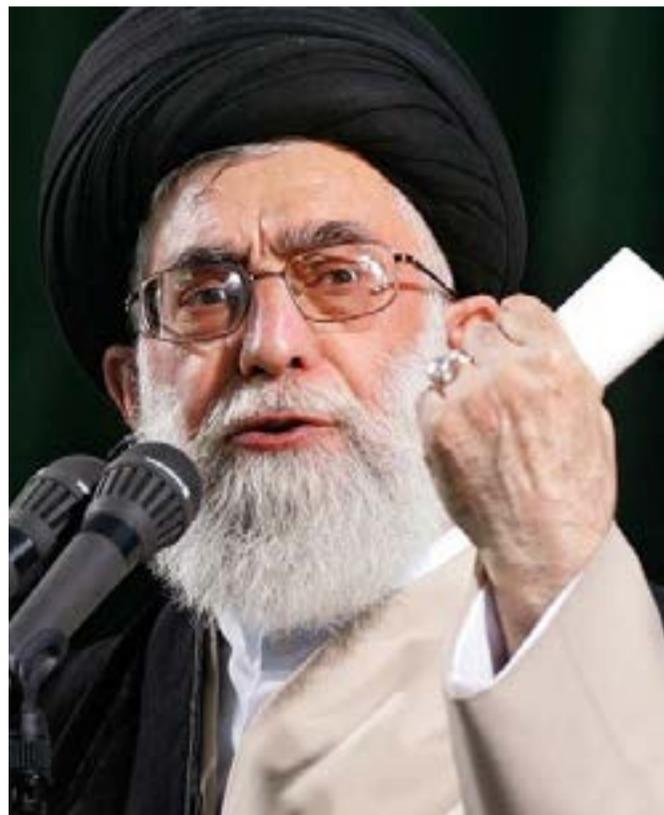
The caricature of Iraq as an Iranian puppet, however, is exaggerated. While both Iran and Iraq might be overwhelmingly Shi’ite, the ethnic divide between Persians and Arabs is strong, and historical enmity borne of decades of conflict remains present. Iraqi businessmen accuse Iran of flooding the market with cheap goods, thereby undercutting Iraqi manufacturing, while Iraqi contractors accuse Iranian firms of overcharging for inferior service. As the Iraqi government works to repair relations with Turkey and reaches out to both China and Western countries, the Iranian government fears that its economic honeymoon might soon end.

Probably the main reason for Maliki’s visit has to do with Iraq’s political uncertainty, hinted at when Khamenei conveyed his “good wishes” for Iraqi President Jalal Talabani. It has now been more than a year since Talabani suffered a debilitating stroke. While the Iraqi press published a still photo of the president recuperating at the hospital—only the second photograph in a year—there is no indication that Talabani can function or, indeed,

even move. His incapacitation highlights not only the political vacuum in the presidency, but also the horse-trading which will presage the 2014 Iraqi elections. The Iranian government has been active in lobbying to ensure that its interests are met in both Baghdad and Erbil—the capital of the autonomous Kurdish region—in the year of transition. As such, Khamenei and other Iranian figures likely discussed with Maliki not only his efforts to win re-election, but also candidates who might fill the presidency. Iraqi politicians from across the political spectrum have acknowledged in recent months tremendous pressure from Tehran to accept Iraqi Kurdish leader Masud Barzani as Iraq’s president. While Barzani is not normally considered pro-Iranian, the Iraqi presidency is more an honorific position, well-suited to Barzani, who values titles. Such a move would ensure Iranian predominance in both Baghdad, where Maliki or any successor would likely be mindful of Iranian interests, and Erbil, where Barzani’s move might clear the path to predominance for his nephew, Nechirvan Barzani, who is more solicitous of Iranian requests.

Regardless of how the Iraqi political landscape changes with the upcoming elections, the battle for paramount economic and political influence in Iraq continues. From the Iranian perspective, it is far from won and must be constantly attended to.

End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)



Iran’s Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Source: <http://www.informationng.com/2013/10/us-not-trustworthy-self-important-breaks-its-promises-irans-supreme-leader.html>

Source: “Hich Mana’ye dar Pishbarad Ravabet ba Iraq va Towse’ah Hamkariha-ye Montaqeha-ye Vujud Nadarad” (“No Impediment to Advancing Relations with Iraq, and No Impediment to Regional Cooperation”) FarsNews.com, 5 December 2013. <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13920914000470>

No Impediment to Advancing Relations with Iraq

According to a Fars News Agency report, citing the website of the Supreme Leader, His Excellency, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, leader of the Islamic Revolution, met with Iraq’s Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki earlier this afternoon and noted the importance of strengthening political and economic relations with Iraq, and affirmed that the cooperation in various sectors is very broad, and there are no barriers to their further development with Iraq or to regional cooperation... The Supreme Leader also expressed his good wishes for his “good and dear friend” Iraqi President Jalal Talabani.

Egypt's Military and the Presidency

24 November 2013

“Anan has not yet decided on a presidential run...”



Mamdouh Hassan (above).

OE Watch Commentary: Egypt has been gripped by “Sisi Mania” since the overthrow of Mohammed Morsi in July 2013. The rise of Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who was appointed as defense minister by Morsi in August 2012, has been steady and well-orchestrated. Cairo’s urban landscape is saturated with posters of Egypt’s new strongman; he recently won the popular vote to be *Time’s* “Person of the Year,” and when Pope Francis was instead selected his supporters were peeved. Most expect al-Sisi to run for and win Egypt’s presidential elections, slated for the summer of 2014.

What, then, is behind the rumors that retired former Egyptian military chief of staff Sami Anan intends to run for president? During the early days of military rule immediately following the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak, Anan was considered Egypt’s potential savior as second-in-command in the ruling military body (SCAF), behind only aging Defense Minister Mohammed Hussein Tantawi. As the SCAF became increasingly unpopular, though, the hot potato was passed to the newly elected Morsi. A couple of months after his election in June 2012, Morsi sent both Tantawi and Anan into retirement, replacing the former with al-Sisi and making the latter a personal advisor.

Source: “Anan’s candidacy for president confuses Egypt’s army,” 2 October 2013, Middle East Monitor. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/africa/7645-anans-candidacy-for-president-confuses-egypts-army>

Military strategists believe that Anan’s announcement, coming before the adoption of a new constitution that will determine both the government’s and president’s powers, is a trial to test public opinion on the potential candidacy of a military figure. ...Military expert General Abdel Hamid Omran said that, “although Anan’s announcement adds to the political confusion, he is the best candidate as he is rational. His nomination may be the least harmful for Egyptians. He is more prudent and less extreme when compared to others, especially General Al-Sisi.”

Source: Mamdouh Hassan. “Sources: Anan has not decided on a presidential run... pages supporting him on Facebook are ‘individual efforts’.” 9 November 2013, al-Shurouq (Egypt). <http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=09112013&id=57606a3f-e24f-47c6-9900-1de7849b4f5e>

Sources close to former chief of staff, Gen. Sami Anan, said that Anan has not yet decided on a presidential run, especially following the leaking of some of his memoirs, a portion of which was published in several newspapers in a way that backfired...

(continued)

Continued: Egypt's Military and the Presidency

Anan's name resurfaced in September 2013, when a rumor spread that he was considering a presidential bid. Although the rumor was shot down within hours, it took on a life of its own. In October a Facebook page for the "popular campaign" supporting an Anan candidacy appeared, as did several images of him in civilian clothing and with newly dyed hair. One of these images, in particular, showing him placidly reading a newspaper in his garden, went viral in the form of satirical "Where's Waldo?"-style Photoshop efforts that cropped the avuncular Anan and pasted his image – to great comic effect – into incongruous and unexpected settings.

Although al-Sisi and Anan are not far apart in age, they are from different military generations and backgrounds: al-Sisi (b. 1954, from the Gamaleya neighborhood of old Cairo) is an infantry officer who eventually moved to military intelligence and was too young to partake in Egypt's armed conflicts with Israel in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Anan (b. 1948, from Mansoura in the Nile Delta), on the other hand, was just old enough to be involved in these wars. He spent the bulk of his military career as an officer in Egypt's air defenses, rising to be its general commander before becoming the military's chief of staff.

At these early stages, untangling the logic propelling Anan's non-candidacy is extremely difficult, if not impossible. The first three accompanying articles, taken from a variety of English- and Arabic-language sources, attest to this. Rumors of a fractious relationship between Anan and al-Sisi have already made the rounds, as the fourth accompanying article, from a pro-al-Sisi Egyptian daily, shows. Even if Anan fades from the political limelight, stronger challenges to al-Sisi from within Egypt's military establishment may yet surface. Al-Sisi's meteoric rise and tightening grip on power are certain to elicit envy and should not be taken for granted; the difficulties facing Egypt will force him to make tough policy decisions. Soon enough his breathless ascent may reach its peak. The question is what comes next. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

Source: Nervana Mahmoud. "Egypt's tale of two generals," 10 November 2013, al-Monitor. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/11/egypt-general-sisi-annan-public-opinion-response.html>

Nonetheless, the journey to next summer's presidential election could be full of surprises. No one can predict whether Sisi's popularity will continue to rise or gradually fade, and whether Anan can bounce back and convince Sisi to stay in the shadows. Nothing is predictable in Egypt other than its unpredictable politics.

Source: Source:

قصة الشائعات التي أطلقها سامي عنان ضد الفريق

"The story of the rumors Sami Anan put out against the general," 24 November 2013, al-Youm al-Sabaa. <http://www.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=1360678#.UqoWXvRDt8E>

Sami Anan was unhappy with al-Sisi's rise and one might say he was even angry about the proximity and relationship of al-Sisi and Field Marshal Tantawi. Anan has put out several rumors about al-Sisi since they worked together in the SCAF and up until now...

The Ascent of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Egyptian Revolution: The Interplay of Narrative and Other Factors

By William Tombaugh, Center for Global and International Studies (CGIS)-FMSO Research Fellow during the Spring 2013 semester at the University of Kansas.

In this paper, CGIS-FMSO Research Fellow, William Tombaugh, examines the ascent to power by the Muslim Brotherhood during the Egyptian Revolution. The actors and their role in the Revolution are analyzed, with a focus on identifying and evaluating narratives associated with each of the actors. The role of narrative, as well as other important factors which contributed to the Muslim Brother's victory in presidential and parliamentary elections are discussed, as well as the post-election failure of the Muslim Brotherhood.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/universities/muslim-brotherhood.pdfNato-Missile-Defense.pdf>

“...there is an urgent need to lay new foundations for the GCC...”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) must adapt to ongoing regional changes. That, at least, is the diagnosis made by several commentators before and after the 2013 GCC summit meeting in Kuwait on 10-11 December 2013. With the Arab Spring now in the rear-view mirror, the Saudi-led GCC seems focused on responding to the apparent rapprochement between the new Iranian administration and the West, as well as the Iranian military's unwavering support for the Syrian regime's bid to crush the GCC-funded armed rebellion.*

The key initiative in this regard, first floated by Saudi King Abdullah in 2011 at the height of the Arab Spring, is a Saudi-led push to transform the GCC from “cooperation council” to federation. Somewhat surprisingly, cold water was poured on the idea even before the summit began: speaking at the Manama Dialogue preceding the summit, Oman's foreign minister flatly stated that his country would withdraw from the six-member GCC were the council to become a federation.

As the first pair of accompanying articles show, both supporters and critics of the Saudi and Omani positions agree that the GCC needs to reinvent itself. The first article is an op-ed in al-Sharq al-Awsat, one of the Saudi royal family's most important regional mouthpieces, while the second is written by a prominent UK-based Saudi academic and critic of the regime.

With talk of a federation temporarily on hold, the most notable achievement of the GCC summit was the agreement to establish a joint military command center. This new command is to be distinct from the Peninsula Shield forces. Unconfirmed reports say it will be based in Riyadh, but beyond that precious few details are available. The announcement may be little more than political maneuvering, since the new joint command would entail other GCC members placing their national security in the hands of Saudi Arabia. With the exception of Bahrain's beleaguered rulers, who strongly support both this idea and the move toward unification, there are no indications that other GCC states (Kuwait, UAE, Qatar and Oman) would be comfortable moving from the status quo to an exclusively Saudi security umbrella.

Source: Abdullah al-Otaibi. “Opinion: The GCC must adapt to the times,” 16 December 2013, al-Sharq al-Awsat. <http://www.aawsat.net/2013/12/article55325292>

Shared interests alone cannot make successful alliances. Alliances need both shared interests and shared fears, which all GCC states have, except one. This state, ever since the council was founded, has pursued a policy of keeping itself relatively separate and disagreed with the rest of the member states about several regional issues. Nevertheless, the GCC could deal with the policies and stances of this state. Perhaps it would be a good thing to try to understand the fears of this state as well as the reasons for it being different. ... In all cases, there is an urgent need to lay new foundations for the GCC.

Source: Madawi al-Rasheed. “Omani rejection of GCC union adds insult to injury for Saudi Arabia,” 9 December 2013, al-Monitor. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/12/oman-rejects-gcc-union-insults-saudi-arabia.html#ixzz2nqp68ieY>

More than 30 years after its inception, the GCC needs to be reimagined along different lines. It cannot continue to operate if its raison d'être is simply forging unity against Iran. While Saudi Arabia continues to cherish this objective, other small states may prefer peace to war. It is likely that other Gulf states will follow Oman's steps, given that the United States has made it clear that containing Iran is better than opposing it... politics in all GCC countries are not driven by ideological or sectarian agendas, with the exception of Bahrain. Other GCC states cherish their economic prosperity and are not willing to undermine their own interests by raising the flag of religious wars.

(continued)

Saudi King Abdullah. Source: <http://www.marketoracle.co.uk/Article24351.html>



Continued: The Future of the GCC: Kuwait, Qatar, and the UAE

*Intra-GCC politics will become heated if, indeed, there are real attempts to overhaul the organization. Over the next several months indications of shifts in the position of Kuwait, the UAE and/or Qatar vis-à-vis the Saudi-Iranian conflict will be one of the region's more interesting subplots. Media sources from each side will spin every little move to their advantage. For instance the third accompanying article, from the Lebanese daily al-Safir, discerns movement toward accommodation with Iran in all three of these countries. The fourth accompanying article, written by a prominent academic and commentator and published in the UAE's English-language Gulf News, argues that the real issue here is one of properly reconfiguring relations between a rising Saudi Arabia and a weakened United States. The one certainty is that as rhetoric continues to escalate between Saudi Arabia on the one hand and Iran and its allies on the other, both sides will work assiduously to ensure that Kuwait, the UAE and Qatar do not take a position that strengthens their opponent. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)***

Source: Source:

دول خليجية تتمايز عن السعودية: انفتاح على إيران و«حزب الله

Dawood Ramel. "Gulf states diverge from Saudi Arabia, opening up to Iran and Hizbullah," 12 December 2013, al-Safir. <http://goo.gl/LdEjqQ>

...Subsequent events are indicative of divergences between Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia. They include the visit by UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan to Tehran and the follow-up trip to Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and the UAE by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif. To this is added UAE President Sheikh Khalifa's statement that "Iran is our closest neighbor." All of this points to changes in Gulf foreign policy that are not primarily driven by Saudi Arabia.

Source: Abdul Khaleq Abdullah. "It's no longer business as usual ," 9 December 2013, Gulf News. <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/columnists/it-s-no-longer-business-as-usual-1.1265099>

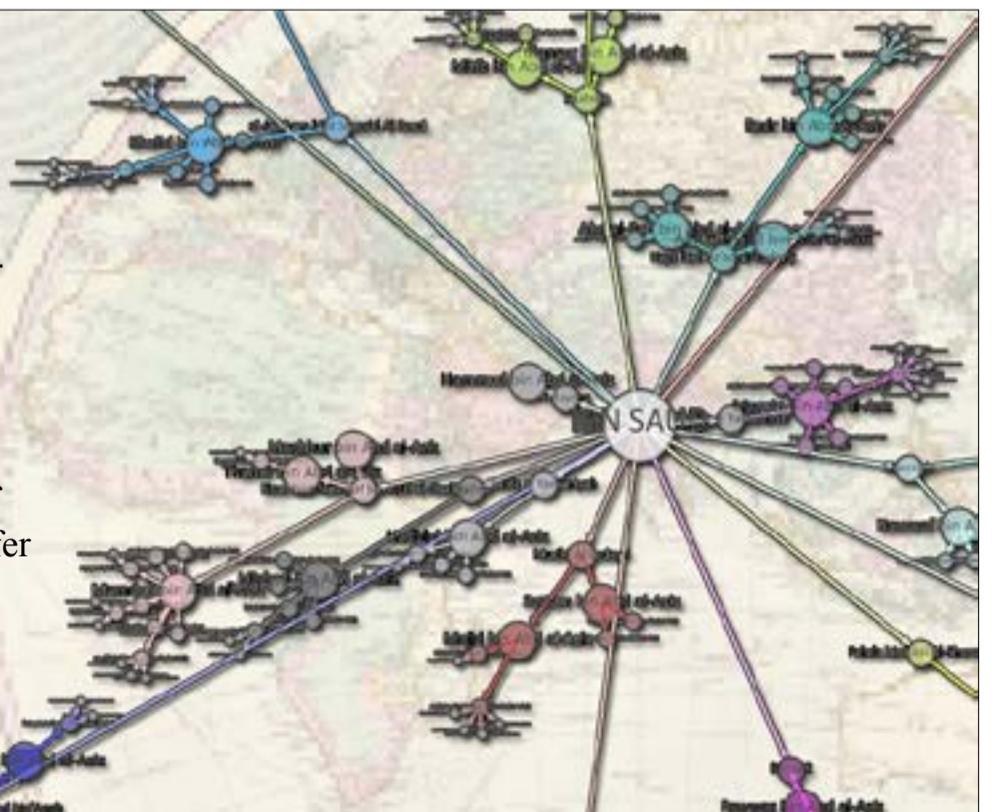
The rise of the Gulf moment comes at a time when America is in retreat — both regionally and globally. As things stand right now, the Gulf states look strategically an inch taller, whereas the US is looking strategically a foot shorter. There is a whole new dynamic in the once-imbalanced US-Gulf relationship. It is no longer a one-way street alliance. America is not as powerful as it was in 2003 and the six Arab Gulf States are not as weak as they were just ten years ago. These deep structural changes need to be recognised to get over the current tensions and keep the US Gulf relationship healthy and move it to a new level of mature engagement in the years to come.

Mapping Saudi Arabia's Succession

By LUCAS WINTER
Foreign Military Studies Office

This paper aims to serve as a guide for keeping track of the key players as the Saudi royal family seeks to transfer power to a new generation of princes.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Saudi-Succession/Saudi-Succession.pdf>



“...it is easy for events such as these to spiral out of control...”

OE Watch Commentary: How serious is the seemingly untamable violence plaguing Jordanian universities? For well over a year now Jordanian authorities, intellectuals and civil society groups have grappled with this question (see: <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/OEWatch/201306/201306.pdf>). Yet beyond scattered calls of the need for greater state competence, ready solutions seem lacking.

The first accompanying article, from the Saudi daily, *al-Hayat*, describes a new initiative in which students at the University of Jordan are being made to sign a pledge promising to refrain from consuming drugs or alcohol. The Jordanian press, though, tends to describe university violence as “tribal brawls” involving local gangs and thus a problem that goes beyond substance abuse. As the article notes, an odd and troubling phenomenon has emerged in which violence emanates from universities rather than spilling into them.

The violence alone is worrisome enough. Combined with the emerging war economy across the border in Syria, it could be combustible. Smuggling and illegal border crossings have both increased several-fold over the past year. Drugs and weapons are often illicit bedfellows, and in this case Jordan has become a major transit route for knockoff Captagon produced in Syria and destined for the pill-hungry Arab Gulf market. The second accompanying article, from *al-Jazeera's* Arabic website, explains growing concern surrounding unlicensed firearms in Jordan and the difficulty of bringing them under state control. Part of the problem, according to a Jordanian parliamentarian cited in the article, is a power struggle within Jordan's security apparatus.

The most recent round of soul-searching and recriminations was prompted by violence on 17 November in *al-Balqa' Applied University*, in the town of Salt, to the west of Amman. The university has experienced similar violence before. As reported by Jordanian media, this particular brawl pitted hundreds of people from rival tribal groups from *al-Balqa' Province*, many from outside the university. Six people were injured by either gunfire or knife wounds and over one dozen men were arrested. The potential

Princess Alia University College - al-Balqa' Applied University gates. (Top)
Source: http://photos.wikimapia.org/p/00/01/59/06/27_big.jpg



'A citizen journalism image provided by Omar Zorba to *khaberni.com* reportedly shows masked students involved in a tribal brawl on November 19 outside the main campus of Balqa Applied University in Salt, some 35km northwest of Amman (Photo courtesy of *khaberni.com*)' (Bottom)
Source: <http://jordantimes.com/tribal-loyalties-behind-majority-of-campus-violence-incidents>

Source: Source:

الجامعة الأردنية تلزم طلابها توقيع وثيقة بعدم تعاطي المخدرات

Maher al-Shawabka. “The University of Jordan forces its students to sign a pledge to not take drugs,” 18 November 2013, *al-Hayat*. <http://alhayat.com/Details/572942>

Those who take part in the brawls are usually young men under the control of kinship-based local or neighborhood gangs rather than drugs or alcohol... [Student rights NGO “Dhabahtuna”] warned that university violence was taking a dangerous turn in terms of firearm use within university gates, including automatic weapons and the involvement of people from outside the university. Furthermore and more dangerous is the spillover of brawls from within the limited confines of the university to become tribal fighting that diffuses... University violence is thus transformed from being a reflection of societal violence to a source thereof.

(continued)

Continued: Jordan's Universities: Where the "Tribal Gangs" Roam?

for university violence to spiral out of control is latent, as the third accompanying article argues. The fourth accompanying article concurs, viewing university violence as a national security issue. Whether anything can be done about it is a different matter. End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)

Source: Source:

تجارة وتهريب السلاح يثيران قلق الأردنيين
Mohammed al-Najjar. "Jordanians worried about weapons smuggling and trading," 9 December 2013, al-Jazeera Arabic. <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/d650caa8-3ed5-4f78-beff-c95f30b22ff9>

Al-Manaseer... said that "Jordan is paying the price of a battle between two wings of the security services that are fighting for power," in an allusion to the interior ministry and its agencies on the one hand, and the general intelligence directorate on the other.

Source: Source:

اغلاق او نقل جامعة البلقاء التطبيقية
Dr. Ayad Abu Ruman. "Close or Transfer al-Balqa' Applied University," 20 November 2013, jordanzad.com. <http://www.jordanzad.com/index.php?page=article&id=140672>

... it is easy for events such as these to spiral out of control and involve students from other groups in Jordan, and as a result slogans might change and some opposition parties may be drawn in, after which it can all explode. Such a scenario could easily come about in Jordan if not for the prudent Hashemite leadership and the mild response by all security agencies in light of current tensions...

Source: Source:

الأمن الوطني الأردني وعنف الجامعات
Shahada abu Baqr. "Jordanian national security and university violence," 27 November 2013, Ammon News. <http://www.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleno=174520>

Now more than ever, all reasonable minds need to realize the magnitude of the danger and together raise the level of thinking and behavior in a way that befits this reality, so that this perplexing, sad, and bitter situation in which universities have become a source of worry, fear and chaos ends...

Jihad, Shariah and Their Implications for Security and Geopolitics

By Dr. Jevdet Rexhepi, Regional Functional Scholar-Eurasia, Cultural Knowledge Consortium, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

This research focuses on the Sunni Muslim tradition, which encompasses about 90-95% of the world's Muslims. The idea isn't that alternate narrations of Islam and interpretations of Islamic doctrine (in spiritual or political terms) do not exist or aren't implemented (i.e., Shi'ism, Muslim Brotherhood), but rather that incorrect understanding of normative Islamic beliefs and practices writ large tends to proliferate.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/COCOM/EUCOM/Jihad-Shariah.pdf>

Deadly Double: Pneumonic and Bubonic Plague Hit Madagascar

“If the plague gets into prisons there could be a sort of atomic explosion of plague within the town.”

OE Watch Commentary: The bubonic plague is deadly, the pneumonic plague deadlier. Madagascar is suffering from both. According to the first accompanying article, bubonic plague has struck in the northwestern town of Madritsara. Originally 20 were thought to have died from the disease, which results when fleas that feed on infected rodents - often black rats - bite humans, but the number keeps rising. The second accompanying article relates how two villagers died of pneumonic plague, which, like the bubonic variety, can be caused by the bite of an infected flea, though pneumonic plague can also spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets. Of the two, bubonic plague is more common though less virulent, but make no mistake, both can be deadly.

Why is the “Black Death” appearing in Madagascar in 2013? To be sure, the disease never went away. Also, plague does occur in places other than Madagascar. However, last year the island nation, which has a regular plague season, had more cases of the plague than anywhere else in the world. One likely reason for Madagascar’s outbreaks is deforestation. As trees and other vegetation are removed, infected rats are forced from the forests into villages and urban areas, where their fleas are more likely to encounter humans. The country’s health budget is already overstretched, and, indeed, the shortage of funds is being blamed, in part, for the present outbreaks occurring.

An extremely interesting aspect of this story is the political angle: the tense presidential election might, in part, be driving the outbreak. As a traditional form of political protest, Madagascans burn bushes, which, in turn, could be causing the rats to seek shelter elsewhere, such as in the homes of villagers.

There is great fear that an even larger outbreak is on the horizon. Overcrowded



To combat plague, the International Committee of the Red Cross is working to reduce rat populations in prisons.
Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25342122>

Source: Bubonic Plague Outbreak Leaves at Least 20 Dead in Madagascar, ANGOP (Angola) 12 Dec 2013 http://www.portalangop.co.ao/angola/en_us/noticias/africa/2013/11/50/Bubonic-Plague-Outbreak-Leaves-Least-Dead-Madagascar,427f591f-7d1b-4d20-a22a-4bbf6e7e6b35.html

...Last year, the African island reported 256 cases and 60 deaths from the “Black Death.” According to the Centers For Disease Control, Madagascar and sub-Saharan Africa have accounted for 95 percent of reported plague cases in recent years...

...In October, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) warned that inmates in Madagascar are typically most at risk for catching the disease, due to the prevalence of rats and unsanitary conditions in the country’s prisons, the BBC reported.

...“The prison walls will never prevent the plague from getting out and invading the rest of the town,” Christophe Rogier of the Pasteur Institute told the BBC in October...

Source: “Madagascar hit by pneumonic and bubonic plague,” BBC News Africa, 11 Dec 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25342122>

...Pneumonic plague can be inhaled and transmitted between humans without involvement of animals or fleas...It can kill within 24 hours...

...Pneumonic plague is caused by the same bacteria that occur in bubonic plague - the Black Death that killed an estimated 25 million people in Europe during the Middle Ages...

...The Pasteur Institute said there were concerns that the disease could spread to towns and cities where living standards have declined since a coup in 2009 and the ensuing political crisis...

(continued)



Continued: Deadly Double: Pneumonic and Bubonic Plague Hit Madagascar

prisons literally crawling with rats are highly conducive to the disease being rapidly spread among the inmates and, almost inevitably, with visitors and others coming and going, to those outside the prison walls.

*These recent outbreaks of plague are quite disconcerting. Moreover, there is a threat of even larger outbreaks in the future, especially the pneumonic type, which can be easily spread through coughing and requires antibiotic treatment very early in the course of the disease to prevent it from being lethal. Plague was one of the first diseases used in biological warfare; its potential to complicate the modern day operational environment remains. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***

Africa's Brain Drain: Its Impacts on Security and Stability

By Lieutenant Colonel Robert Feldman, U.S. Army Reserve.

Africa is bleeding. Much of its lifeblood, composed of well-educated individuals who could help tackle its toughest problems, is flowing away. This hemorrhaging of engineers, doctors, teachers, nurses, businesspersons, scientists, and others with extensive training constitutes Africa's brain drain. This brief study examines the impact of this loss in the social, economic, political and security spheres.

<http://fms.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Africa's-Brain-Drain.pdf>



China Takes Some Credit, Maybe Even Gloats: Africa's Surging Economies

10 October 2013

“China is the driving force for Africa's growth.”

OE Watch Commentary: *Since much of the news coming out of Africa is coverage of the continent's many problems - conflicts, diseases, poor governance, terrorism, and so forth - it is relatively easy to overlook that periodically good things do happen on the continent. As the accompanying article from Beijing shows, China has not let all of the bad news bury the good, especially on the economic front, where it turns out that, despite America and Europe still shaking off their recessionary blues, Africa, according to the IMF, will have experienced 5% growth in 2013. Maybe it is not surprising that China has noticed this impressive economic growth: after all, as the most important trading partner for sub-Saharan Africa, it is responsible for a significant portion of it.*

This is not one-off growth; the IMF predicts 6% in 2014. Much of this is from mining, oil production, and agriculture, where raw materials, often with little or no finishing, are sent to foreign markets, especially China. Several factors are contributing to that growth, including an expanding African middle class, increased international trade, and greater political stability (at least in some African countries). The stirrings of economic diversification are also helping, though, to be sure, resource-rich African countries, which often rely on the aforementioned oil and mineral extraction industries, tend to lead the growth index.

While China is broadcasting its contributions to Africa's economic success - some might even say gloating about them - it is also, according to the book, Africa: On International Contributions of Africa-China Relations, accusing the West of unfairly painting China as the new colonist in Africa, in no small part because of Chinese economic undertakings on the continent. The book's author finds Western nations are often stuck in the democracy-security-development nexus, while China emphasizes mutual interests in economic cooperation. China also avoids interfering in African local issues, which some in the West criticize as China lacking morality and responsibility. Whether such criticism is justifiable or not, it is hard to ignore the significant role China has played in Africa's impressive recent economic development. It is also hard to ignore the immense leverage China has gained and continues to accrue for being, as Mohamed Barrada, professor of economics at Nouakchott University in Mauritania, says, “the driving force for Africa's growth.”

End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)



With numerous African nations experiencing surging economies thanks to Chinese investments and trade, Chinese leverage in much of the continent continues to grow.
Source: <http://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/?p=3645>

Source: “African economies remain resilient in 2013,” Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (Beijing), 12 Dec 2013, <http://www.focac.org/eng/zxxx/t1108239.htm>

...Economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, has rebounded quite robustly since 2009, when growth was significantly reduced. ..

...Scott Firsing, director of Pretoria-based North American International School (NAIS), said Africa's “old and new” resource-rich countries, in particular, led the continent's economic growth. “The old” includes South Africa, Algeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Nigeria, while Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania are from “the new.”...

...The countries worst affected by the global crisis in the past few years are the middle income countries that were more fully integrated with the global economy and international financial market. Those countries have seen a sharper reduction in their growth rate. South Africa, for example, is among those not growing as robustly as the rest of the continent...

...To achieve sustainable development, more attention needs to be paid to domestic sectors and intra-African trade. The dominant agriculture sector can help reduce poverty and lead to growth in other fields like services, and wholesale and retail trade...

...In Firsing's view, inadequate infrastructure, lack of skills, and poor education are among the major obstacles hampering Africa's economic growth, so he called for developing and modernizing the infrastructure which “remains critical to Africa's future economic growth.”...

The Arms of Apartheid: Still Produced, Still Sold

9 October 2013

“In any case the new ANC government quickly set out to support the industry for the same reason as other arms-producing states: as a source of income, a catalyst for technological development and even hoped it could be used as a foreign policy instrument, in particular in Africa.”

OE Watch Commentary: South Africa developed a significant homegrown arms industry during apartheid. It had to: there was a 1977 UN arms embargo placed on the nation, forcing it to design and manufacture many of its own weapons. These arms were used to enforce apartheid or fight guerilla wars in Zimbabwe and Namibia, then called Rhodesia and South-West Africa, respectively. With the end of apartheid, some thought the domestic armaments industry would, or perhaps should wither. As the accompanying article states, “arms exports were an issue of debate during the 1990s with some people questioning the morality of selling tools of repression created by the former apartheid regime.” Still, no less a figure than Nelson Mandela, upon assuming the presidency in 1994, allowed arms manufacturing to continue, albeit as defense spending decreased, manufacturing slowed.

Among the items South African industries manufacture are helicopters (transport and attack), military trucks, small arms, and antitank missiles. There is also the Casspir, the rather infamous mine-protected armored vehicle with a V-shaped hull, of which earlier versions are often considered forerunners to present day MRAPs (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected) used by the American military. Indeed, South Africa’s arms industry is considered one of the most advanced in the non-Western world today.

While South Africa willingly gave up its nuclear weapons program and saw the seven nuclear weapons it had manufactured destroyed under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, it is doubtful that its conventional arms manufacturing will meet a similar fate, despite the nation lacking any significant external threats. The weapons have been useful in other countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the UN needed attack and utility helicopters to help strengthen its peacekeeping force. Providing military equipment to help quell Africa’s many trouble spots is not, however, the main reason South Africa has kept its armaments industry after apartheid’s fall. The manufacture and sale of military equipment, despite being apartheid-tinged, is a significant source of revenue. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**



The Casspir, perhaps the most well-known armament manufactured in South Africa and sold to other nations. Source: http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8210:mechem-relaunches-the-casspir-mrap&catid=50:Land&Itemid=105

Source: Thalif Deen, “South Africa’s Arms Industry Most Advanced in Global South, Inter Press Service, 11 Dec 2013, <http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/12/south-africas-arms-industry-advanced-global-south/>

...When the white apartheid regime in South Africa kept the overwhelming majority of blacks under military repression, the country’s security forces were armed with weapons originating mostly from a highly-developed domestic armaments industry...

...Nicole Auger, a military analyst covering Middle East/Africa at Forecast International, a leader in defence market intelligence, told IPS “the South African military industry really took shape in the 1980s and got to the point where its technical capability and design and production abilities were among the most advanced in the world.”...

...Pieter Wezeman, senior researcher, Arms Transfers Programme at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, told IPS the South African arms industry is advanced in a few niche areas such as certain light armoured vehicles and anti-tank missiles. “But overall, it has become increasingly a part of the global arms industry acting as subcontractors and supplying military components for complete systems elsewhere.”...

...The U.S. was a one-time major client because it urgently needed mine-protected armored vehicles for use in Iraq and Afghanistan...

...The 1977 arms embargo provided the incentive for South African firms to research and develop its own weapons so that it could become self-sufficient...

Nigeria Ramps Up Military Production Capabilities

14 October 2013

“These two developments suggest that Nigeria’s military is beginning to reconceptualize itself not only as an organization that is engaged in security-related affairs, but one that could very well be a center of innovation – and thus economic growth – for the country at large.”

OE Watch Commentary: Over the past month Nigeria has been consistently taking an aggressive role in the indigenous manufacture of military equipment, a trend that began with transition to civilian rule in 1999. Specifically, the Nigerian Air Force recently revealed that it has produced the country’s first unmanned drone, while the Nigerian Navy has claimed that it now has the capacity to make and sell commercial warships, which it plans to market to other African states.

Nigeria’s capacity to build and sell commercial warships is being hailed as a major development, particularly given the country’s increasing maritime security concerns posed by piracy in the Bight of Benin. To be sure, Nigeria has had its hand in the shipbuilding industry before. In June 2012 it revealed the NNS Adoni, a 100-foot-long ship that was the first of its kind ever to be designed and built exclusively by Nigerians. The unveiling of that ship was lauded as a major accomplishment by President Goodluck Jonathan, and understood as not only a source of national pride and a step in the right direction for a Nigerian military establishment desperately eager to modernize itself, but also a spur on technological innovation in the country more generally. The more recent news that the Nigerian Navy is now capable of building ships even larger than the Adoni was met with equal elation, especially given the plans to sell to them to other African states. Given that more than half of Sub-Saharan African countries have coastlines that require at least minimal naval presence, Nigeria could very well stand to profit from continental sales, particularly if the ships’ cost is kept low and quality is at least moderate.

The fact that the federal government also revealed it has created an unmanned drone also speaks to Nigeria’s aggressive stance towards military modernization. Given the pervasive security and humanitarian challenges in some of the country’s more remote locales, the Nigerian government has a logical vested



The Nigerian Air Force unveiled its first indigenously developed UAV on 17 December.
Source: statehouse.gov.ng

Source: “Nigerian Navy to export warships to African countries,” Punch (Nigeria), 20 November 2013: http://www.punchng.com/news/nigerian-navy-to-export-war-ships-to-african-countries/?utm_source=Africa+Center+for+Strategic+Studies+-+Media+Review+for+November+21+%2C+2013&utm_campaign=11%2F21%2F2013&utm_medium=email

The Nigerian Navy says it is building commercial war ships for export within the African countries.

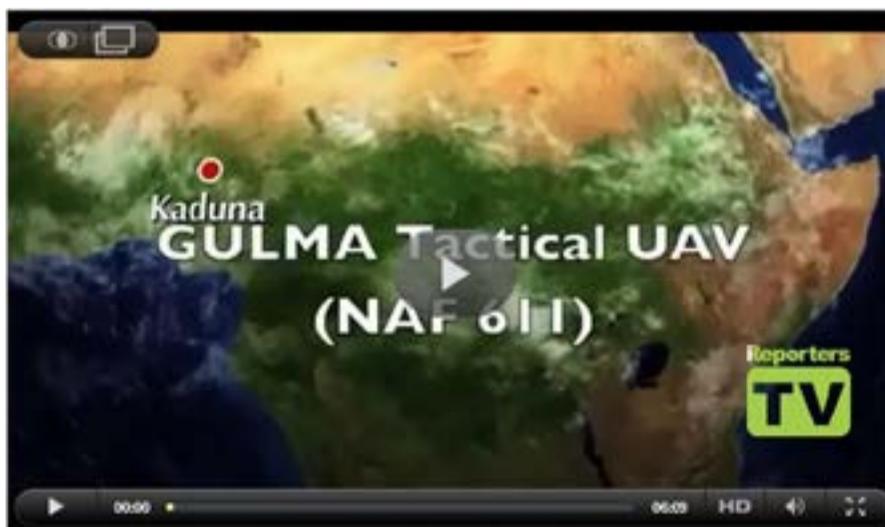
The Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), Vice Adm. Dele Ezeoba...expressed confidence that the Nigerian Navy was skilled enough to build patrol ships between 10 and 38 metres in size for export.

“The Nigerian Navy will no longer buy a ship of between 10 and 12 metres in size, because we have the capacity and capability to build them in our dockyard,” he said.

According to him, the ship under construction is in the same class with first indigenous 31 metres patrol ship, NSS Andoni, but was redesigned and upgraded to 38 metres.

He assured that the second indigenous ship would be delivered to Nigerian Navy by the dockyard for its inauguration into the fleets latest by June 2014.

(continued)



Open source video footage of Nigeria’s Gulma Drone In Flight: Part 1
Source: http://ireporterstv.co/ir_fullvideo/nigerias-gulma-drone-in-flight-part-1/

Continued: Nigeria Ramps Up Military Production Capabilities

interest in the sorts of surveillance capabilities that drones could provide. Indeed, as President Jonathan noted in his speech at the unveiling: “Apart from its diverse military application[s], unmanned aerial vehicle[s] provide mankind with a range of benefits in disaster management, power line surveys, law enforcement, telecommunications, weather monitoring, and aerial imaging/mapping. It is also rapidly becoming an important tool in news coverage, environmental monitoring, and oil and gas exploration.” That the new drone is named “GULMA” (the Hausa word for “gossip”) suggests that the Nigerian federal government understands the new technology as being integral for gathering human intelligence, likely in relation to Boko Haram, Ansaru, and other militant groups whose activities are otherwise challenging to monitor.

*Combined, these two developments suggest that Nigeria’s military is beginning to reconceptualize itself not only as an organization that is engaged in security-related affairs, but also one that could very well be a center of innovation – and thus economic growth – for the country at large. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)***

Source: Omonobi, Kingsley, “Nigeria: Jonathan unveils Nigerian-made drone,” Vanguard (Lagos, Nigeria), 18 December 2013: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201312180349.html>

President Goodluck Jonathan yesterday unveiled the first indigenous unmanned aerial vehicle, UAV, named GULMA, built by the Nigerian Air Force in Kaduna.

He declared that the giant technological breakthrough of various sectors, particularly the Armed Forces, are pointers to the country’s potential for greater deeds.

In his speech at the unveiling ceremony, President Jonathan said: “We must not forget the lesson of this encouraging moment in our nation’s history; that as Nigerians we are capable of great deeds.

“Besides its diverse military application, unmanned aerial vehicles provide mankind with a range of benefits in disaster management, power line surveys, law enforcement, telecommunications, weather monitoring, and aerial imaging/mapping. It is also rapidly becoming an important tool in news coverage, environmental monitoring, and oil and gas exploration.

“Apart from their commitment to the protection of our sovereignty, they are helping to keep our nation ahead in military science and technology and to keep their civilian counterparts on their toes.”

The Minister of Information, who also supervises the Defence Ministry, Labaran Maku, noted that the true professionalism of the military since 1999 had given rise to the indigenous military-led technological breakthroughs.

“The GULMA UAV potentially affords the Armed Forces a window of immense opportunities in its task of acquiring timely intelligence and combating criminality, especially in light of the nation’s prevailing security challenges.

African Political Systems and Conflict

By Susan M. Bartlett, Center for Global and International Studies (CGIS)-FMSO Research Fellow during the Fall 2012 semester at the University of Kansas.

What is the relationship between African conflict and political party institutionalization? By using survey results from Afrobarometer polling, Kansas University graduate student Susan M. Bartlett argues that greater political party institutionalization is positively correlated with reduced instances of African conflict. Bartlett’s work is an important step in giving greater attention to how political parties in postcolonial state settings differ in genesis, composition, and actions from their analogues in Western societies.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/universities/african-political-party.pdf>

“When state collapse happens in former French colonies, Paris is continuously stuck between a rock and hard place: intervene and be labeled as neo-imperial, or stand back and be labeled as indifferent to human rights and shirking historical responsibilities.”

OE Watch Commentary: *It should come as no surprise that as the calendar year winds down, many commentators on the African continent are beginning to refer to 2013 as “The Year of the French Army in Africa.” The year was bookended on one side by France’s January 2013 operation to oust militant Islamists in northern Mali, and on the other side by its December 2013 intervention to protect civilians in deteriorating Central African Republic. Despite calls by citizens within both of those countries, as well as members of their diasporas living within France to intervene, Paris nevertheless continues to be criticized by many in the African media for both meddling in sovereign affairs and offering wrong-headed approaches to problems.*

On one hand, commentators are quick to criticize France on the standby qualm of neocolonialism, which in French is encapsulated in the term “françafrique.” Commentators, like the one in the second article, lament the fact that France appears ready to intervene at a moment’s notice in its former colonies. For its part, President François Hollande’s administration has also been heartily

Source: Pigasse, Jean-Paul, “Mali-Centrafrigue - Mieux vaudrait regarder la vérité en face,” [Mali and the Central African Republic: Better to look truth in the face.], Les Dépêches de Brazzaville (Brazzaville, Republic of Congo), 16 December 2013: <http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/201312161229.html>

That France is still so concerned with what is happening in its former backyard to that point that it is ready to intervene militarily at its African partners’ request cannot possibly chock anyone. In acting like it did yesterday in Mali, and today in the Central African Republic, it deals with present problems while also assuming responsibilities derived from its long history with the continent that are ultimately inescapable.

The real question is whether the forces that France is deploying on the ground have any serious chance of resolving the problems that led to the armed intervention in the first place. And sadly, in this regard, one would be right to be deeply skeptical that the means being deployed are not all in line with the issues that they are meant to address. This is the case for at least two reasons:

- A. The use of sophisticated tools like planes, helicopters, armored vehicles, heavy arms, and armed drones have no ability to put the end to conflicts that essentially have an ethnic or religious base, and this is a fact that is becoming all the more evident every day. It could, after some time and within a limited territory, put an end to violence that is decimating civilian populations. However, this sort of response has no chance to instill a lasting peace in an area where civil war is rife. Those that doubt this fact should consider the stinging defeat by Western forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

(continued)

A French soldier looks out from an armoured vehicle during a patrol in Bangui, the capital of Central African Republic, on December 6, 2013.
Source: <http://www.japantoday.com/category/world/view/french-troops-pour-into-central-african-republic>

Continued: 2013: The Year of the French Army in Africa?

criticized from more liberal critics precisely for not wanting to intervene or even not intervening quickly enough.

Moreover, even those who have welcomed a French presence in response to crippled African states are also quick to forward critiques about the tactics employed by Paris. Those like the author of the first article seem to welcome assistance, though remain deeply wary that a military solution could serve to reconcile problems with inherently social, ethnic, and religious roots. For his part, the author of the second article is also critical of France's tendencies to overpower African militaries, whose capacities at conflict prevention could ultimately be undermined by French overreach.

*To be sure, commentators do tend to recognize the fact that when state collapse happens in former French colonies, Paris is continuously stuck between a rock and hard place: intervene and be labeled as neo-imperialist, or stand back and be labeled as indifferent to human rights and shirking historical responsibilities. How best to reconcile these two contending viewpoints is yet to be seen. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)***

B. This sort of conflict, as the Congo knows, can only be resolved by elements from within the country itself. To think that an external military intervention could reconcile enemy brothers is simply a utopian dream. This type of action might lead to a temporary suspension of violence, but sooner or later, once the units have returned to their distant barracks, the use of force will return and civil war will again ravage the country. This is exactly what happened in Mali where, contrary to appearances, nothing has been resolved in the areas where France intervened.

Source: Makieni, Dieudonna, "Nord-Mali: Vers une guerre sans fin?" [Northern Mali; Towards a War Without End?], *Le Pays*, (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso), 12 December 2013: <http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/201312120744.html>

Without a doubt, 2013 will be remembered as the year of the "French Army in Africa." Of course, France's logistical capabilities and the quality of her monitoring capabilities confer her an undeniable effectiveness, that served her well in the first few hours of the occupation in northern Mali. The question that we have to ask is: how long will France occupy this role, when of course, responsibility actually lies with African armies? Yesterday, Mali, today, CAR: would France respond to a call for help if another insurgency showed itself somewhere else in Africa? Surely, not: she can no longer indefinitely deploy her troops on the continent. However, the international terrorist, he does in fact have possibilities. This why France must, without delay, allow the Malian state to entirely exert its authority across its territory, including Kidal. However great its power, France cannot contribute to an endless war in Mali.

Ethiopians at Home and Abroad Infuriated by Repatriation of Compatriots from Saudi Arabia

“Impacts of the repatriation and violence towards Ethiopians have been felt globally.”

OE Watch Commentary:

Ethiopian citizens and those in its diaspora have recently galvanized to express extreme outrage to Saudi Arabia's recent decision to expel some 150,000 Ethiopian immigrants from the country, in what will be the largest humanitarian airlift in history. Not only have Ethiopians around the globe expressed anger about the deportations, they are also highly critical of the manner in which the Saudi state has been treating eventual deportees, including numerous instances of human rights abuses, police brutality, and even murders. Tensions between Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia are at unprecedented levels, and are exacerbated by the fact that other Middle Eastern states, like Israel, are following suit and expelling their own Ethiopian immigrant populations as well.

Saudi Arabia's expulsions began in November 2013, when a temporary amnesty program for the nearly 9 million illegal migrants residing within its borders ended. Thereafter, a brutal police crackdown began, which ultimately killed three Ethiopians, setting off the intense backlash from Ethiopians around the world.

Impacts of the repatriation and violence towards Ethiopians have been felt globally. Within the country members of civil society, such as the author of the first accompanying article, have been highly critical of Addis Ababa's response. On one hand, they accuse the government of not doing more to protect its citizens living abroad, while on the other hand, they claim that the government's incapacity to reduce poverty within Ethiopia has been the very impetus that caused flight from



Image of young Ethiopian woman murdered in Saudi Arabia.

Source: <http://www.tesfanews.net/ethiopian-migrants-tell-of-torture-and-rape-in-yemen/>

Source: Bekele, Getahune, “Death and rape rife in Saudi Arabia as xenophobia against Ethiopians turns bloodier,” The Horn Times Newsletter (Ethiopia), 29 November 2013: <http://ecadforum.com/2013/11/29/death-and-rape-rife-in-saudi-arabia-as-xenophobia-against-ethiopians-turns-bloodier/>

[The recent murder of an Ethiopian girl has caused] incalculable grief in Ethiopia and [is] a result of Saudi Arabia also losing her incandescent charm as the holy land of Islam.

Not that this dead Ethiopian girl earned a generous stipend in the medieval and backward kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a nation dependent on cheap slave labor for her daily survival. The slayed defenseless girl was there in Saudi just to escape the abject poverty blighting her country, a poverty created by successions of tyrannical oppressors but exacerbated by the current ruling minority junta, which openly practices an evil ethnic apartheid system in the 21st century.

The 22-year-old domestic worker was crushed to death last week by a police bus at Amira Nura repatriation center in Riyadh-Saudi Arabia, during a scuffle with security forces.

The cry of raped woman and tortured men is echoing forlornly in the desert with the international community and the Ethiopian ruling minority junta simply looking the other way. In the teeth of these extremely vicious attacks, demonstrations staged by diaspora Ethiopians from the US across Europe did not make the royal family of Saudi Arabia suspend their cruel decree or lose their spitting venom against the defenseless migrant workers, or rein in the over- scrupulous religious police synonymous with beheadings and rape. The carnage and bloodletting is continuing.

According to the Horn Times reporters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopians, grinning and bearing the tragedy, are currently staring huge-eyed at their ruling junta which violets every norm of how a responsible government should behave in the face of such criminal acts. They are also staring at the savage kingdom of Saudi Arabia in utter astonishment.

“Ethiopians are used as scapegoat by the nervous royal family [of Saudi Arabia] to divert attention from other pressing issues as a tide of desire for change start building up so rapidly within Saudi Arabia. We are talking about a wealthy family clinging to power by virtue of preserving traditional Islam, tightly controlling state administration, diplomacy, and commerce.”

In recent weeks, prominent Ethiopians have been calling on western powers to have the moral integrity to insist that the Saudi Arabian leaders respect all rights that were agreed upon when they signed the UN charter.

(continued)

Continued: Ethiopians at Home and Abroad Infuriated by Repatriation of Compatriots from Saudi Arabia

the country in the first place. For its part, the Ethiopian government is increasingly overwhelmed with how to deal with the new influx of persons; some have suggested that the repatriation risks triggering a humanitarian crisis.

Outside of Ethiopia reactions have also been heated. Members of the Ethiopian Diaspora have staged multiple protests in cities such as Atlanta, Washington DC, London, Toronto, Stockholm, and Seoul, lambasting Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Saudi Arabia's repatriation policy is causing ripples throughout the region, with Israel now slated to return some 500 Ethiopian immigrants as early as January 2014.

End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)



A map showing the journey of Ethiopian migrants to Saudi Arabia.

Source: <http://www.tesfanews.net/ethiopian-migrants-tell-of-torture-and-rape-in-yemen/>

Source: "136,000 migrants returned from Saudi Arabia to Ethiopia," Times Live (Johannesburg, South Africa), 18 December 2013: <http://www.timeslive.co.za/africa/2013/12/18/136-000-migrants-returned-from-saudi-arabia-to-ethiopia>

An Ethiopian government official says at least 136 000 Ethiopians have been sent home from Saudi Arabia as part of its crackdown migrant workers.

Foreign Affairs Spokesman, Dina Mufti, said Tuesday that has left his government trying to cope with the massive number of returning Ethiopians.

In Saudi Arabia, an amnesty period for immigrants recently ended and a crackdown began November 4 targeting the kingdom's 9 million migrant laborers.

Decades of lax immigration enforcement had allowed migrants to take low-wage jobs that the kingdom's own citizens shunned. Saudi authorities grappling with high unemployment now want those jobs for the kingdom's citizens.

Source: Abebe, Bekwet, "Ethiopia: Israel Follows Saudi Arabia to Demand Deportation of Ethiopians," Addis Fortune (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), 8 December 2013: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201312100198.html>

Some 60,000 migrants from different African countries - particularly Eritrea and Sudan, which makes up the lion's share at some 90% of the total - have entered Israel in recent years through the Sinai Peninsula. This has led to fears that the Jewish character of the country of 7.8 million is being threatened, as was stated by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a speech in May 2012.

In order to assuage those concerns, the country is embarking on a drive to remove the undocumented migrants, which it calls 'infiltrators', with incentives designed to encourage voluntary departures. These include 3,500 dollars in compensation for each migrant, in addition to free plane tickets and health care.

Unlike those who will be leaving Israel shortly, a large portion of those from the oil-rich kingdom returned to the country without their personal belongings; some of them even barefoot.

"We wish these measures weren't to be taken, but at least they will not throw them out the way Saudi Arabia did," said Dina, who was not aware of the issue until approached by Fortune.

The Israeli embassy in Addis Ababa, on the other hand, requested full cooperation from the Ethiopian government on ways of returning the migrants, since they entered into the country using illegal means.

Currently, there are more than 130,000 people of Ethiopian origin in Israel, the majority of whom have Israeli citizenship given that they are Beta Israel.

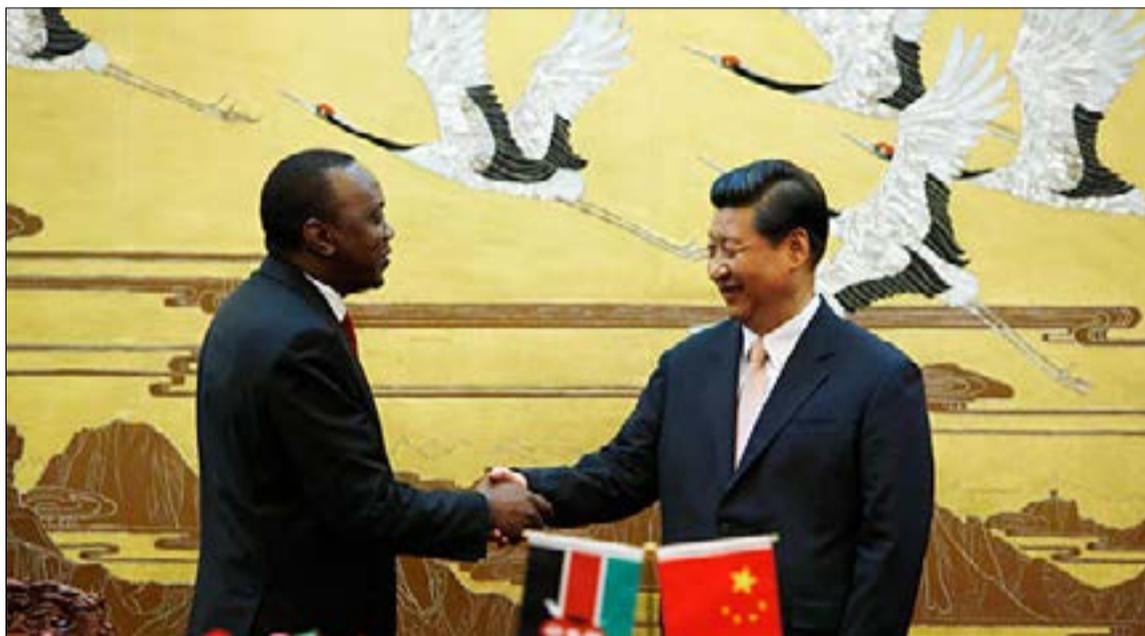
China-Funded Railway in Kenya Accelerates Military Ties

“What we are doing here today will most definitely transform the course of development not just for Kenya but the whole East African region... Let me at this juncture express my deep gratitude to the President of the People’s Republic of China, Mr. Xi Jinping, for his great personal interest in this project, and his government’s immense support.”

OE Watch Commentary: Despite concerns from leaders in Kenya’s Coast Province about China Road and Bridge Corporation’s capacity to build a railway connecting Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan, on 28 November Kenya launched construction of the \$13.8 billion Chinese-funded railway. Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta praised the deal for “transforming” the development of East Africa and praised Chinese President Xi Jinping and the Chinese government. The deal, which was signed days after China sided with the African Union’s recommendation to suspend International Criminal Court (ICC) proceedings against Kenyatta, is a sign of increasingly close ties between Kenya and China.

An article in Uganda’s leading daily, New Vision, expressed optimism about the railway, whose first phase runs from Kenya’s coastal city of Mombasa to Nairobi. The article said it “hoped” the railway would extend to Uganda before connecting to Rwanda and South Sudan. One reason for the expression of “hope” – rather than certainty – is that China’s motive for constructing the railway is to export South Sudanese, Ugandan, and northern Kenyan oil to China via Kenya’s coast. In September 2013 China National Offshore Oil Company, which is searching for oil in South Sudan and northern Kenya, won a \$2 billion deal to develop northern Uganda’s Kingfisher petroleum field near the border with Congo. However, if there are new conflicts in East Africa related to terrorism, insurgency, or interstate rivalry or if the oil fields are more modest than previously thought, China may halt development of the railway.

In order to prevent security issues from derailing the search for resources in East Africa and to build goodwill, China will likely provide more military assistance to Kenya and its East African neighbors, including



Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and Chinese President Xi Jinping agree on a Chinese-funded railway project connecting Kenya to other East African countries. Source: <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/2013/0820/From-Indian-Ocean-to-Uganda-China-will-build-Kenya-s-new-rail-line>

Source: “Kenya launches \$13.8bn China-built railway to boost trade,” newvision.co.ug, 28 November 2013.

Kenya launches \$13.8bn China-built railway to boost trade

“Kenya launched construction of a Chinese-funded \$13.8 billion flagship railway project, hoping to dramatically increase trade and boost Kenya’s position as a regional economic powerhouse. The key transport link, to run from the busy port city of Mombasa inland to the highland capital Nairobi, is eventually hoped to extend onwards to Uganda, and then connect with proposed lines to Rwanda and South Sudan. “What we are doing here today will most definitely transform the course of development not just for Kenya but the whole East African region,” President Uhuru Kenyatta told crowds at the ground breaking ceremony he called a “historic milestone”. “As a result east Africa will become a competitive investment destination... a busy growing east Africa is good for us a country.”

China has funded the project only for the first 450-kilometre (280-mile) section -- \$5.2 billion -- from Mombasa to Nairobi. Work on that section, by the state-owned China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), is expected to be completed by 2017. “Presently our region relies almost exclusively on road transport,” Kenyatta said, adding he was looking forward to waving off “the first train to Kigali via Nairobi and Kampala, delivering the promise of prosperity for all our east African peoples.”

According to plans, the new lines would see passenger journey times cut from the current 12 hours to around four, which is around half the current driving time on crowded and pot-holed roads. Freight trains are planned to be able to cut the current 36-hour trip by rail to just eight, a major boost for regional landlocked nations, with

(continued)

Continued: China-Funded Railway in Kenya Accelerates Military Ties

surveillance equipment and attack helicopters for Kenya's war on al-Shabaab in southern Somalia. In 2011 China also provided the Uganda People's Defense Force with \$2.3 million for its efforts against al-Shabaab and anti-Ugandan insurgents based in Congo who are ideologically, if not also operationally, connected to al-Shabaab. China, which holds 25% of the market share of arms sales to Africa (compared to 3% for the U.S), has seen its arms wind up in both rebel and government hands, however, especially in South Sudan. This could further militarize East Africa and create instability, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). [1]

*Another side effect of Chinese involvement in East Africa, according to the New Vision article, is that China has rankled countries that are not included in the railway line, such as Burundi, Tanzania and Congo. Tanzania's transport minister has announced new infrastructure plans with Burundi and Congo, but it remains unclear whether they will receive support from China or another country. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)***

1. For a summary of the SIPRI report, "Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2012," see: <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130318/DEFREG03/303180017/>

planners claiming it will slash cargo transport costs by 60 percent. However, the project has sparked controversy, with some Kenyan lawmakers criticizing the awarding of the contracts and complaining the process was not transparent. It has also rankled regional nations not included in the line, with Burundi's transport minister on Thursday announcing a raft of infrastructure plans with Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

New East African railway



Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25134276>

High Altitude Problems in Garbage Collection

December 2013

OE Watch Commentary: Colombian Attorney General Alejandro Ordóñez announced the removal from office of Gustavo Petro, the Mayor of Bogotá. Such removal is within the constitutional power of the attorney general; while unusual, it is not unprecedented. The event is a sub-drama within the larger Colombian ideological battle, and exposes the interweaving of that ideological struggle with quotidian activities.

Petro was a member of the defunct leftist guerrilla organization known as the M-19. Given amnesty, he became a successful politician, apparently without abandoning his revolutionary socialist perspectives. He was elected mayor of Bogotá in late 2011 on a plurality of 32% of the vote. One of his first decisions was to reform garbage collection, taking the mission away from existing private contractors and assigning it to an existing government bureaucracy, one which had no experience collecting garbage. What ensued in the city of seven million inhabitants was an annoying if temporary ecological, aesthetic and public health disaster. The mayor was forced to reverse course, rehiring the private companies at a higher cost. The mayor's experiment wasted money and displeased the electorate. That administrative flub sits at the heart of the case brought by the Attorney General, who is himself known as a decided anti-leftist. The mayor now has a few months (while still functioning as mayor) to appeal his removal, but his chances of success on appeal appear dim. Some sectors of the public have rallied to his defense, but so far the numbers do not look to be politically impressive. Failing his appeal, Mr. Petro may be barred from running for public office for fifteen years, effectively eliminating any presidential candidacy he might have entertained.

End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)

Source: Staff, "El procurador Ordóñez actuó correctamente: Jaime Bernal Cuéllar," (Attorney General Ordóñez acted correctly: Jaime Bernal Cuéllar (former Attorney General), La w radio 10 December 2013, <http://www.wradio.com.co/noticias/actualidad/el-procurador-ordonez-actuo-correctamente-jaime-bernal-cuellar/20131012/nota/2034278.aspx>

The ex-attorney general said that Article 277 of the Constitution gave him the authority to oversee the conduct of public servants, among them popularly elected functionaries. In that vein, Bernbal Cuellar said that Attorney General Alejandro Ordóñez acted correctly in the removal (from office) and ineligibility determination made regarding Gustavo Petro for the issue of the garbage (collection).

Source: Eduardo Mackenzie, "La obsesión anticapitalista del doctor Petro" (Dr. Petro's anti-capitalist obsession), VoxPopuli, 16 December 2013, <http://voxpathuli.net/>

Specialized Colombian organizations...warned him, in vain: what you intend to do is illegal, not viable, and will put the health of the city's inhabitants at risk...The amnestied exguerrilla was convinced that his talent as an organizer was worth more than the experience and realism of those entities. But he was mistaken.

Source: Gabriel Zapata Correa, "La Procuraduría merece respeto" (The Attorney General Deserves Respect), El Mundo, Medellín, 13 December 2013, http://www.elmundo.com/portal/opinion/columnistas/la_procuraduria_merece_respeto.php

The polemics, which have not lost heat, owe without doubt to the fact that it may be the political news of the year -- without a doubt.

Source: Alessandro Rampiotti, "Thousands rally to support fired Bogota mayor," Al Jazeera, 14 December 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2013/12/crowds-gather-support-ousted-bogota-mayor-2013121404530554792.html>

Al Jazeera's Alessandro Rampiotti, reporting from Bogota, said international pressure is mounting on the country to address the rationale for sentencing Petro to "political death."

Panama Canal Expansion: Energy for Asia-Pacific Allies and Competitors

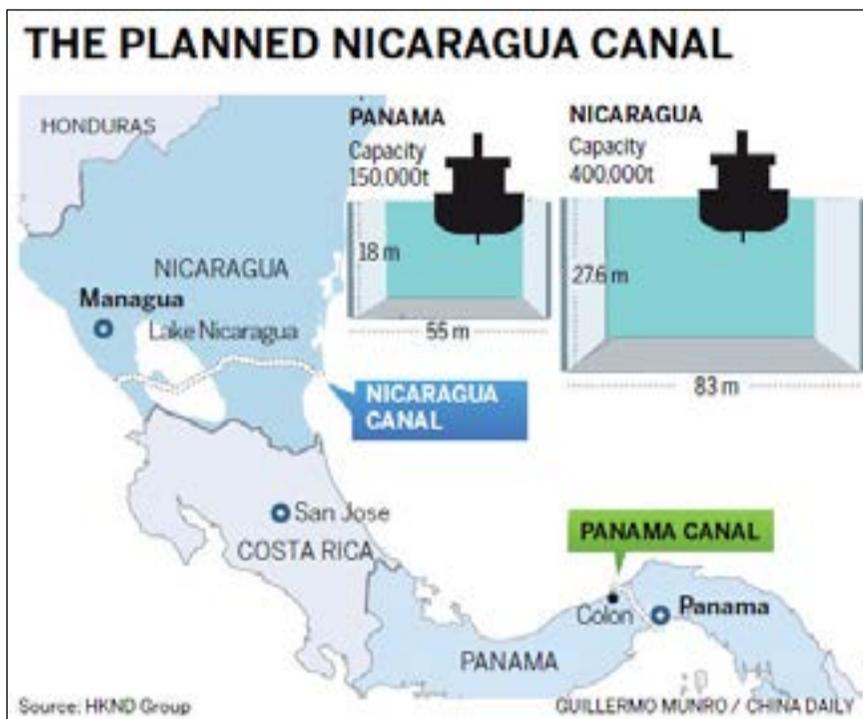
“...those commenting questioned how an organized crime group could mobilize...when the federal and state governments were unable to do so.”

OE Watch Commentary: By 2015 the Panama Canal is scheduled to open its \$5.6 billion expansion project that will significantly increase both the number and size of the cargo ships that may pass its locks. The principal change will be a reduction in transit time between East Asian ports and those on the eastern Atlantic. For example, East Asia to the Gulf of Mexico by freighter around Cape Horn or through Suez takes approximately 41 and 43 days, respectively (19 knots average ship speed). Using the Panama Canal, this same journey takes 25 days or just a few days more than ships from East Asia to the Middle East. Reduced transport time through the canal translates into a 40% time savings in getting goods to market and a roughly 30% savings in total cost-to-ship for seaborne carriers and their customers.

Increased Panama Canal capacity will be important to all seaborne commerce, but none more so than for the fragmented international trade in liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Unlike globally priced oil, transportation infrastructure constraints make gas a regionally priced commodity. Having the smallest local supply to fast rising demand, East Asia faces the world's highest gas prices (in 2013, 45% and 400% higher than Europe and North America, respectively). Up until 2015 only 8% of the world's LNG fleet can fit through the canal. Post-expansion, the percentage will be more than 90%. Increasing East Asia's access to lower terminal-priced gas, combined with significantly more competitive transport, may reduce Asian gas prices by 10-15%, a significant savings for East Asian economies.

The strategic implications of this pending change will be slow to manifest themselves, but enormous for regional allies and competitors. The first article below highlights Japan's LNG dependence as the largest LNG importer, accounting for one-third of the global LNG trade. While the rate of growth of Japan's LNG reliance will vary with the extent to which it restarts its nuclear power, the coming seven seven years are likely to see Japan's LNG consumption grow by 30-40%. As LNG grows



Map Source: <http://images.china.cn/attachement/jpg/site1007/20130626/001aa0ba5c851334847201.jpg>

Source: “Panama Canal widening to expedite US LNG sales to Japan,” NewsBase, 14 November 2013. <http://www.newsbase.com/newsbasearchive/cotw.jsp?pub=glng&issue=295>

Japan Looks to Reduce Reliance on Mid-East and Russian Energy with US Natural Gas Imports

Japanese public and private sector officials are taking a keen interest in the project to widen the Panama Canal, which will double the canal's capacity and allow the waterway to handle an estimated 12 million tons per year of LNG. As the world's largest LNG importer, Japan relied for decades on imported natural gas as part of its energy portfolio.

Source: “China's Power Market To Outstrip US And Europe Combined By 2035”, International Business Times, 10 December 2013. <http://www.ibtimes.com/chinas-power-market-outstrip-us-europe-combined-2035-1502174>

China Is Also Voracious For New Energy Sources

China added an electricity system the size of Japan's every four years in its past decade of massive economic growth. Its total power load will be larger than the U.S. and Europe's combined on an equivalent basis by 2035. China has tripled its electricity infrastructure over the past decade. Even with a widely feared and discussed Chinese economic slowdown, electricity consumption should grow 4.1 percent a year for at least 20 more years.

(continued)

Continued: Panama Canal Expansion: Energy for Asia-Pacific Allies and Competitors

in importance to the functioning of Japan's economy, so too does LNG's indirect yet increasingly critical role in sustaining the country's military power. Without the cost savings of LNG transited through the Panama Canal, Japan could turn to countries like Australia, though at slightly higher prices, or it may increase its dependence on the Middle East, turn to pending Russian gas supplies, or feel hard-pressed to adopt a more aggressive stance in its on-going disputes with China over the energy rich East and South China Seas, which are primarily natural gas players.

The second and third articles touch on China and access to new energy. The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that a megawatt of electricity in Asia generated from gas is about 2.2 times as expensive as the cost of equivalent power from coal. The IEA also pegs China's growing need for electricity at a conservative 4% per year for the next ten years. It should come as no surprise then that 70% of all Asian power plants under construction are coal fired. Yet, in reaction to its literally choking pollution, China has a national strategy to support gas-fired plants. The Panama Canal expansion, leading to a 10-15% cost savings, will lower the obstacle to China succeeding in promoting gas over coal and reduce its persistent trade surpluses to boot. China's energy demand (and that for Brazilian ores, which will also benefit from canal expansion) has breathed life into dormant investment projects.

*The third article describes a Chinese company's efforts to build a cross-isthmus canal in Nicaragua. However long the odds of such a second canal being realized, its serious planning indicates the tremendous value to improving transport between the western Atlantic seaboard and Asia. Beyond economics, there is a fundamental linkage between canal expansion and Japan's and China's ability to maintain and foster national power. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zandoli)***

Source: "China's Power Market To Outstrip US And Europe Combined By 2035", International Business Times, 10 December 2013.
<http://www.ibtimes.com/chinas-power-market-outstrip-us-europe-combined-2035-1502174>

So Voracious As to Plan a Long-Sought Nicaraguan Canal

A project to build a 286-kilometer canal traversing Nicaragua has been initiated by a Chinese company in what could be the most significant global logistics ventures of the 21st century. It is expected to rival the Panama Canal and boost China's energy and resource imports from the Americas when it is completed in 2020.



Australian Liquid Natural Gas tanker Gallina.

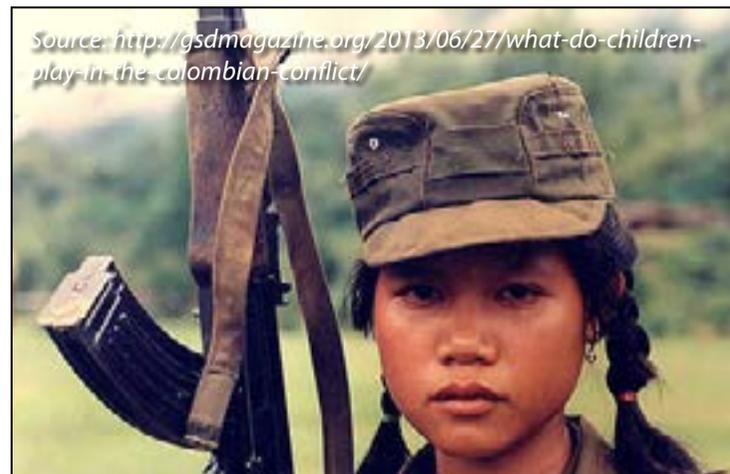
Source: <http://shipmanagementinternational.com/natural-gas-production-to-stay-afloat-as-industry-moves-to-the-water/gallina-02-Ing/>

“Children enrolled in the FARC front clubs are generally between the ages of 5 and 12 years.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The FARC is a paramilitary group that has been operational in Colombia since 1964. This organization was initially comprised of peasants, but is now a full-fledged military organization with an estimated 15,000-18,000 guerillas. Regarding organization, the FARC is divided within seven main operational regions. “Block” is the name given to each FARC military command inside one of its main operational regions. Each individual “block” comprises 5-15 “fronts.”*

The FARC is known to exploit all factors and conditions in areas in which they have presence to maintain at least the minimum number of soldiers within its ranks. Even children are targeted and groomed from a young age for inclusion in the FARC. According to studies done by Colombian social organizations, economic strife is the principal factor exploited by the FARC when recruiting children. It was also noted that the longer a child has been in the FARC, the less likely it is that he will leave the organization. Today, an estimated 1364 minors are working within the ranks of the FARC, 932 of whom are males. Of these, 51% entered voluntarily, 25% were forced to join, and 10% were taken into the jungle under false pretenses.

*In terms of child recruitment by “fronts,” the Jacobo Arenas and Manuel Cepeda Vargas Fronts in the Western Block have the highest number of children within their ranks. Within the Western Block 115 of the 349 child recruits were between the ages of 15 and 17, 144 were between the ages of 11 and 14, and 8 were less than 10 years old. In comparison, the Northwest FARC Block has 340 minors within its ranks, the Southern FARC Block has 332, the Central Combined Command has 239, and the Western Central Command in Cauca has 210. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel and Gonzalez)***



Source: “Unos 3.000 niños reclutaron las Farc.” El Espectador. Accessed on 06 December 2013 from <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/unos-3000-ninos-reclutaron-farc-articulo-446581>

The FARC Recruitment of an Estimated 3,000 Children

During decades of operations aimed at combating the FARC, Colombian authorities have seized secret diaries, indoctrination protocols, propaganda flyers, and even information containing methods utilized to recruit children. Additional evidence that the recruitment of children is common practice for guerilla groups is that in the last decade, authorities have documented 3,000 cases involving demobilized child guerillas in Colombia; 59% of which worked at the service of the FARC.

In a 60 page document, the Colombian news media source El Espectador condensed guidelines employed by the FARC to recruit children into their organization. According to this document, the indoctrination process starts when children are between 9 and 15 years old. And per passages extracted from FARC’s “Diary of the Marquetalia Resistance,” children 10 years of age and older can be assigned tasks appropriate to their age.” Another passage in this document indicated that in Marquetalia, there are many young guerrillas that have mastered war fighting tactics and that have been fighting against the enemy since they were children. The FARC has even created a “Pioneers Club” which is utilized to educate and mold children into social revolutionaries from a young age. Children enrolled in the FARC Front clubs are generally between the ages of 5 and 12 years.

How Many Children Have Actually Been Recruited by the FARC?

When comparing statistics with other governmental organizations in Colombia, it was determined that of the 5,075 children demobilized from guerilla groups between 1992 and 2012, 3,000 pertained to the FARC. The state also determined that in 31 of Colombia’s 32 Departments, FARC has recruited children into its ranks. Those states with the highest recruitment rates were reported as Caquetá, Antioquia and Tolima. The highest numbers of indigenous recruits came from Vaupés, Cauca and Putumayo.

Additionally, between 2002 and 2007, FARC recruitment of children jumped from 22 a year to 213 a year. Today, an estimated 1,364 minors are working within the ranks of the FARC; 932 of which are males. As for the level of education of child recruits, 775 of the 1,364 known child FARC guerillas did not receive education past the fifth grade, 76 could not read or write, and only 4 graduated from high school.

How Children Are Lured into FARC Ranks

Economic strife is the principal factor exploited by the FARC when recruiting children. Additional statistics indicated that of the 1,364 children working at the service of the FARC, 569 could not explain why they joined, 175 joined for economic reasons, 133 joined because they were scared of what would happen to them if they did not, 94 decided to join because of problems at home, 86 could not find work, 43 were forced, 35 stated that they loved weapons, 27 joined because they wanted to, 22 joined under false pretenses, 15 joined because they were bored, 9 joined because of friendship or a significant other, and 6 joined out of curiosity.

Michoacán Goes to War?

9 October 2013



OE Watch Commentary: *The Mexican State of Michoacán is home to the port of Lázaro Cárdenas, a strategically significant west coast shipping container transfer point. Recent reports claim a sharp increase in recent months in the presence and activity of local militias. Not sanctioned by the Mexican government, their ostensible purpose is to oppose by force the drug cartel known as the Knights Templar, which has held sway in Michoacán for years. Accusations exist that the self-defense militias, or some of them, work for a rival drug cartel. Other accusations have the government collaborating with the Knights Templar. In any case, the militias seem to be better equipped and organized today than they had been just a couple of years ago, claiming to now control some twenty towns, centered in Apatzingán County (municipio).*

Armed self-defense groups in Colombia managed to consolidate on a national scale by the end of the 1990s. Some in Mexico see what is happening in Michoacán as similar, and as the beginning of a greater level of violence.
End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)

Source: Staff, “Cientos de militares llegan a Apatzingán para reforzar la seguridad” CNNMéxico/Notimex, 23 November 2013, <http://mexico.cnn.com/nacional/2013/11/29/cientos-de-militares-llegan-a-apatzingan-para-reforzar-la-seguridad>

Article #1:

The governor of Michoacán, Fausto Vallejo, announced Thursday that more federal troops would arrive in order to prevent the advance of the civil community defense groups, which took control Wednesday of the town of Santiago Acahuato in Apatzingán County (municipio).

Source: Paula Chouza. “Un informe revelaría la relación entre el Gobierno de Michoacán y los Templarios.” *El País Internacional*, 22 November, 2013, http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2013/11/22/actualidad/1385076648_387528.html

Article #2:

A senior Michoacán government official has met with members of the Knights Templar Cartel on two occasions and reached a range of agreements with them. It was revealed in recent days by Mexican journalist *Ciro Gómez Leyva*...

The situation took a new turn last weekend when the community guards took the town of Tancitaro, of 7,600 inhabitants. Barely three weeks earlier they tried to enter the city of Apatzingán, but the attempt was repelled by a grenade attack presumably from the Templars. Since then other firefights have occurred and the self-defense forces have indicated they will not stop until they have “liberated the State from organized crime.”

Source: Anabel Hernández, “La entrega de Michoacán a los cárteles,” *Proceso*, 9 de noviembre de 2013, <http://www.proceso.com.mx/?p=357562>

Article #3:

The goal of citizens made desperate by the violence was to free themselves from the yoke of criminals, and they said they hoped that “the information {that they had provided to the public prosecutor about the cartel} would be useful and that therefore [the government] would help them live peacefully absent the fear of being murdered by those delinquents.

(continued)

Continued: Michoacán Goes to War?



Weapons cache seized from Los Caballeros Templarios.
Source: <http://www.borderlandbeat.com/2011/04/mexican-cartels-migrate-to-usa.html>

Source: Raul Crespo. "México, así empezó el conflicto extremo en Colombia." Aporrea, 23 November, 2013. <http://www.aporrea.org/internacionales/a177427.html>

Article #4:

The armed vigilantes or self-defense peasants appeared for the first time in Guerrero State and a little less than two years ago extended into Michoacán, a rich agricultural area where they organized communities, obligating the drug traffickers to seek refuge in the mountains....

What is certain is that the cartels intend to recover the lost territory, making life impossible for the counties guarded by the self-defense forces, by detaining market products and gasoline.

Source: AFP. "Milicias armadas se expanden en México." (Armed militias expand in Mexico), AFP, 11 December 2013, <http://es-us.noticias.yahoo.com/video/milicias-armadas-se-expanden-en-232105738.html>

Article #5:

The appearance of the militias in Michoacán State is a major challenge for the Mexican government. These self-defense groups are multiplying to the point that they could provoke a confrontation with the Knights Templar cartel, established in the region.

“...it doesn't make sense to keep both of my kidneys if that means I would still be in debt.”

OE Watch Commentary: There more than two million ads regarding organ sales on the Internet. According to a 2010 World Health Report, organ sales via the Internet began in China and India and moved into Europe following the 2009 economic crisis. Currently, the organ black market being run over the Internet has moved to Latin American countries, including Mexico.

According to United Nations representative Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, “a growing number of people are exploited and compelled by need or by force to provide organs for transplantation to people within their own countries or abroad.” She further stated that the root cause of organ trafficking is an acute shortage of organs for transplantation worldwide and a mismatch between the growing demand for this and the strict limits set on available supplies.”

The majority of individuals who offer to sell their organs are between the ages of 20 and 39

Source: “Jalisco: tráfico de órganos en línea.” Proceso. Accessed on 22 November 2013 from <http://www.proceso.com.mx/?p=294759>

Internet Organ Trafficking in Jalisco, Mexico

An estimated 41% of Jalisco's general population lives in extreme poverty; a situation has prompted some to offer their organs up for sale on the Internet. When questioned about the choice to offer his organs for sale on the Internet, one 24-year-old male responded in the following manner “it doesn't make sense to keep both of my kidneys if that means I would still be in debt.”...

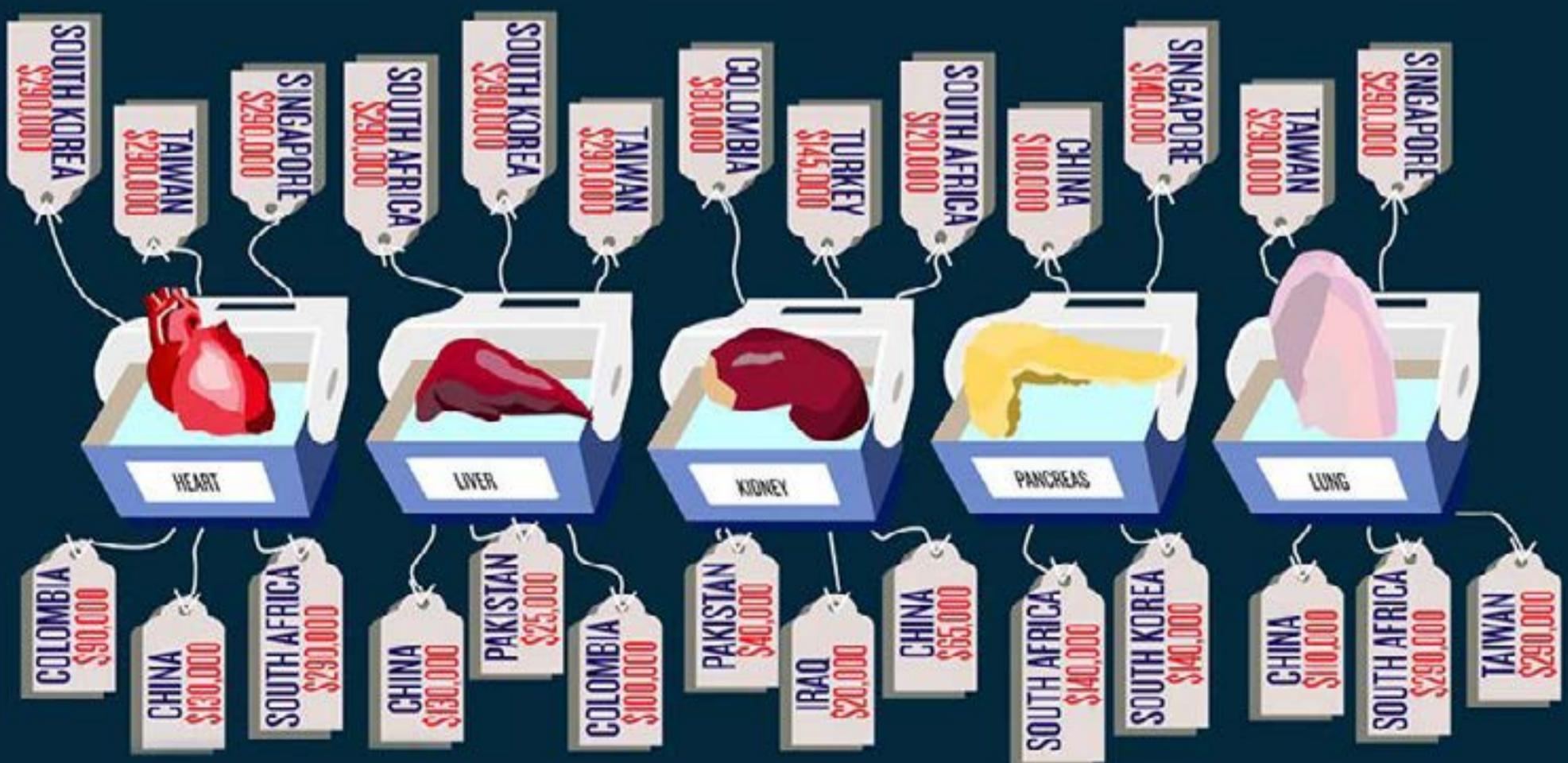
...One such ad was posted by a 25-year-old named Juan and has been translated as follows: “My name is Juan. I am 25-years-old and have many economic problems. I am selling one of my kidneys for 250,000 pesos to pay off my debts. I live in Guadalajara, Jalisco, but can travel anywhere. My blood type is O+ and I am willing to undergo any necessary tests. I only ask for discretion and serious offers. Those interested can contact me via e-mail....”

A Market without Regulations:

Juan, the aforementioned 25-year-old from Jalisco has already posted ads on three different Internet websites in hopes of selling one of his kidneys. During an interview with a reporter regarding the sale of organs, he stated that he needs the money to continue university studies as a nurse and to help his mother with household costs. He further added that the idea to sell his kidney came from a friend who had already done

THE PRICE OF ORGANS AROUND THE WORLD*

Source: <http://bloggersagainsocialinjustice.blogspot.com/2013/10/the-price-of-health-organ-trafficking.html>



Continued: Internet Organ Trafficking in Jalisco, Mexico

and are facing economic challenges. The most commonly sold organ is the kidney, which nets between 250,000 and 600,000 pesos. Within Latin America, Mexican citizens offer some of the best prices and selection as result of the economic stagnation in the country and the lack of specific legislation regarding organ trafficking.

*Recipients are generally wealthy, while victims are often poor, unemployed and with low levels of education. The latter can be easily deceived about the nature of the transaction and its potential impact. In many instances, those lured into selling their organs are offered large amounts of money, but are almost never paid in full. Furthermore, post-operative care offered to the donors is often inadequate. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel and Gonzalez)***

it. She also works in the health sector and sold her kidney to a 55-year-old woman for 200,000 pesos. Now she has her own house and was able to pay off most of her debts...
...The sale of organs via the Internet is a crime according to the General Law of health Furthermore, if an individual is caught bypassing the transplant list, they may be punished with up to 17 years in prison. Laws are in place to curb the sale of organs via the internet, but that has not stopped desperate sellers and buyers. Another issue with stopping organ sale is that cyber police place more focus on crimes such as to human trafficking and child exploitation.

“...East Timor has taken the case to The Hague in an attempt to have the \$40 billion deal it signed with Australia torn up.”

OE Watch Commentary: *Second order effects from recent National Security Agency (NSA) leaks are creating new factors within the operational environment in the Indo-Pacific Asia region. Local press coverage of this public issue has grown and allegations of wrong doing have set off the expected diplomatic conversations and statements. Most interesting is the reported knock-on effect within the operational environment that may have immediate and tangible consequence.*

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (Australia's national public broadcaster) reports on East Timor's past President Dr. Ramos-Horta calling for the cancelation of an AUD\$40 billion deal signed by the two nations. Allegations of Australia bugging East Timor government meetings during the negotiations are the impetus for the governmental calls for action. Australian media continue to publish detailed accounts of the alleged intelligence gathering. The growing regional concern is reflected in the selected piece from The Australian, an online news source. In it we find Indonesia suspending intelligence sharing and military cooperation due to the allegations. The stopping of military cooperation, especially among naval forces, has created a gap in the coordinated fight against people smuggling. A final article from The Sydney Morning Herald reports in detail on the unexpected consequence of increased human trafficking due to the current diplomatic row.

Modern governments tacitly accept the realities of intelligence gathering amongst the global family of nations. Yet once revealed these actions cause national consternation that finds expression in recall of ambassadors, political angst, and unpredictable second order effects.

End OE Watch Commentary (Welch)

Source: The Australian Broadcasting Corporation, “East Timorese president Jose Ramos-Horta condemns Australia over spying claims,” December 11, 2013 <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-12-11/ramos-horta-says-australia-wouldn27t-have-won-un-security-counc/5148452>

East Timor's former president Jose Ramos-Horta says Australia would never have secured a seat on the United Nations Security Council had claims that it spied on its neighbours been known.

Australia is accused of bugging an East Timorese cabinet room in 2004 so it could listen in on senior ministers and officials negotiating a new oil and gas treaty.

...“It really undermines 10 years of a relationship and I don't know what Australia can do to restore confidence among East Timorese people and leaders,” he said.

Dr Ramos-Horta now acts as a special peace and security envoy for the UN secretary-general.

Last year, he helped lobby for Australia to win its seat on the UN Security Council.



Pictured: Former President Jose Ramos-Horta says Australia has undermined its relationship with East Timor. Source: <http://www.worlddiplomacy.org/Countries/EastTimor/LeaderEas/Horta1.html>

Source: The Australian, “Yudhoyono suspends people-smuggling cooperation with Australia,” November 29, 2013, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/policy/indonesia-foreign-minister-marty-natalegawa-says-repair-damage-over-spying/story-fn59nm2j-1226764580611>

INDONESIA has suspended intelligence exchanges and military cooperation until Tony Abbott explains the circumstances of Australia's alleged spying in 2009 against Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, his wife and close advisers.

“Facing the common problem of people smuggling, Indonesia and Australia have coordinated operations, coordinated patrolling in the sea area - I have asked for this to be suspended until everything is clear,” Dr Yudhoyono said in a national address.

...Canberra has refused to confirm or deny this undertaking....

Tony Abbott has refused to apologize over revelations Australian spies monitored Mr.

Yudhoyono's mobile phone, but expressed regret at any embarrassment felt by the President....



Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Source: <http://setkab.go.id/berita-5973-presiden-korupsi-di-korlantas-polri-ditangani-kpk.html>

(continued)

Continued: New OE Factors Emerge

“The suspension of cooperation covers naval support and information sharing for anti-people smuggling operations and joint military exercises of any kind.”

Source: The Sydney Morning Herald, “Indonesia spying row reopens routes for asylum seekers, say smugglers,” December 10, 2013 <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/indonesia-spying-row-reopens-routes-for-asylum-seekers-say-smugglers-20131210-2z3o4.html>

People smugglers are telling asylum seekers that bad diplomatic relations between Australia and Indonesia mean the route by boat to Christmas Island is once again open for business.

New evidence obtained by Fairfax Media shows asylum seekers are being told not to fear arrest by Indonesian police because co-operation has been suspended in light of the phone-tapping affair.

...It is impossible to tell how much the new talk by people smugglers is a marketing spiel and whether asylum seekers are convinced by it. Boat arrivals since Indonesia withdrew co-operation from Australia on November 20 do not yet show a clear trend.

...Mr Yudhoyono and his Foreign Minister, Marty Natalegawa, have suggested that the situation will not be normalised until well into next year after the two countries have gone through a six-stage process and developed a new spying protocol...

Australian-bound asylum-seekers on board a ship that capsized.
Source: <http://images.smh.com.au/2013/08/31/4709836/art-asylum-620x349.jpg>



“...The same smuggler is offering a cut-rate fee of as low as \$1800 to entice people onto boats...”

One Giant Step for China's Research and Development ... and its Military

13 October 2013

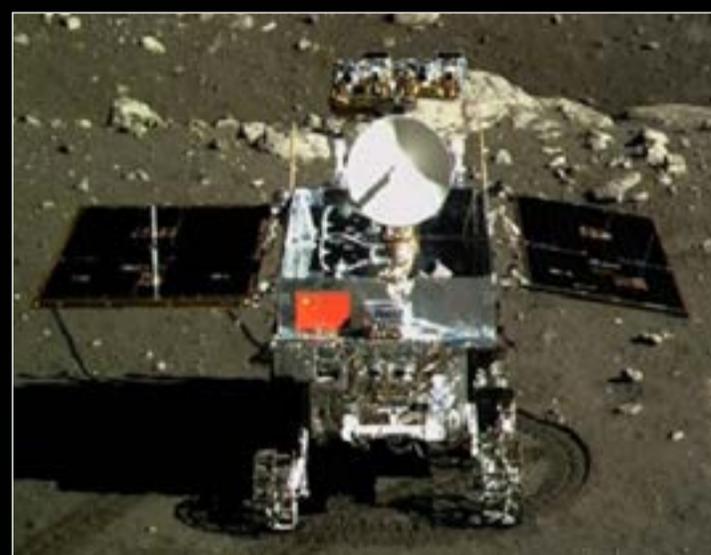
“Today, a world power must be an aerospace power... We need to integrate land, sea, sky, space, network and electromagnetic wave warfare to form a multi-dimensional battlefield.”

OE Watch Commentary: Perhaps not a giant leap for mankind, but certainly a giant step for China, which has recently become the third country, behind the United States and Russia, to conduct a soft landing on the moon. China's 2 December launching of the Chang'e-3 lunar probe and subsequent lunar landing have received wide coverage in the country. The Chang'e-3 is phase 2 of China's lunar program, which includes orbiting, landing, and returning to Earth. The Chang'e-1 and Chang'e-2 missions took place in 2007 and 2010. During these two missions China was able to observe the moon 100km to 200km away.

The significance of the Chang'e-3 is not simply in China's accomplishment of reaching the moon, but rather what it means to the country's efforts in becoming a global innovative force. The first article explains that China is in the middle of a development transition, and that the country must grasp this opportunity to catch up with the rest of the world. Aerospace technology holds a special meaning in that it is known as a “pearl in the field of science and technology.” As the article states, “it plays a significant role in promoting progress in science and technology and advancing economic development for the entire country.”

By all accounts, China truly is making strides in innovation. According to the second article, “More than 80 percent of technologies and products of the mission are newly developed...”

China views successful efforts in innovation as essential to achieving not only economic superiority, but also military superiority. Notably, “Whoever controls space and sky, will also own all the strategic initiatives. Chang'e-3 is going to significantly expand the boundary of China's space interests. It will give China, as a rising power, more strength in space to protect [its] national security from above.” End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)



The Yutu moon rover taken by the camera on the Chang'e-3 moon lander during the mutual-photograph process, at the Beijing Aerospace Control Center in Beijing, capital of China, Dec. 15, 2013. Source: <http://lupuvictor.blogspot.com/2013/12/change-3-and-yutu-rover-landed-on-moon.html>

Source: “嫦三再譜創新篇章 港人分享祖國榮光 (Chang'e-3 Represents Another Innovation, HK People Share Motherland's Glory), Ta Kung Pao, December 2, 2013, <http://news.takungpao.com/paper/q/2013/1202/2076357.html>

Article #1: A Vision of a “de-Americanized” World

China, as a country in the middle of a developmental transition, must grasp this opportunity to become innovation driven in order to catch up with the trend in the rest of the world.

Aerospace technology is known as a “pearl” in the field of science and technology. It plays a significant role in promoting progress in science and technology and advancing economic development for the entire country.

Chang'e III is significant to our national security as well. The 21st century is the century of air and space. Space is the strategic high ground for countries to compete over strength. Today, a world power must be an aerospace power... We need to integrate land, sea, sky, space, network and electromagnetic wave warfare to form a multi-dimensional battlefield.

Whoever controls space and sky, will also own all the strategic initiatives. Chang'e III is going to significantly expand the boundary of China's space interests. It will give China, as a rising power, more strength in space to protect our national security from above.

(continued)

Continued: One Giant Step for China's Research and Development ...and its Military

Source: "China Launches Probe And Rover To Moon," Xinhua, December 2, 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-12/02/c_132932922.htm

Article #2: China Launches Probe and Rover to Moon

"We will strive for our space dream as part of the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation," he said... More than 80 percent of technologies and products of the mission are newly developed, he said...

The lunar probe mission is of great scientific and economic significance, said Sun Zezhou, chief designer of the lunar probe.

The mission has contributed to the development of a number of space technologies and some of them can be applied in civilian sector, he said...

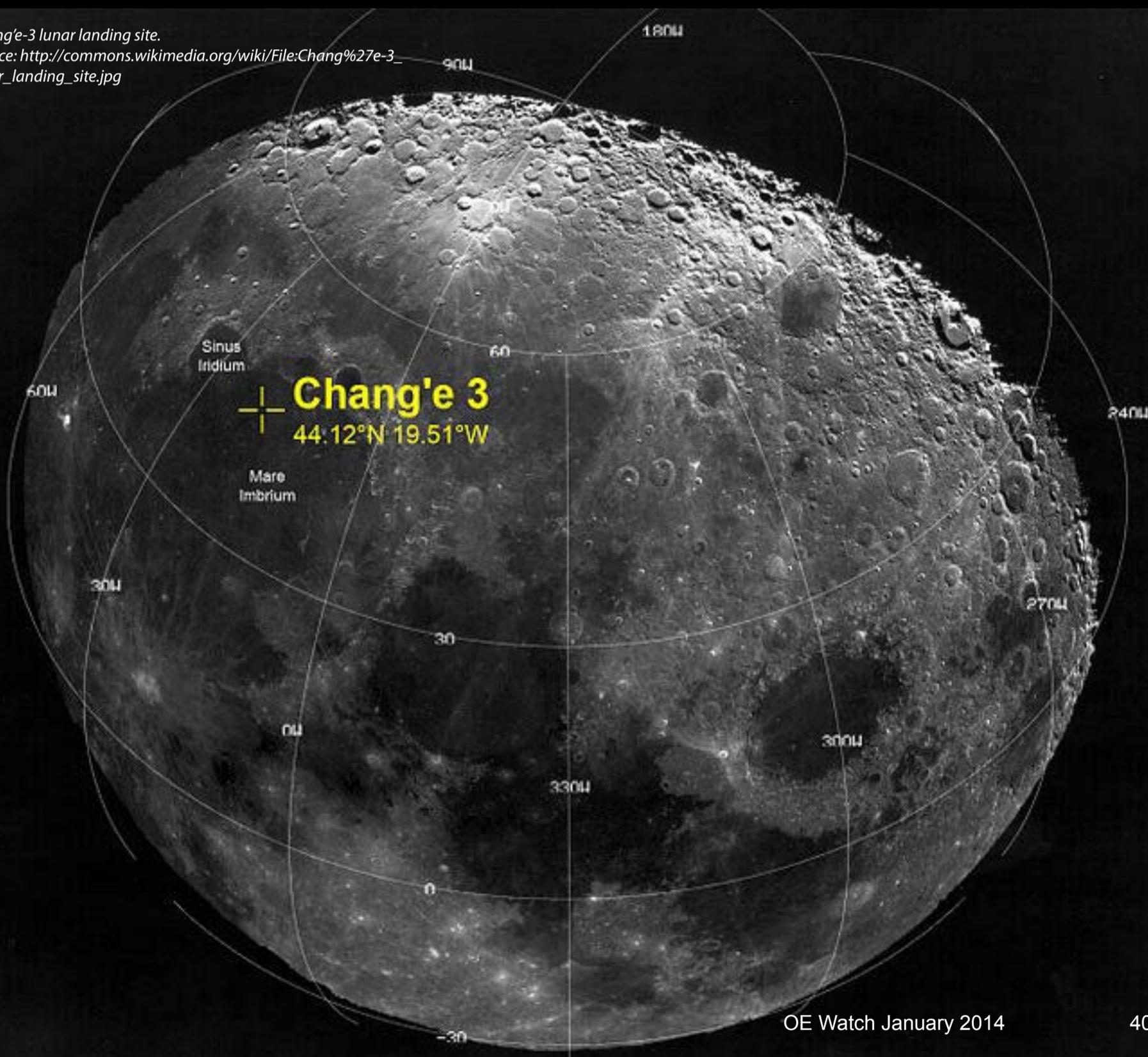
Launched on Oct. 1, 2010, Chang'e-2 verified some crucial technologies for Chang'e-3 and reconnoitered the landing area. It also made the world's first lunar holographic image with a resolution of 7 meters.

If successful, the Chang'e-3 mission will mean China has the ability of in-situ exploration on an extraterrestrial body, said Sun Huixian, deputy engineer-in-chief in charge of the second phase of China's lunar program.

"China's space exploration will not stop at the moon," he said. "Our target is deep space."

Chang'e-3 lunar landing site.

Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chang%27e-3_lunar_landing_site.jpg



“Responsibility is not necessarily sweet but may sometimes be very bitter, and it is not necessarily mellow but may sometimes be very sharp...any bottom lines that must be adhered to in real life are equally not to be challenged in the seemingly virtual but real online world.”

OE Watch Commentary: Since May China's State Internet Information Office (SIIO) has conducted a crackdown on online rumors. At that time it closed twenty or so microblogging accounts and vowed to take “a high-handed approach” against rumors. The campaign continued throughout the year. It was understandable when SIIO shut down illegal drug sales, criminal activities, prostitution rings, unlicensed media outlets, and breeches of privacy and information, but microblogging sites? The reason provided was that they were the source of negative information that had to be shuttered.

In November the office launched a campaign to promote an expanded knowledge of Internet-related laws and regulations among young people. This also is a respectable reason for doing so. However, the authorities may have gone too far. The new focus on guiding public opinion changes the SIIO task from guiding information to imposing Internet sanctions. Instead of building a bright cyberspace future for China, according to bloggers, such control means the end to the expression of free opinion and keeps government eyes and ears in total darkness about what is happening around it. There is no easier way to be caught unaware when a crisis erupts. Chinese authorities, on the other hand, believe cracking down on rumors allows for the spirit of reform and innovation to work in concert with public opinion.

One factor that worries the Internet police is the rising popularity of Internet celebrities, that is, those Internet users who can influence public opinion with facts the authorities conceal. The authorities hope to teach what they deem as “social responsibility” to these individuals, a fact that bloggers and other Internet followers reject. The following report lists the seven points or bottom lines that these so-called “celebrities” must follow. **End of OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

Source: “China State Council Information Office of the PRC, 17 August 2013

The Seven Bottom Lines for Online Social Responsibility

Lu Wei, director of the State Internet Information Office, attended a forum on Internet celebrities' social responsibility. During the discussions, six hopes for Internet celebrities and seven bottom lines were put forward. The six hopes were:

- Internet celebrities should take on more social responsibility because their words and deeds online will influence more people
- Internet celebrities should conscientiously safeguard national interests, proactively give play to their role of gathering positive energy, and inspire more Internet users to make contributions to realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation
- Internet celebrities should conscientiously disseminate socialist advanced culture and carry forward the virtues of the Chinese nation
- Internet celebrities should take the lead in complying with laws and morals and make diligent efforts to become advocates of the rule of law and morals
- Internet celebrities should actively advocate social credibility and make contributions to the building of social credibility
- Internet celebrities should take the lead in safeguarding citizens' legitimate personal rights and interests and conscientiously resist all behavior that harms other people's reputations and interests.

The seven bottom lines were to adhere to were laws and regulations; the socialist system; national interests; citizens' legitimate rights and interests; social and public order; morals; and information authenticity. These bottom lines, which are viewed as the boundaries and red lines that must not be crossed, are the only way that users can surf the Net safely, according to the author.

“Only when one is aware of the pain of taking on responsibility will he learn the pleasure of taking responsibility.”

“On the issue of coping with the ‘island chain,’ we should strategically despise it, but tactically take it seriously...we should continuously expand our own strategic initiative and enlarge our room for maneuvering.”

OE Watch Commentary: Recently China established an air defense identification zone (ADIZ) that has ruffled feathers and caused tit-for-tat retribution (e.g., South Korea consequently announced an expanded ADIZ for the first time in 62 years) in the region. China does not seem to mind. Noted strategist Peng Guangqian, an editor of the popular book, *The Science of Military Strategy*, stated that China is using the ADIZ as “a clairvoyant pair of eyes on a Chinese dragon, a monitoring machine installed on the porch of China’s house.” Defending territorial waters and boosting defense capability is absolutely correct in his opinion.

The announcement of China’s ADIZ took place on 23 November. A day earlier a National Security Committee was established to handle security threats, including those to “our country’s [China’s] territorial sovereignty and maritime rights.” Two days later, the first of two articles on the development of a military “sea-air force” was published. These articles laid out the rationale for the ADIZ.

Source: Lu Zhengtao, “The ‘Island Chain’ Strategy Cannot Lock China Up,” *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao Online*, 29 November 2013

How Air-Sea Battles Will Be Fought

Some scholars point out that upon entering the 21st century, a new geopolitical viewpoint began to emerge that gradually gained international acknowledgment. It could also be said that whoever controls the Pacific Ocean controls the entire world. The rules of modern joint operations have proven that to achieve land supremacy and sea supremacy, it is first necessary to seize air supremacy. So, importance has been universally attached to the sea and air three-dimensional combat model by those nations with ocean dreams.

As China has been awakened to sea rights awareness, it has recognized more and more the very long 18,000 kilometer coastline that exceeds three million square kilometers. China has island territory disputes with numerous nations in the East China Sea and South China Sea. Furthermore, due to Japan’s rightward divergence intensifying, as well as powerful nations from outside the region getting involved, these disputes are becoming more complex and fiercer.

Some experts point out that for a major power like China, the possibility of air combat or land combat occurring on its own soil is very small, and that China’s external war threat will most likely erupt in the Asia-Pacific in the waters around China, which are the waters inside and outside of the first island chain. From this, China’s need to strengthen its sea-air three-dimensional operational capabilities in order to respond to the threat

(continued)

“Great Japanese Naval Victory off Haiyang Island” by Nakamura Shūkō, October 1894 [2000.380.11]
Source: http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/throwing_off_asia_01/image/2000_380_11_1.jpg



Continued: China's Strategic ADIZ and its Air-Sea Force

According to first article, the island chain and military forces are important influences on Chinese considerations for scientific and accurate strategic planning, strategic decision making, and strategic implementation. The number of countries involved in the creation and maintenance of the island chain theory are beset with contradictions and mistrust at the present time, considerably weakening the US's strategy of containing China. Now China has sea combat power and is willing to expand its sea mobility. That is, in strategic terms it is much less concerned with the objective reality of its eastern coastline and is willing to take risks such as imposing the ADIZ. The ADIZ helps establish both near and distant sea combat power with the ability to provide overhead support if needed. This would occur with the ability to shut down all air travel over the ADIZ in times of potential conflict.

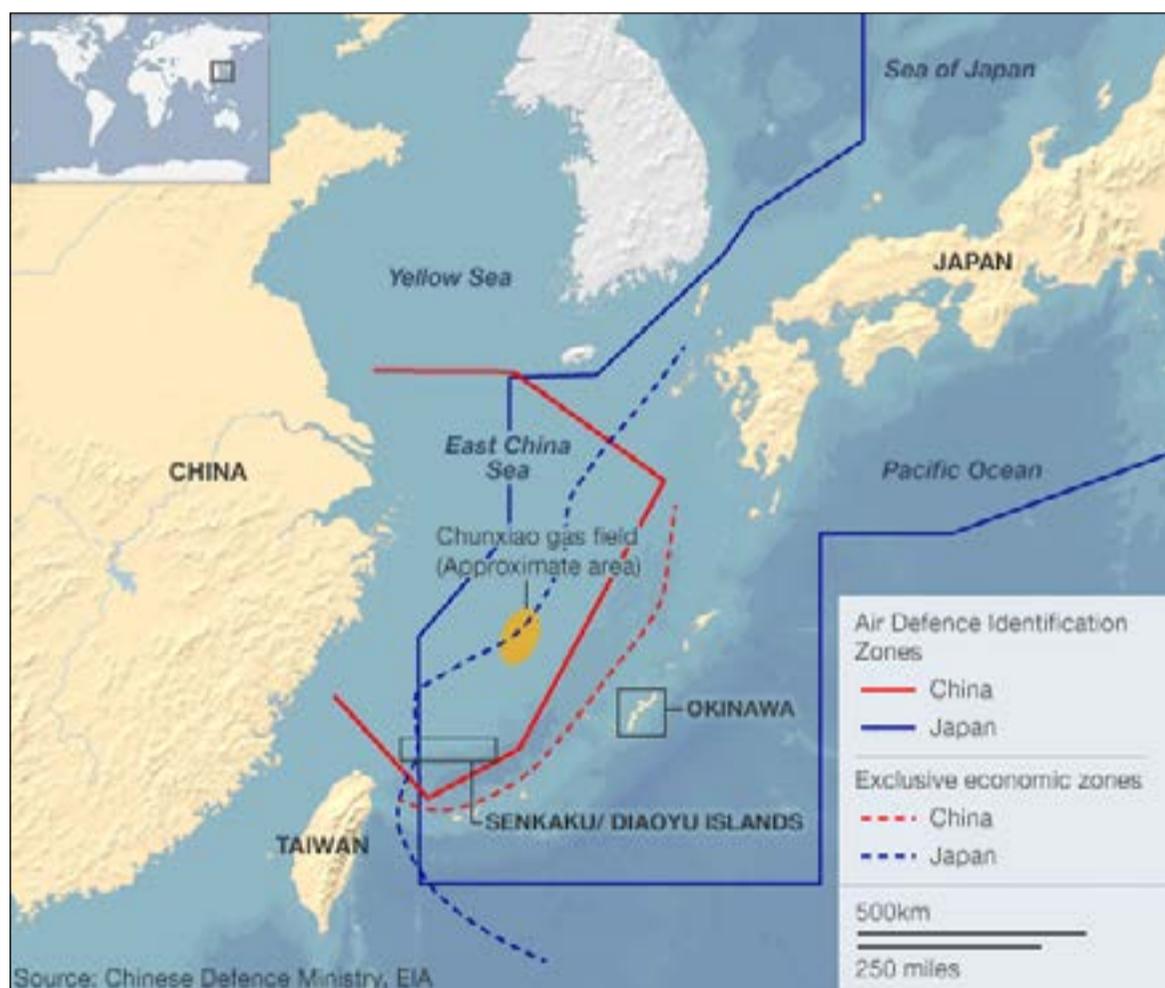
*The second article, cited below, examines just how the battle would be fought. The Navy is expected to play the leading role in future air-sea battles, with the Air Force responsible for seizing air supremacy and providing cover for the Navy. Thus, the ADIZ appears tied to China's air-sea battle of the future. The nation may be preparing the ground now with the ADIZ and other actions to follow to "win victory before the first battle." **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)***

Lu Zhengtao, "How Will a Chinese 'Air-Sea Battle' Be Fought," Guoji Xianqu Daobao Online, 25 November 2013.

seems quite pressing. In the future, China's sea-air integrated operations will very likely be joint operational actions of the three services of the air force, navy, and Second Artillery. Of these, the navy will play the leading role in future sea-air three-dimensional battles, and it will primarily be responsible for implementing blockades and high-intensity strikes on the enemy's maritime forces and forward positions in the key waters using large surface vessels and submarines in order to ensure the maritime supremacy of the Chinese side.

The air force will primarily undertake the serious task of seizing air supremacy and giving cover to the navy. It will cooperate with the Second Artillery's strategic missiles to conduct key attacks on enemy targets. This requires that extremely high requirements be placed on command and control capabilities.

Not only this, but under maritime conditions, the natural environment changes are violent, and a lot of predetermined operational plans could become difficult to initiate at any time due to weather problems or other such reasons.



“Religious extremism in the Xinjiang region is a combination of ethnic separatist forces and violent terrorist activities using spiritual weapons.”

OE Watch Commentary: In a Chinese-language article for Xinjiang Daily, Mehmeti Ali Abdullah, who is an Uighur lecturer and member of the Communist Party, writes about the rise of religious extremism and violent terrorist crimes in China. He attributes their emergence to the development and evolution of ethnic separatism. In order to provide theoretical guidance on future work, he analyzes the nature of religious extremism in Xinjiang, which is China’s vast resource-rich westernmost region and the historical homeland of China’s Muslim Uighurs and other Turkic peoples, such as Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks and Tajiks.

The article traces the history of religious extremism in China to three periods: first, the early 20th century, when the people of Central Asia sought a pan-Turkic or pan-Islamic State; second, the 1980s, when Islamist movements, including the Uighur-led East Turkistan Islamic Movement, created bases in Afghanistan and spread religious nationalism in Xinjiang; and, third, the 1990s, when the dissolution of the Soviet Union led to the independence of five new majority Muslim states in Central Asia and “religious fanatics” encouraged the separation of Xinjiang from China. The article therefore conforms to the Chinese narrative, which seeks to associate potentially indigenous desires of Uighur nationalism and Xinjiang secession with the foreign import of religious extremism.

This article is likely part of a media campaign that China is launching to combat rising religious extremism in Xinjiang among Uighur Muslims. Recent terrorist attacks that Uighurs carried out in Xinjiang on security officers and Han pedestrians and in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square, coupled with the U.S. withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan in 2014, have China worried about Uighurs identifying with Islamist forces outside of China and adding a religious cover to what used to be a nationalist movement in Xinjiang. Moreover, increasing trade between Xinjiang and the



Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, China has sought to encourage its more than 50 recognized ethnic groups to “unite for 10,000 years,” such as in this poster from the Cultural Revolution. However, there are still Muslim Uighur groups inside and outside of China that seek independence for Xinjiang, which they call “East Turkistan,” and that are increasingly adopting a religious – rather than nationalist – ideology. Source: <http://www.trocadero.com/vick22/items/523886/en1.html>

Source: “宗教极端主义的本⊠及其危害, The Nature and Harm of Religious Extremism“ Xinjiang Daily, 24 November 2013.

After the “9.11” incident, religious extremism has become rampant in the world again, endangering world security and peace, causing widespread concern in the international community. In Xinjiang, China, the spread of religious extremism in the last decade is closely linked with ethnic separatism, creating a series of violent terrorist crimes and serious harm to national security and social stability. Development and evolution of religious extremism, with its many causes internal and external, should be analyzed from many angles and in-depth research, in particular to recognize its nature and hazards, can provide theoretical guidance for our future work to related to this.

Religion and religious extremism are essentially different concepts. Any one religion advises people to do good. A religion or a religious group preaches that if you can not do well with people, it means the explanation of the doctrine has gone wrong or simply there is a lack of basic behavior consistent with the teachings of religion. Thus, extreme thoughts and behavior in whatever form of religion are at their essence non-religious, and at best are under the guise of religion. Deeper in terms of religious issues are ideological problems; while religious extremists in the name of a mission conceal or shelter the use of religion to engage in violent terrorist, separatist, and other extremist activities, which are not a religious issue but a political issue.

(continued)

Continued: China Grapples with Religious Extremism in Xinjiang

Islamic World, including Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Middle East, as well as the availability of extremist materials on the Internet or DVDs that are smuggled into Xinjiang, make it more difficult for China to use traditional media to monitor religion.

*If the article is part of a broader investigation into Islamic extremism, it may signal that China is beginning to consider non-securitized approaches to combat religious extremism. This would run counter to China's "strike hard" campaign in Xinjiang, which since 2009 has prioritized executing and punishing terrorist suspects and sympathizers. However, China still appears to use outdated slogans about creating a "Communist society" and encouraging "development for stability," even though ethnic Hans from eastern China run most of the major corporations in Xinjiang. As a result, China's "soft" approach may serve to alienate or gain only little resonance among Xinjiang's Uighur population. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)***

The spread of religious extremism in Xinjiang began in the early 20th century. Early 20th century ethnic separatists in Xinjiang absorbed the pan-Islamism, pan-Turkism, and an ethnic separatist political program called "East Turkistan independence Theory." In the 1980s, Afghanistan became the new base for the Islamist movement. The new Islamist infiltration spread and gradually combined with ethnic separatism in Xinjiang, forming a very harmful "religious nationalism" program. In the early 1990s, in the Soviet Union, nationalism and religious extremism filled each new independent state, which encouraged separatist forces in Xinjiang, and they tried to incite religious fanaticism to inculcate religious extremist religious doctrine.

In Xinjiang, the forces of religious extremism and violence and ethnic separatist forces and terrorist forces collude in sabotage to harm social and political stability. Religious extremism in Xinjiang is in the banner of religion but is mass agitation against the so-called "infidels" to provoke ethnic conflicts and incitement to carry out "jihad" in an attempt to overthrow the current regime. Its ultimate aim is to the divisive split of Xinjiang from the motherland family. We can say that religious extremism in the Xinjiang region is a combination of ethnic separatist forces and violent terrorist activities using spiritual weapons.

Turkey and China: Unlikely Strategic Partners

By Ms. Karen Kaya

In late September-early October 2010 Turkey and China held a bilateral military exercise in Turkey, the first such exercise that China conducted with a NATO member. This, coupled with the numerous high-level diplomatic and military visits between the two countries since 2009, has led to talk of a new "strategic partnership" between Turkey and China. While it is debatable whether the two countries are really at the level of a strategic partnership, the burgeoning Sino-Turkish relationship, which has remained unconsidered and understudied, is worth examining in order to assess the implications it may have for the U.S. and its defense community. This article analyzes the Turkey-China relationship in light of their strategic interests and discusses why it is unlikely that they will become true strategic partners, given the wide divergence between these interests.



<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Turkey-and-China.pdf>

OE Watch Commentary: *Watching the massive parades or carefully choreographed displays of public unity, one might easily believe the North Korean rhetoric about domestic harmony and loyalty to the government. The Pyongyang leadership has fostered the image of a people united around the Juche philosophy of military readiness and self-reliance, prepared to sacrifice everything for the health of the regime. However, as the excerpt from a South Korean press report points out, appearances can be deceiving, and all may not well in the Hermit Kingdom.*

Like a scene from some modern, absurdist tragedy, the recent arrest, denunciation and execution of Jang Song-thaek, the second most powerful person in North Korea, has reminded foreigners (and possibly the domestic audience) of the inherent dangers of absolute power. However, for seasoned North Korean watchers such bloody violence is nothing new and has been an essential component in maintaining the Kim family dynasty for the past sixty years. In Kim Jung Un's raw-power political system, no one is immune, and today's favorite lieutenant can be transformed into tomorrow's treacherous traitor.

*This excerpt suggests that this bloody show of force might signal a more prominent role of North Korea's military leadership in policymaking. The rationale behind this assertion centers upon Jang Song-thaek's role in increasing trade with China (which presumably weakened the country's military-first policy). More likely, this grim incident reflects the brutal internal dynamics of the feudal North Korean political system. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kim and Finch)***

Source: "What Jang Song Thaek's Ouster Means Going Forward," Hankyoreh Online, 10 December 2013. <http://english.hani.co.kr>

Jang Song Thaek's Ouster

"On Dec. 9, North Korea gave its first confirmation to the outside world that second-in-command Jang Song-thaek had been removed as head of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) administrative department. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un appears to have ousted Jang, his uncle by marriage, in an attempt to place himself more solidly at the center of the regime. The move came ten days before the second anniversary of his father Kim Jong-il's death....

"Jang was accused of a long list of misbehavior at the meeting - everything from "anti-state, anti-revolution factional activities" to "impeding the Cabinet's economic projects" and "acts of corruption and depravity." The aim here may have been to further solidify Kim's grip on the regime by squashing any hopes for a comeback by Jang.

"...But his removal doesn't appear likely to have much of an impact on the regime's stability or course of action. No more challengers to Kim's "Baekdu bloodline" of hereditary succession from grandfather Kim Il-sung appear to be left, and most of the older officials in the party, government, and military have already been replaced by "newcomers" in their forties and fifties. Meanwhile, the administration has continued to pour its energies into economic reforms (of a kind) ever since officially stating a two-track policy of nuclear weapons and economic development this past spring. Jang did have a role in special economic zone development and relations with China, but his presence had not been strongly felt this year.

"The worry right now is that Jang's fall could result in the military gaining a stronger grip on power. Some analysts have noted that Jang was one of the figures who opposed the military in its plans to carry out a long-range rocket launch and nuclear tests. If he did lose out in a power battle, the military could up with a stronger say in things - especially its General Political Bureau director Choi Ryong-hae, who is now being called the "new second-in-command." And this could mean that for all the current efforts to maintain the status quo, Pyongyang's foreign policy may end up drifting toward a hard line, especially if it remains on poor terms with Beijing and Washington and nothing is done to get relations with Seoul improving again...."



Jang Sung-taek
Source: Yonhap News

“If there is peace in the Batken Province, there is peace throughout Kyrgyzstan,”

OE Watch Commentary: Kyrgyzstan's Border Guards have received criticism for the way incidents on the country's borders have been handled in the past year. Additionally, the head of the service was relieved of command in late October for alleged corruption charges. The accompanying article comes from a journalist who went on an organized tour of border posts in the Batken Province. This is not the first time that the Border Guards have organized a public relations event for journalists: in May 2012 in Osh journalists took part in a target shooting competition. Outside of the public relations aspects of this tour, the article provides a couple of important pieces of information.

The article mentions that the Batken Province is at the center of whether or not there is stability in Kyrgyzstan. There is some history to back up this claim, particularly the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) incursions in 1999 and 2000 and numerous incidents on the province's borders even before this year. Perhaps the best piece of information in the article is the length of the borders between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan that have yet to be demarcated. If the numbers are accurate, it would provide a better picture of specific disputed areas on the borders. A couple of news articles from earlier in the year have included more details on border disputes between governments of the region, and these help to understand the disputes a little better (see: September 2013 OE Watch “Breaking Down the Border Disputes”).

The other good piece of information that the author mentions is how land mines remain on Uzbekistan's side of the border. The mines were initially placed to protect against another incursion by the IMU and to curb illegal border crossings. The locations of the mines have not always been clear, and a number of civilians have been killed and injured as a result. In 2005 the government of Uzbekistan reportedly removed some of the mines on its borders (including mines on the Uzbek-Tajik border), but it was not clear how many were removed. Lastly, the photographs give an idea of the infrastructure that the border guards have in Batken. It appears that there is an emphasis on strengthening border security in the province, which is some indication of how the country views its biggest threats. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**



“Journalists participate in a target shooting competition put on by the Kyrgyz Border Guards outside Osh, Kyrgyzstan in May 2012.” Source: <http://www.kabar.kg/rus/society/full/33952>

Source: Ivashchenko, Yekaterina. “Кыргызстан: Охрана границы от родственников и соседей (Kyrgyzstan: Guarding the borders against relatives and neighbors),” Fergana News, 21 November 2013. <http://www.fergananews.com/articles/7954>

Kyrgyzstan: Guarding the borders from relative and neighbors

Since the beginning of 2013 the Kyrgyz Border Guards have received close attention. Every two weeks there are conflicts with neighboring countries and there are casualties. The Border Guards are criticized for poor performance and authorities pay little attention to one of the worst problems of the country...they organized a press tour of the most strategically important frontier region – Batken...Journalists were able to talk with border guards and explore the outpost...

“If there is peace in the Batken Province, there is peace throughout Kyrgyzstan,” this phrase starts my acquaintance with the head of the Batken border detachment, Colonel Kubatbek Jeenbayev...The total length of the (Batken) border with Uzbekistan is 384.21 km (103.61 km is not demarcated), with Tajikistan 673.7 km (422.6 km not demarcated)...In the province there are three border detachments and a special forces unit is deployed in each...“This year the unit was involved in the conflicts in Charbak and Ak-Sai. They also conduct reconnaissance, detain (border crossing) violators, and more,” said Jeenbayev...

...We managed to make it to the junction of three states, located five kilometers from the village of Chon-Kara and the post “Ak-Turpak.”...The field on Uzbekistan's side has been mined since 1999...The border here with Tajikistan is not demarcated, but there are conditionally placed pillars: they are placed every three kilometers...

OE Watch Commentary: In the last few years Kazakhstan's Ministry of Defense has often mentioned its goal of having more contract positions in the services and relying less on conscription, but it has been difficult to gauge what steps have been taken to implement this. There are reports that more contract soldiers have recently joined the ranks, and, as the accompanying articles show, there continues to be various efforts to appeal to the younger generations. The article on the cadet class in the school in the city of Karaganda mentions that it is not necessarily a pipeline to serve in the military, as it also includes instruction from members of the local police force. As such, the curriculum includes the role that police play in society. Regardless, the cadet classes could prove to be a more attractive option for families than a general course of study in a public school, especially if there is a difference in funding and overall quality of education. It would be worth watching if there is an expansion of this type of program.

The article on the laser tag competition by itself is not significant, but the fact that it included some competitors learning to assemble and disassemble a Kalashnikov is worth noting. The article never mentions who brought the rifles, and it should not be assumed that a member of the military or security services was involved. However, weapons training like this is taking place at other youth events in Kazakhstan more often than in years past, in particular with patriotic clubs. The article on the TV series is probably the most indicative of the three on how the Ministry of Defense is trying to bolster recruitment and eventually develop more of a contract force. The series will include Kazakh- and Russian-language versions, and while there is no mention of how much the production cost, it likely received considerable funding. Lastly, the article mentions how the growth of the Kazakh Army will be through its officer corps, not NCOs. This might simply be attributed to the storyline of the series, but it does not match up with the country's push to create a stronger NCO cadre in the armed forces. Overall, programs for youth sponsored by the military could have some success, especially if there are few other alternatives for extra-curricular activities. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**



"A poster for the upcoming TV series "The Honor of an Officer."

Source: http://military-kz.ucoz.org/news/ministerstvo_oborony_zavershilo_semki_pervogo_otechestvennogo_armejskogo_seriala_oficer_abyrojy_chest_oficera/2013-12-05-3566

Source: Pronchatova, Natalya. "Кадетское образование становится популярным (Cadet education is becoming popular)," Megapolis, 18 November 2013. http://www.megapolis.kz/art/Kadetskoe_obrazovanie_stanovitsya_populyarnim

In early November in Karaganda school number 91, where an experimental cadet class is open, (cadets) in sixth grade took an oath. According to the director of the school, each year the number of cadet classes is getting larger. In general, the school does not aim to raise future military or law enforcement officers. The school conducted a study to find out what students do in their free time. It turns out, nothing. In the area around the school there are no youth centers or sport schools. The school invited a martial arts trainer to teach cadets. Now they defend the honor of the school at provincial and city competitions...

(continued)

Continued: Kazakhstan's Soft Efforts to Develop a Contract Force

Source: Plyaskina, Nadezhda. "Лазертаг на выживание (Laser tag survival)," Vremya (Time), 19 November 2013. <http://www.time.kz/articles/sport/2013/11/19/lazertag-na-vizhivanie>

Last weekend there was an unusual battle of laser weapons...Boy and girls practiced situations close to combat conditions..."The electronic barrels of our weapons are set to 150-300 meters," said (organizer) Aidos..."The fastest game was last year...when instructors from the military school came, they laid into us in minutes"...The fighters from school No. 78 became champions for the second time. The students demonstrated not only the ability to use laser weapons, but also quickly disassemble and assemble the Kalashnikov rifle, as well as accuracy in air rifle shooting...

Source: Kim, Andrey. "Честь имеем! (We have honor!)," Vremya (Time), 5 December 2013. <http://www.time.kz/articles/moment/2013/12/05/chest-imeem>

The most anticipated premiere next spring – the Ministry of Defense finished filming the first national army series "The Honor of an Officer"...the construction of a new Kazakh Army is the growth of its new officer corps...To fill this gap, the 30 part TV series is due for release in the spring...The life of the main character, the journalist Batyr, is collapsing and he abruptly decides to change his fate and become a soldier...the creators wanted to portray current life in the Kazakh army and the powerful modern technology it has..."In front of the film crew, the Ministry of Defense threw open the gates of military towns, bases, and ranges, and presented us the opportunity to use the latest equipment in service in the army," said the main producer...

A Central Asian Perspective of Security in Afghanistan

By Matthew Stein

In the ten years since the start of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) the five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) contributed support for International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operations by granting over-flight rights and use of airfields for transit or search and rescue operations, and allowing overland logistics of non-lethal supplies. The drawdown of forces in 2014 from Afghanistan will affect the conduct of regional affairs and regional security, particularly for the countries of Central Asia.

However, Central Asian perspectives of the future of Afghanistan are often overlooked. There are a number of articles by security analysts and academics in Central Asia that offer detailed and candid perspectives of ISAF operations and security in Afghanistan, though these may not be noticed or well received by policy-makers in the United States. A brief examination of articles by one such author,

Dr. Viktor Dubovitsky, can help better understand the Central Asian perspective of security in Afghanistan.



<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/CA-Perspective-of-Security-in-Afghanistan.pdf>

“The defendants and their lawyers are trying to prove with these videos that they did not fire live ammunition at civilians”

OE Watch Commentary: *There are numerous photographs and videos available of the April 2010 revolution in Kyrgyzstan, and, as the accompanying article shows, these are being used in the trial of members of the “Alpha” unit that clashed with protestors on 7 April. The members of the unit are hoping that photo and video footage will exonerate them of charges of killing protestors outside the White House that day. The videos that accompany the article (and are also available on You Tube) were part of the unit’s defense, but they do not show any significant footage that has not already been seen. The videos are edited to focus on specific people and ultimately to show that some of the protestors were carrying and using weapons that had been seized that day from police and the security services.*

*The defense is trying to prove that members of the unit did not fire at civilians (at one point during the day security forces allegedly fired blank rounds as warning shots) and were not in positions on the roof of the White House or on the buildings around Ala-Too square. One aspect of the trial that is surprising is that it has not received much attention in Kyrgyzstan, much less outside the country. There have been other notable headlines in Kyrgyzstan in recent weeks, like the ongoing problems with the Kumtor gold mine and the removal of the mayor of Osh, Melis Myrzakmatov. It is possible that these events are simply overshadowing the trial, and the author does not offer an opinion of the trial in the article. There have already been changes in security procedures at the White House since the revolution (see: January 2013 OE Watch “If These Fences Could Talk”), and the outcome of the trial could have an additional impact on security forces and rules of engagement around government facilities during times of protest or civil unrest. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)***

Source: Li, Aleksandra, “Подсудимые бойцы «Альфы» показали собранные ими видео о революции-2010 (The defendants of the «Alpha» unit showed the video they collected of the 2010 revolution),” Kloop, 18 November 2013. <http://kloop.kg/blog/2013/11/18/hronika-bojtsy-al-fy-pokazy-vayut-sobranny-e-video-o-revoljutsii-2010/>

The defendants of the «Alpha» unit showed the video collection of the 2010 revolution

The military court began to watch the video of the April 2010 revolution provided by the defendants of the special Alpha unit...The defendants and their lawyers are trying to prove with these videos that they did not fire live ammunition at civilians...During the showing of the video, the defendants and their lawyers paid particular attention to how the protestors started to display aggression before the Alpha unit arrived...“We want to show that the riots started long before Alpha arrived,” said the defense lawyer...

Chronicle of the meeting:

10:33 18 Nov 2013 the defendants’ lawyer started showing the collection of video footage..

11:05 the video shows how the special forces (Alpha) arrives...Tsygelnik (member of Alpha): “...Prior to our arrival there were riots...”

11:56 a close-up of a sign on the fence of the White House that says it is a protected object. The footage changes and shows protestors trying to ram the gate...

12:20 the video shows the special forces on the square. The footage changes and shows police using a water cannon...

12:25 **Tsygelnik:** “In this footage the white colored smoke from non-lethal weapons is visible...a grenade (explosive) gives off a black smoke...”

12:51 they are showing footage taken from behind the White House fence...

13:06 ...a series of photos that show how police returned fire.

Prosecutor: “...I have a photo of them, one of which is Dunganov.”

Lawyer of the victims: “Did you shoot or (just) aim?”

Dunganov: “If I had fired, it would be visible.”

Lawyer: “It is clear that you’re aiming the weapon.”

Dunganov: “I do not deny I was there. I fired my weapon at the vehicle.”...

A Kyrgyz View on Russian, Chinese and U.S. Influence in Central Asia after 2013

December 2013

“Russian dominance in the military arena, given the background of socio-economic crisis facing the countries of the region, cannot be the only basis for a long-term presence of the Russian Federation in the region.”

OE Watch Commentary: A Russian-language interview of Zamira Muratalieva, a Kyrgyz political scientist from the Institute of Strategic Analysis, featured in the pro-Russian website, StanRadar.com, highlighted Russian, Chinese and American influence in Central Asia post-2013. With the drawdown of U.S. troops from Afghanistan and U.S. departure from Kyrgyzstan’s Transit Center at Manas in 2014, Muratalieva says Russia is set to dominate the military arena in Central Asia and wants to “take responsibility” for the region. However, she also believes that Russian military dominance, which includes a bilateral guarantee of Russian troops stationed in Tajikistan until 2042, is insufficient for Russia to have long-term influence in Central Asia.

Muratalieva notes that China is “binding” itself to Central Asia through bilateral economic cooperation, which is much more attractive than Russian-led integration projects, which she says are based on geopolitical interests more than economics. Muratalieva believes U.S. influence in Central Asia, and especially in Kyrgyzstan, is mostly seen in “soft power” mechanisms, such as the democratization of political systems and economic liberalization. She says that even if the U.S. leaves Manas, there is a possibility that Turkey will take the lead on a civilian transportation hub there, which could preserve U.S. influence and allow allies such as Azerbaijan and Mongolia to use the hub.

Muratalieva’s analysis, however, reveals the uncertainties among Central Asian experts about how Russia will use its military in the region post-2014. There may be heightened tensions and insecurity along the Afghan-Tajik border in upcoming years, including from the Tajik jihadist group Jamaat Ansarullah, which opposes Russian bases in Tajikistan. Russia may therefore seek to increase its military presence in Tajikistan. Many Central Asian experts who are more skeptical of Russia than Muratalieva



A Russian serviceman at Kant Air Base, Kyrgyzstan, where Russia may deploy strategic bombers in 2014. Source: http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20120922/176152844.html

Source: “Zamira Muratalieva: Russia Takes Responsibility for the Future of Central Asia” stanradar.com, 21 November 2013.

Zamira Muratalieva: Russia Takes Responsibility for the Future of Central Asia

The advantages of the Customs Union are largely due to the necessity of choosing a vector of further development of the country in which Russia certainly take responsibility for the future of the region. Another positive aspect is the simplification that the Customs Union will offer migrant workers, which are in Russia. Based on data from April 2013, there are about 579,000 such people. Certainly, in relation to civilization as well as by virtue of having a common history, Kyrgyzstan, Russia is much closer than any other geopolitical project.

The foreign policy of Russia is due largely to geopolitical interests rather than economic expediency. Investment in the hydropower sector in Central Asian countries is regarded as a guarantee of loyalty of the political regimes of the region. Therefore, in my opinion, Russia is forced to require explicit guarantees from Kyrgyzstan that it will follow the pro-Russian course because the financial capabilities of Russia are behind the U.S. and China.

The U.S. can not use direct measures of power such as in the case of Yugoslavia. Mechanisms of soft power – the democratization of political systems and economic liberalization – have almost fully proven effective in Kyrgyzstan. In this situation, the best course for the United States seems to clash with the two potential rivals—Russia and China.

(continued)

Continued: A Kyrgyz View on Russian, Chinese and U.S. Influence in Central Asia after 2013

believe that Russia may have worked behind the scenes to foment the 2010 ethnic clashes in southern Kyrgyzstan to justify its military presence in the country and that Russia may tacitly – or covertly – foment a similar crisis in Tajikistan to expand its military presence there.

Nonetheless, Muratalieva does not believe that Russia's military-oriented approach in the region can offset what it lacks in terms of providing attractive economic or political models for Central Asian states. She notes that the Kyrgyz political class is heterogenous and divided among pro-America, pro-Russian, pro-Chinese, and pro-Arab elites, and it is yet to be determined which of these power centers will ultimately gain most influence in Kyrgyzstan after 2014. End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)

Despite ratifying an agreement on the withdrawal of U.S. Transit Center in Kyrgyzstan, the question is still open on the establishment there of joint armed forces of four countries –Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia – and Bishkek voiced official invitations for Russia and Turkey to establish logistics hub at the airport of Manas.

The Goals of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Its Impact on Central Asia and the United States

By Mr. Matt Stein

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) has been an active terrorist organization in the Central Asia region since its formation in 1998. Its original goal was to overthrow the government of Uzbekistan and establish an Islamic caliphate in the Fergana Valley region. When the terrorist attacks on 9/11 took place, the IMU was operating out of northern Afghanistan. Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) dislodged the IMU from its support areas, and the organization changed its priorities, particularly targeting the government of Uzbekistan. This brief study examines the history, current operations, and goals of the IMU to help determine what threat the organization poses for the governments of Central Asia and for the United States while its forces remain in Afghanistan.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/IMU-Goals.pdf>



Russian MVD-VV Tests Foreign Vehicle for SPETSNAZ Purchase

5 December 2013

“The MVD had initially planned to make the vehicle on a KamAZ base, but having analyzed the experience of the Ministry of Emergencies in employment of the Iveco chassis for fire trucks, the security officials opted for the overseas alternative.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The purchase of foreign weapon technologies has been a thorny issue regarding Russian defense tenders. Traditionally, Russia has only procured arms from domestic manufacturers that are usually state, or partially state, owned. The exceptions to this rule have typically been in areas where domestic manufactures have been particularly lacking, namely avionics, precision guidance systems, and unmanned aerial vehicle technologies.*

Although the purchase of domestic arms makes good sense from the government’s perspective of wanting to grow domestic arms industry and bring in more money for research-and-development programs, the security forces have often had a much different view. There has been some grumbling from them that their money could be better spent if they were allowed more flexibility in weapons purchases instead of being forced to shop solely in the domestic market. The accompanying article discusses the Ministry of Interior Troops (MVD-VV) decision to field test an Italian Iveco truck for MVD-VV SPETSNAZ operations, quite an achievement for a foreign manufacturer, as the Russian security forces use almost exclusively domestic chassis for their fleets.

*In general, even if Iveco does win this tender, Russia’s domestic arms manufactures have little to fear from Western manufactures. Western weapons systems are often many orders of magnitude more expensive than equivalent Russian systems, and are often far more difficult and more expensive to maintain and repair. Many foreign customers will continue to seek out Russian arms technologies for a variety of reasons, including pricing, cost of repair and maintenance, political expediency, and historical familiarity. The real threat to Russia’s domestic arms manufactures comes from the arms industries of India, China, and other states of the former Soviet Union, all of which are now catering to the same developing markets which have been the bedrock of Russian arms sales. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***



Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2012_Eurosatory_Iveco2.JPG

Source: Aleksey Krivoruchek, “MVD Special Forces Will Free Hostages on an Iveco Armored Truck. The Department Has Commissioned the Development of a Special Vehicle for Special Operations,” *Izvestiya Online*, 5 December 2013, <[http:// www.izvestia.ru](http://www.izvestia.ru)>, accessed 14 December 2013.

Russian MVD-VV field tests foreign vehicle for SPETSNAZ tender

The Interior Ministry has commissioned the development of a new special forces’ vehicle, which will be employed in special operations for the delivery of a six-man detachment. As distinct from the special carrier in service with the department, it will be a truck-type vehicle. The truck on an Iveco chassis will be fitted with all the requisite equipment for monitoring, assault, and the freeing of hostages – all-around video and resources for mine-laying and breaking down doors and also gear and equipment for delivering the men to the buildings which have to be swept or from which hostages need to be released....

...The MVD had initially planned to make the vehicle on a KamAZ base, but having analyzed the experience of the Ministry of Emergencies in employment of the Iveco chassis for fire trucks, the security officials opted for the overseas alternative. This was announced by a high-level department employee on terms of anonymity... “When KamAZ reported on the cost, timeframe, and servicing, we began to look for an alternative, to which we were pointed by our Ministry of Emergencies colleagues. We inspected their vehicles, spoke with the technicians and employees, and summoned our specialists, and a 25-man team approved it. It was decided that the Iveco chassis would suit us in terms of storage conditions and the possibility of conveyance of the vehicle on railroad transport and by air, and there are servicing centers throughout the country. And at the kick-off meeting of the future state commission it was decided that we would opt for Iveco,” *Izvestiya’s* source said...

Russia Increases Presence in Central Asia, Greater Focus on the Tajik Border

“After the full manning of the 201st Russian Military Base to the division level, which recently had a brigade structure, its combat and personnel strength will be increased by a minimum of three times.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Russian Federation has had mixed feelings about the US/NATO presence in Afghanistan. On one hand, Russia greatly resents having a potentially hostile force on its southern periphery; on the other, it enjoys the benefits of the greater stability those forces provide in that same troubled southern periphery.*

The planned withdrawal of US/NATO forces presents a problem for the Russian Federation. The Russian strategy for preventing instability from crossing its southern borders from Afghanistan and Pakistan has involved first stopping instability from crossing into its southern former Soviet neighbors. In the West, Islamic militancy is thought to be the primary problem that flows from South to North in Central Asia, but Russia and the post-Soviet Central Asian states are usually more often concerned with controlling labor migration, political instability, and especially the narcotics trade. Apparently, Russia firmly believes that a US/NATO full or partial pullout warrants additional Russian resources to make up the security shortfall in the region. As the accompanying article discusses, Russia plans on tripling the size of Russian Ministry of Defense troops in Tajikistan by upsizing the 201st Brigade to a full-sized division, and moving one of the new regiments closer to the Afghan border. This change comes only a few years after the 201st Motorized Rifle Division was downgraded to a brigade.

*Russia is not only increasing its presence, but also building new infrastructure for the forces in Tajikistan, indicating plans to remain there for the long haul. Although not mentioned in this article, Russia also has approximately 500 advisors with the Tajik Border Service; these advisors are likely to be bolstered in the future if Russia truly is concerned about border security. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Source: Vladimir Mukhin, “The Central Asian Problem Bridgehead: They Will Deploy 201st Motorized Rifle Division Subunits on the Afghan-Tajik Border,” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta Online*, 11 November 2013, < <http://www.ng.ru/> >, accessed 15 December 2013.

Russia ups Presence in Central Asia, Greater Focus on the Tajik Border

RF Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu announced on Saturday that the 201st Military Base that is deployed in Tajikistan has transitioned to the division structure. And already in six months, by the time of the withdrawal of the NATO coalition forces from Afghanistan, it will be equipped “at 100 percent, including with the latest models of weapons and military equipment.”

At the same time, President Vladimir Putin has submitted to the State Duma for ratification the Russo-Kazakhstan Agreement on the two countries’ Joint Regional Air Defense System (YeRS PVO)...

There are also problem issues on the reinforcement of the 201st Russian Military Base. After the full manning of the 201st Russian Military Base to the division level, which recently had a brigade structure, its combat and personnel strength will be increased by a minimum of three times. Motorized rifle regiments will be recreated in Dushanbe, Kulyab and Kurgan-Tyube. Their rearming with more state-of-the-art military equipment will be conducted. In the process, the weapons and basic loads of ammunition, which are located at 201st Russian Military Base right now, will be transferred to the Tajikistan Armed Forces at no cost. Their residual value can total \$150-200 million.

In August 2013, Sergey Shoygu reported that Russia can allocate those amounts to the Tajikistan Army rearming program in the next 10 years. So, the process of rearming the 201st Russian Military Base and the Tajik Army is being significantly accelerated.

However, Moscow will still have to ante up on other issues.

Nezavisimaya Gazeta’s sources in the Russian military department report that already beginning with the New Year the 201st Russian Military Base will begin the construction of its military infrastructure at the new location. That requirement is set forth in the agreement on the status of the Russian base, which the Tajikistan leadership recently ratified. According to the document, the new military garrisons outside the “administrative-territorial borders of the cities of Kurgan-Tyube and Kulyab, Khatlonskiy Oblast, Republic of Tajikistan must be built over the course of five years”. In so doing, based upon a report from Dushanbe, the military infrastructure in Kulyab will be redeployed closer to the Afghan-Tajik border. Besides this, expenditures are planned for the improvement of Ayni Military Airfield, although the agreement on it has not yet been signed and difficult negotiations are being conducted on this score right now. Dushanbe insists that in contrast to the agreement on the 201st Russian Military Base, Moscow would pay a lease payment for the use of this military facility.



Russian border guard on patrol.
Source: <http://www.yuga.ru/>

Russia Strengthens Its Presence in the Caucasus amidst Protests

December 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in Armenia on 2 December. His trip's starting point appeared symbolic — not Yerevan, the country's capital, but Gyumri, home to the Russian Army's military base, whose lease Armenia had agreed in 2010 to extend to Russia until 2044. Putin's remarks further reinforced the symbolism when he said that Russia does not intend to leave the South Caucasus, but rather strengthen its presence there.*

Some Armenians protested Putin's visit because of Armenia's recent move towards Russia by joining Russia's Customs Union. The accompanying excerpts describe the protests and provide a broader perspective on Putin's visit. The first excerpt, from Kavkaz-Uzel (Caucasian Knot), describes the diversity among the protestors, including traditional rivals, whom Putin brought together. The second, by Leila Noroushvili in Georgia Online, describes unprecedented security measures which "somehow smacked of North Korea or the early USSR."

According to Western press reports, approximately 1000 protestors came out in the streets in Armenia. For a country of three million, this is not a large number. Indeed, previous recent protests in February 2013 following the presidential election in Armenia drew a crowd of several thousand, according to Western reports. To put Armenia's December anti-Putin protests further in perspective, perhaps as many as one million Ukrainians, according to some reports, came out into the streets following Ukraine's similar recent move away from Europe in November, numbers comparable to what became known as the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004.

*Nonetheless, the protests in Armenia against Putin's visit matter, both in the context of unprecedented security measures in Gyumri and, more broadly, within the context of public dissatisfaction in the post-Soviet space in general, in response to governments (e.g., Ukraine and Armenia) moving their countries closer to Russia and away from Europe. This dynamic certainly matters as other post-Soviet countries watch. It particularly matters for Georgia, which initiated an association agreement with the European Union in November. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***

Source: "В Ереване проходит акция протеста против визита президента РФ Владимира Путина в Армению (In Yerevan Protests against Visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to Armenia)," Kavkaz-Uzel.ru (Caucasian Knot), 2 December 2013. <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/234458/>

In Yerevan Protests against Visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to Armenia

In Yerevan this afternoon protest actions began by opponents of the visit of President Vladimir Putin to Armenia, who do not support Armenia's accession to the Customs Union. Organizers of the campaign are the group Arzhanapativ Hayastan (Dignified Armenia), which includes representatives from several opposition parties and civil society organizations.

[According to one blogger] very different people gathered for the protest. "You can see anarchists... You can also see the guys from the nationalist party Ayazn hand in hand with the guys from the ANC. But that was what surprising - is the presence of the LGBT flag. Usually guys from Ayazn actively persecute the LGBT people. And Putin brought them together..."

Activists carry placards: No Russia and anti-government banners, altogether about 200 people participated in the procession... Today's meeting of the Armenian parliament began with criticism of the police officers who detained last night activists opposing the visit of the Russian president in the country...

Source: Leila Noroushvili, "Россия продолжает укрепляться на постсоветском пространстве" (Russia Continues to Strengthen Position in the Post-Soviet Space)," Грузия Online (Georgia Online), 6 December 2013. <http://www.apsny.ge/analytics/1386369881.php>

Russia Continues to Strengthen Position in the Post-Soviet Space

...His official visit to Armenia the Russian president began not from the capital, but from Gyumri, where the Russian military base is located. In the Soviet times, the base was part of the Transcaucasian Military District, TanMD, whose headquarters were located in the capital of Georgia - Tbilisi. Of course, Gyumri prepared for the arrival of the distinguished guest and taken unprecedented security measures. For example, along with other measures, there were these - the locals were banned from holding funerals and weddings, moreover, in the hours Putin's visit it was forbidden to approach windows and look at a passing motorcade according to Armenian journalists. It somehow smacked of North Korea or the early USSR ...

OE Watch Commentary: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov arrived to Iran on 11 December –his first visit to the Islamic Republic since President Hassan Rouhani took office in August this year. The accompanying commentaries from the Kremlin's official newspaper of record, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, (Russian Newspaper), provide a Russian perspective on the visit.

The visit appears to have further boosted ties between Russia and Iran and reaffirmed each country's belief of the other's importance in resolving critical international issues. The title of the second article, "Iran Gave Russia a Six in Diplomacy," plays humorously on the traditional Russian school grading system, where "five" is the highest grade, and "one" is the lowest. A grade of "six" therefore implies Russia's superior excellence, and at the same time plays on the P5+1 (the five permanent U.N. Security Council members plus Germany, who work together on Iran's nuclear issues) or "group of six," as it is sometimes referred to in the Russian press.

Rossiyskaya Gazeta notes that Lavrov and top Iranian officials searched together for a solution to the Syrian crisis and discussed cooperation on Afghanistan-related drug trafficking and the 2014 Caspian Summit in Astrakhan. These are among the issues that serve as the basis for the Russian-Iranian alliance, so they come as no surprise.

Both Russia and Iran are affected by drugs coming out of Afghanistan and both share similar concerns about Afghanistan's post-2014 future. The Syrian crisis brought the two countries even closer together, as both oppose Western intervention, and both see Syria under Bashar al-Assad's leadership as perhaps their closest, if not only, Arab ally.

Russia has continued to push for Iran's inclusion in the Syrian peace talks in Geneva, while Iran, for its part, stressed the importance of Russia's international role, which is something Russian President Vladimir Putin wants. "We consider it is of principal importance to invite Iran to this international conference [Geneva 2]," Lavrov stressed during his visit to Tehran, while his counterpart, Javad Zarif, said, "Russia's role is very important in averting a regional catastrophe."



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (left) and his Iranian counterpart, Mohammad Javad Zarif, give a joint press conference in Tehran on December 11. Source: <http://www.rg.ru/2013/12/11/iran-site.html>

Source: "Лавров: Иран способен позитивно повлиять на действия в Сирии (Lavrov: Iran could have a positive impact on operations in Syria)," Rossiyskaya Gazeta (Russian Newspaper) 11 December 2013. <http://www.rg.ru/2013/12/11/russia-iran-anons.html>

Lavrov: Iran could have a positive impact on operations in Syria

...Iran is able to have a positive impact on what is happening in Syria. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said this after talks with his Iranian counterpart Javad Zarif... Also Lavrov urged to begin consultations to reach a final agreement with Iran on the nuclear issue...

"The main thing, in my opinion— is to do everything that we agreed upon (Iran and the "group of six"), do not try to interpret the written in this document agreements broadly or narrowly, and in parallel, it is very important to begin consultations on the parameters of the final package that will dot all the "i's " and close this issue permanently," RIA Novosti quoted Lavrov...

Source: Vladislav Vorobyov, "Иран поставил России "шестерку" по дипломатии ("Iran Gave Russia a Six in Diplomacy)," Rossiyskaya Gazeta (Russian Newspaper) 12December 2013. <http://www.rg.ru/2013/12/11/iran-site.html>

Lavrov: Iran could have a positive impact on operations in Syria

..."Russia—is one of Iran's best friends in the "group of 6," added [Javad] Zarif... That same Monday, apparently, it was also not by accident First Deputy Prime Minister and Crown Prince of Bahrain Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa suddenly announced that the U.S. volatility may encourage the Arab world to move closer to Russia, "Russians proved that they are good friends. As a result, some states region already thinking to develop more multilateral relations, and not rely solely on Washington. America, it seems, is suffering from schizophrenia when dealing with the Arab world."...

Lavrov's program in his visit to Tehran had just a few points, but what points! Talks

(continued)

Continued: Lavrov's Visit to Tehran Strengthens Russia-Iran

Notably, Zarif also said that Russia is one of Iran's best friends in the group of 6. It's important to keep this comment in perspective. Indeed, Russia is Iran's strongest supporter in the P5+1 group. Yet Russia and Iran are not exactly friends. Rather, they share an alliance built on mutually-shared interests and animosities.

The two countries' history of relations is complicated, vacillating for centuries between conflict and competition for territory and influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Later, Iran's revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was hostile to the Soviet Union. Perhaps as a result, Moscow supported Baghdad during the Iran-Iraq War. It was only with Khomeini's death in 1989 that both Moscow and Tehran sought to improve relations.

*To be sure, Russia and Iran are indeed close allies at the moment, beyond cooperation in the P5+1 group, and the two countries' ties appear only to be growing. It is important, however, not to mistake this alliance for genuine friendship. Here, historical context matters. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***

with his Iranian counterpart Javad Zarif, access to the media and most importantly—meeting with President Hassan Rouhani. And this is without any secrecy. Moscow made no secret why Lavrov visited the Iranian capital: to discuss the details planned for autumn 2014 Caspian summit in Astrakhan, talk about cooperation on Afghanistan and the fight against drug trafficking and course, search together for a solution to the Syrian crisis...

“We consider it is of principle importance to invite Iran to this international conference [Geneva 2],” underscored the Russian minister. “Russia's role is very important in averting a regional catastrophe,” noted Zarif...

Public Perception of the Sea Breeze Exercises and Ukraine's Prospects in the Black Sea Region

By Alisa Moldavanova

This paper focuses on the changing Ukrainian public perceptions of Sea Breeze. By closely examining six Ukrainian regional and national newspapers from 2001 until 2013, this study uncovers several underlying themes that explain varying public support and resistance to these exercises. The results suggest that Ukrainian public opinion is not uniform, and emphasize the importance in keeping these regional differences in mind when conducting a public information campaign regarding the Euro-Atlantic prospects of Ukraine.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/international/Ukraine/Sea-Breeze-exercise.pdf>

Russia's \$2 Billion Weapons Deal with Egypt

26 September 2013

OE Watch Commentary: Russia will provide Egypt \$2 billion worth of weapons, according to the accompanying excerpts from Russia's business-leaning Vedomosti and Newsru.co.il. According to Russian officials cited in the articles, the weapons under discussion are those that the U.S. had denied Cairo when President Obama partially suspended military aid to Egypt in October 2013 following the ouster of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood-led government and its president, Mohammad Morsi. This will be the largest military agreement for Russia and Egypt since the 1970s –the largest arms deal, in general, for decades, according to some Western reports citing Russian sources.

Russia and Egypt have been working for a while now on renewing their Soviet-era ties, and the weapons deal is the latest, major step in this trajectory. Russia's Head of the International Committee of the Federation Council Mikhail Margelov is quoted in Newsru.com.il as saying that Russia intends to return to the Middle East, among other regions, "after a 20-year hiatus."

Indeed, in November 2012 Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov went on a Middle East tour, which began in Egypt, where Lavrov invited Morsi to come to Russia upon Russian President Vladimir Putin's personal invitation. In November 2013 Lavrov and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu met with their Egyptian counterparts to discuss the arms deal.

Russian-Egyptian ties go a long way back. The Soviet Union had a close relationship with the secular regime of now-ousted Hosni Mubarak. Earlier, Tsarist Russia supported Egyptian Christians for centuries.

Renewing ties serves the interests of both Russia and Egypt. The current Egyptian leadership is angry at the United States for what it perceives to be U.S. abandoning its ally, and is in search for a new patron. This opens a window for Russia to step in to fill the void, as the Kremlin seeks not only commercial ties, but also, more importantly, influence in the Middle East. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)**



Head of the International Committee of the Federation Council Mikhail Margelov.
Source: http://russiancouncil.ru/en/inner/?id_4=1958#topnews/20130449380.html

Source: "Маргелов: Египет закупит в России оружие на миллиарды долларов (Margelov: Egypt To Buy Billions of Dollars Worth of Weapons from Russia)," Newsru.co.il, 12 December 2013. http://newsru.co.il/mideast/12dec2013/margelov_a205.html

Margelov: Egypt To Buy Billions of Dollars' Worth of Weapons from Russia

Russia will supply military equipment to Egypt worth two billion dollars. Head of the International Committee of the Federation Council Mikhail Margelov announced this speaking at the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Russian politician did not specify the types of weapons and did not say whether the contract is signed or is it a tentative agreement. However, he stressed that Egypt will receive weapons which the United States had denied it.

According to Margelov, the Middle East –is only one of the regions where Russia intends to return after a 20- year hiatus. He noted that even before the "Arab Spring" Moscow began to strengthen military-technical, trade and economic cooperation with Middle Eastern states....

Source: Alexei Nikolsky "Египет готов купить российское оружие на \$2 млрд (Egypt Ready to Buy Russian Weaponry Worth \$2 Billion)," Vedomosti, 20 November 2013. <http://www.aif.ru/dontknows/answer/1027008>

Egypt Ready to Buy Russian Weaponry Worth \$2 Billion

...The intensification of military-technical cooperation with Egypt was one of the topics discussed during the visit on Thursday of Russian Defense and Foreign ministers Sergei Shoigu and Sergei Lavrov in Cairo, where they held talks with Egyptian counterparts within the "2 + 2" format. As Shoigu said after the talks, "we continued discussing projects on military and military - technical cooperation, agreed that in the near future we will take steps on the legal framework of our agreements ."....

Now, according to Vedomosti's source, negotiations are ongoing about the purchase of up to \$2 billion MiG-29M/M2 fighters , air defense short-range anti-tank missiles "Cornet" and Saudi Arabia may pay for deliveries of Russian weapons, as it offers much financial support to Egypt's the new leadership.

OE Watch Commentary: Over the past decade the Kremlin leadership has endeavored to improve the status and prestige of those serving in the military. There was much need for repair, as the 1990s were particularly strained for the Russian Armed Forces. Political confusion was aggravated by extreme economic distress and the brutal conflict in Chechnya. Graphic stories depicting the horrific conditions of those serving in the military were commonplace, and the military's reputation fell dramatically among the Russian populace.

Repairing this damage has been a long and difficult process. While there has been no shortage of political rhetoric surrounding the value of military service, only over the past 4-5 years have actual policies and funding been implemented to improve the basic living conditions of soldiers. Besides reducing the conscript tour of duty to one year, the Kremlin has helped to enact policies which tie military service to increased employment and educational opportunities. They have also saturated the Russian media (e.g., TV stations, programs, films, etc.) with material designed to portray military service in a positive light. The removal last year of the unpopular former defense minister (A. Serdyukov) and his replacement by the highly respected S. Shoygu also helped to improve the military's reputation.

As the poll figures from the accompanying extract (<http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=459&uid=114617>) indicate, these efforts appear to be paying off. While the increases have been modest, more Russians now regard their military as average or above. The poll results also indicate that most Russians continue to favor a conscript military as opposed to a volunteer force. However, as improvements continue in the realm of soldier pay, benefits and living conditions, more young Russian men will likely consider military service as a viable career choice, which could ultimately result in a professional force.

End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

Source: Poll Shows Surge in Satisfaction with Army, VTsIOM, (All-Russia Center for Study of Public Opinion; URL: <http://wciom.ru/>) 27 November 2013.

...The state of the Russian Armed Forces is seen by the population in a more positive light than two year ago under the previous Defense Minister Anatoliy Serdyukov, the state-owned Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (VTsIOM) website reported on 27 November... A VTsIOM poll conducted in November also showed that the public continues to support the compulsory military service.

The state of the Russian army is being seen more positively: in 2011 only 13 per cent of the respondents regarded it as positive and now the figure is 22 per cent. Negative view is becoming less common (it fell from 29 per cent in 2011 to 18 per cent today). Over half of those polled described the state of the armed forces as average (53 per cent).

...Over half of the Russian today favor the retaining of the universal compulsory military service military... Transition to the contract system is supported by 38 per cent...

How would you rate the current condition of the Russian military?						
	1998 г.	2009 г.	2010 г.	2011 г.	Feb 2013 г.	Nov 2013 г.
Very good (Очень хорошее)	0	2	2	1	2	2
Good (Хорошее)	1	15	12	12	14	20
Average (Среднее)	13	48	47	44	46	53
Poor (Плохое)	40	22	25	23	26	16
Very poor (Очень плохое)	41	3	3	6	5	2
Hard to answer	5	10	10	14	6	7
(Затрудняюсь ответить)						

Homegrown Internet Defense

20 November 2013

OE Watch Commentary: Internet usage continues to expand throughout all of Russia. In 2012 Russia accounted for the highest number of Internet users in all of Europe. According to a recent report, today more than 50% of the Russian population uses the Internet on a daily basis (http://download.yandex.ru/company/ya_russian_regions_report_2013.pdf). As access and connectivity continue to improve, this percentage is certain to increase.

As in other countries, social media platforms account for a high percentage of overall Russian Internet use. The two most popular Russian social media sites are VKontakte (In Contact) with 46 million users and Odnoklassniki (Classmates) with 40 million. In stark contrast, Facebook has only been able to attract 1.2 million Russian users. The excerpt from the accompanying article suggests that national security concerns are a primary reason why Russians prefer their own homegrown social media over foreign imports.

The article reflects the prevalent belief among many within the Kremlin that the West (particularly the US) continues to use digital technology to weaken the Russian state. Just as Western propaganda allegedly played a key role in the dissolution of the USSR, so today, Russian authorities claim that the US is using platforms like Facebook and Twitter to foment dissent. According to this Russian logic, these new American technologies allow the US government to manipulate information and influence politics to improve its geopolitical position on the global chessboard. Fortunately for Russia, it has developed its own domestic social media sites which, according to this excerpt, have helped to protect the country's sovereignty.

The article goes on to mention how the Russian authorities have worked to make their domestic social media sites more attractive (e.g., faster loading speeds and no restrictions on sharing copyright material) than foreign counterparts. They also suggest that this is part of a long-term information strategy, as these Russian sites were on-line domestically for two years before Facebook entered the Russian market. The excerpt also intimates that the Russian security services may have an easier time monitoring the traffic on these domestic social media sites. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

Source: Sergey Tikhonov, "How VKontakte and Odnoklassniki Defended Russia's Independence," Ekspert Online, 20 November 2013.

Domestic Social Networks Seen as Bastions of Russian Sovereignty

Social networks are one of the key elements of national security, and their creation and development takes place under implied state control. Documents disclosed by Assange and Snowden have fully corroborated suspicions by some experts that Facebook is a most important element in the system of total surveillance over the planet's population by the United States and an instrument of political influence. Countries that have succeeded in establishing their own social networks that are dominant in their own societies are able to resist the information-psychological expansion of the West and de facto retain at least some sovereignty. It has now become clear why the protest movement in Russia in 2011 failed to develop into a nationwide civil confrontation with the powers that be in the manner planned by its architects. That is because Facebook, despite significant investment in its development in Russia, has failed to emerge as a major medium in our country comparable to Russia's "own" social network VKontakte.

It is already recognized at government level today that social media is an important factor in national security. In this respect, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Rogozin's remarks that "social media is one of the elements of cyber warfare" are illustrative. This is the first such statement by such a high-ranking Russian official. It has recently emerged that in the current practice of US intelligence services there exists so-called console access, which in reality makes it possible to control news content in social media. And all the talk about their "self-regulation" is yet another myth designed to cause the vigilance of public opinion to drop...

...Moreover, social networks play the role of information collection centers that accumulate all information about the population of a particular country according to all target criteria. It has also emerged that the political manipulation capabilities of the global reach network Facebook have already been tested in practice in countries of the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeast Asia -- Egypt, Yemen,



<http://www.facebook.com>



<http://www.odnoklassniki.ru/>



vk.com

(continued)

Continued: Homegrown Internet Defense

Tunisia, Libya, Cambodia, Thailand, and Indonesia. ...

...Even though it has let Facebook and Twitter into its media space, Russia does not allow them to develop to such an extent that they have an influence over a significant section of the population. In order to do so, there was no need to impose bans and put up obstacles to their development in the country. Simply, analogues of the global giants were created, which had major advantages over them for the user. Communication companies provide a powerful channel to VKontakte, which is why its page loading speeds are among the highest on Runet [Russian Internet]. Moreover, Russian networks have been tacitly “allowed” to violate copyright by permitting unlimited downloads of illegal audio and video content. However, these were still merely preventive measures because by the time the Russian version of Facebook was launched in 2008, Russia had had its own social networks -- VKontakte and Odnoklassniki -- for two years.

As at 1 October 2013, VKontakte had 46 million daily users and Odnoklassniki had 40 million, while Facebook only 1.2 million. It means that Russian social networks “control” almost the entire adult urban population of the country, whereas their Western competitor has to make do with a tiny section of the public concentrated primarily in Moscow and St Petersburg and limited mostly to “office plankton” and business people. ... In Russia, the growth of Facebook is being thwarted, in particular, by the presence of strong local competitors.”

Russia's Strategic Mobility

Supporting 'Hard Power' to 2020?

By Roger N. McDermott

http://www.foi.se/ReportFiles/foir_3587.pdf

Roger N. McDermott's *Russia's Strategic Mobility: Supporting 'Hard Power' to 2020?* examines the rapidly changing Russian military's strategic capabilities for logistics, combat service support, and force projection. McDermott's work for The Russia Studies Programme of the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) sheds light on the unglamorous, but vitally important logistic backbone upon which the Russian military relies. Roger N. McDermott is a Senior International Fellow for the Foreign Military Studies Office.



APRIL 2013



Ivan's Daily Routine

16 October 2013

OE Watch Commentary: A popular Russian blogger who covers Russian military topics recently included a post that described the typical daily soldier training schedule in the Eastern Military District. A partial translation of the schedule is posted in the table below. The schedule is similar to soldier training plans world-wide, but a couple of points stand out.

First, it is a very full schedule and may reflect some of the challenge in training one-year conscripts for the demands of the modern battlefield. Readiness exercises conducted in 2013 highlighted shortfalls in basic soldier skills (e.g., driving, map reading, weapon familiarization). Second is the explicit focus on ensuring the health and welfare of the individual soldier. For example, during the morning inspection leaders are required to carefully examine soldiers for any evidence of injury or sickness. The current military leadership appears determined to eradicate hazing and the poor treatment of conscripts. The schedule also permits time for a short nap after lunch and allows conscripts to use their mobile phones for an hour after supper. The schedule indicates when contract soldiers (these correlate to U.S. professional soldiers) are expected to be on duty: 0800-1800. Finally, in accordance with recent directives from the minister of defense, there are clear instructions when the Russian flag is to be raised and lowered and when the national anthem is to be sung.

Writing a training plan is easier than carrying it out, and the blog comment section reflects skepticism regarding "nap-time" and allowing conscripts to use mobile phones. Still, allowing prospective new recruits to become familiar with their daily schedule may help to dispel some of the negative stereotypes associated with conscript duty. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

Source: Blog entry, Denis Mokrushin, <http://twower.livejournal.com/http://twower.livejournal.com/1174694.html#comments>

Routine Daily Training Schedule Eastern Military District 2013-2014

Event Number	Event Description	Begin	End	Length
1.	Wake Dep Plt Cdr	0620	0630	10 min
2.	General Wake up	0630	0640	10 min
3.	Morning Exercises (PT) Mon-Sat. For those on profile-walking.	0640	0710	30 min
4.	Showers, make beds	0710	0740	30 min
5.	Morning inspection (to include close examination of soldiers, uniforms etc...)	0740	0810	30 min
6.	Arrival of contract soldiers		0800	
7.	Breakfast	0810	0830	20 min
8.	Training preparation	0830	0850	20 min
9.	Raising Russian flag; singing national anthem	0850	0900	10 min
10.	Training Sessions (Mon-Fri)			
11.	1st hour	0900	0950	50 min
12.	2d hour	1000	1050	50 min
13.	3d hour	1100	1150	50 min
14.	4th hour	1200	1250	50 min
15.	Travel from tng; turn-in weapons; clean up.	1250	1310	20 min
16.	Lunch	1310	1350	40 min
17.	Relax/nap	1350	1450	60 min
18.	Prep for training	1450	1500	10 min
19.	5th hour training	1500	1550	50 min
20.	6th hour	1600	1650	50 min
21.	7th hour	1700	1750	50 min
22.	Evening formation; Review orders; clarify battle plans	1750	1800	10 min
23.	Contract soldier departure		1800	
24.	Change uniforms, clean boots, wash hands, prepare for dinner	1800	1850	50 min
25.	Dinner	1850	1930	40 min
26.	Personal time; hand out mobile phones to conscripts	1930	2100	90 min
27.	Watching and listening to Russian radio and TV	2100	2130	30 min
28.	Evening stroll	2130	2150	20 min
29.	Evening inspection; check of guard duty	2150	2210	20 min
30.	Evening toilet	2210	2230	20 min
31.	Retreat. Lower flag of Russian Federation		2230	

Russia to Deploy Military to Control Oil and Gas Reserves in the Arctic Ocean

“Russia will send a military force to be set up in the Arctic next year in order to actively explore the promising region and use all possible channels to protect its security and national interests, President Vladimir Putin said at a meeting with senior military commanders on Dec. 10.”

OE Watch Commentary: *There is an on-going territorial dispute among Russia, Canada and Denmark as to ownership of the undersea Lomonosov Ridge running through the North Pole. Under the 1982 U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, the size of a country's exclusive economic zone (200 nautical miles from the coast) can be extended to 350 miles if there is sufficient evidence that the seabed beyond the 200-mile zone is a natural extension of a country's continental shelf. The dispute is not so much about land as about Arctic oil and gas fields. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the North Pole area may contain up to 30 percent of the world's gas and 13 percent of the world's oil reserves. These reserves are essential for Russia to continue its long-term economic development. According to the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources' estimate of 2012, Russia has only enough oil and gas to meet its economic requirements for the next 30 years. As the first excerpt indicates, the Kremlin leadership intends to protect these claims with a robust military presence in the region.*

The second excerpt points out that Russian airborne forces are preparing for a spring

Source: Yulia Ponomareva, Russia Beyond the Headlines, www.rbth.ru, 12 December 2013 (Russia Beyond the Headlines is a website sponsored by Rossiyskaya Gazeta)

Article #1:

Russia intends to deploy a military force on its northern coast to engage in the fight for control over promising oil and gas reserves in the Arctic Ocean

...This year Russia began restoring seven airfields in the Arctic, which had been left abandoned after the break-up of the Soviet Union. By the end of the year it will put contracts in place to refurbish two more airfields, the president said.

Putin thanked all those who had taken part in restoring the Russian military base on the New Siberian Islands between the Laptev Sea and the East Siberian Sea. That archipelago, according to him, is “crucial for monitoring the situation throughout the Arctic.”

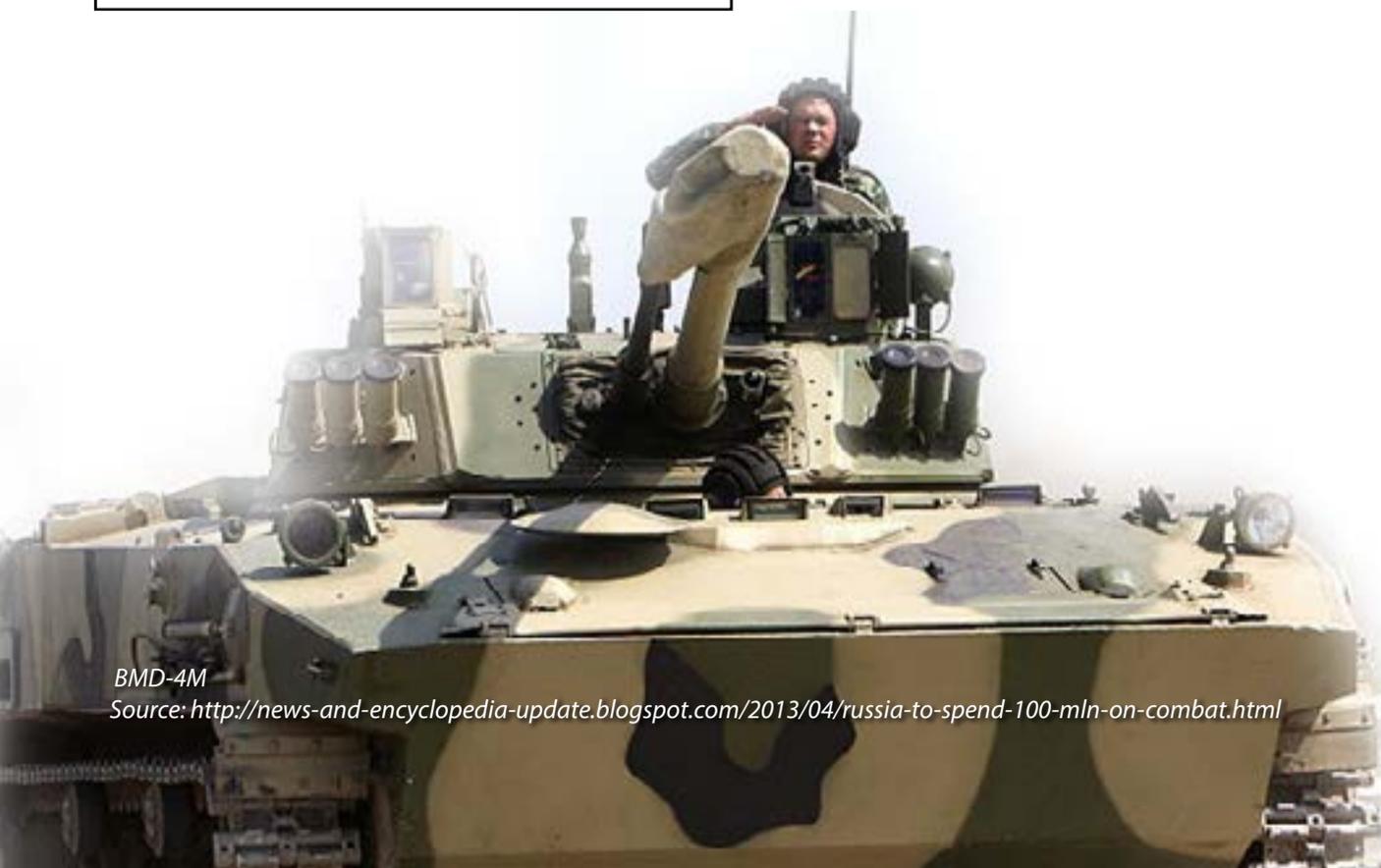
Putin's statement came a week after the prime minister of Canada ruled to include the North Pole into Ottawa's seabed claim to be filed with the UN Commission on the Law of the Sea....

Experts believe that it is the need to defend its economic interests in the Arctic and to ensure security for companies planning to work in the Arctic Ocean behind the Russian authorities' ambition to increase the country's military presence in the region.

According to military observer Dmitri Litovkin, there are no actual military threats for Russia in the Arctic, so the decision to deploy a military contingent there is aimed at removing future threats related to territorial disputes.

“The state is establishing a platform on which companies could develop mineral resources,” Litovkin said. “Only the state can guarantee, say, to Gazprom that it will be able to produce oil and gas on that territory undisturbed.”

(continued)



BMD-4M

Source: <http://news-and-encyclopedia-update.blogspot.com/2013/04/russia-to-spend-100-mln-on-combat.html>

Continued: Russia to Deploy Military to Control Oil and Gas Reserves in the Arctic Ocean

*Arctic exercise to test their ability to plan and conduct large-scale airborne drops in polar regions. The airborne forces commander also announced plans to equip airborne divisions with the BMD-4M infantry fighting vehicle (which is the airborne version of the BMP-3) and the BTR-MDM air assault transport vehicle. Both are air-deliverable and tracked, which make them ideal for Arctic and other rugged terrain combat. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)***

Source: Moscow Interfax-AVN Online in Russian -- Website of news service devoted to military news and owned by the independent Interfax news agency; URL: <http://www.militarynews.ru> 5 December 2013.

Article #2:

“Russia’s airborne troops will hold exercises in the Arctic region in the spring, Andrey Kholzakov, deputy commander of the VDV [Airborne Troops], has announced.”

...“In March we are planning exercises involving the 98th Airborne Division in the northern latitudes. We want to see how the service personnel function in the Arctic zone. There have been solo drops [odinochnoye desantirovaniye] in the zone. We need to know not only how a contract service member will behave but also how the staff will function,” he said on the “Rossiya 24” television show on Thursday.

He also said that the VDV started tests on the BMD-4M airborne fighting vehicle on 1 December.”...

...In addition, the manufacture of 10 modernized BMD-4Ms and BTR-MDMs has begun launched, and state testing on them will be held in January-February 2014....



BTR MDM Source: http://imagenesmilitares.blogspot.com/2013_11_01_archive.html



BMD-4M Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BMD-4M_on_Engineering_Technologies_Forum_-_2010_show.jpg

OE Watch Commentary: Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, the head of Russia's military-industrial complex, stated in mid November that it was necessary for the country's industry to skip the fifth generation of weaponry. He asserts that Russia missed the fifth technological level due to "messing up." He wants us to believe that quantity matters more than quality, maintaining that computers and fifth-level technologies made up only 10% of Russia's defense, space, and other sectors.

At the same time, Russia is a worldwide leader in information technologies, especially in software development. Russia has continuously led the field in software development and security and has produced numerous new pieces of weaponry for which, Russia's leaders assert, there is "no equivalent" anywhere in the world. For example, Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu recently stated that Iskander-M has "no equivalent" in the world for its tactical specifications. Russian correspondent Vladimir Mukhin noted that the Favorit surface-to-air missile system has "no equivalent" in the world. Reportedly, the Club-K missile complex, the Tiger-M-based mobile EW complex, and the new Zoopark 1 radar reconnaissance and fire control system also have "no equivalents" in the world. This propaganda is likely designed to convince Russians that their country is well-defended and to impress upon foreigners that Russia's military industry (despite evidence to the contrary) remains on the cutting edge of technology. Rogozin asserts that skipping a technological era has not damaged Russia's defense capacity: "The core of the sixth technological level is the discoveries made in nanotechnologies, biotechnologies, new materials, including strategic materials, new information and communication technologies, cognitive, membrane and quantum technologies, photonics, micro-mechanics, robotics, genetic engineering, virtual reality technologies and thermonuclear energy." **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

Source: Interfax-AVN Online in English, 15 November 2013

Rogozin: Russia Misses 5th Technological level, has to Leap into 6th

Russia has to create conditions for leaping from the fourth to the sixth technological level within the next few years, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin said. "We missed the fifth technological level. Pardon my language, but we messed up," he told the audience at the Technoprom-2013 Forum in Novosibirsk on Friday. He said that computers and other fifth-level technologies accounted for no more than 10% of Russia's defense, space and other sectors.



ZOOPARK-1

Source: <http://www.npostrela.com/en/products/museum/92/546/>

"So, you can see the complexity of tasks faced by domestic science and industries: our country aims to join the club of states operating on the sixth technological level within a decade," Rogozin said. "The core of the sixth technological level is the discoveries made in nanotechnologies, biotechnologies, new materials, including strategic materials, new information and communication technologies, cognitive, membrane and quantum technologies, photonics, micro-mechanics, robotics, genetic engineering, virtual reality technologies and thermonuclear energy," the deputy prime minister explained. A synthesis of these areas may lead to the creation of artificial intelligence at some point, Rogozin added.

He suggested that the sixth technological level would grow mature in 25-30 years. "Certainly, it would be much too early to speak about Russia's accession to the sixth technological level," he said.

In Rogozin's words, the share of elements of the sixth technological level is meager in Russia, which has a developed fourth technological level in half of its production assets, such as heavy machine building, atomic energy and some other sectors, and the third technological in a third of production assets. Novosibirsk, a scientific and technological center, may be one of the first Russian regions to introduce elements of the sixth technological level, Rogozin stated.

Azerbaijan's Iran Problem

Azerbaijan holds a unique position in the Islamic world as a majority Shi'ite state that is both run by Shi'ites and also respects the separation between mosque and state.¹ As a country that has at times been incorporated wholly into both Iran and Russia and, indeed, the only state that borders both countries today, it also falls within both the Iranian and Russian concepts of their “near abroad,” a sense which propels both Tehran and Moscow to seek influence in a manner that can undercut Azeri freedom and independence.

When Azerbaijan regained its independence in 1991, it became only the world's second Shi'ite-led state after the Islamic Republic of Iran. Certainly, Iraq and Bahrain were majority Shi'ite, but Sunni leaders ruled over those states, and in Bahrain they still do. Decades of Soviet rule had taken their toll on Azerbaijan. Imposed atheism had not eradicated Islam—Soviet authorities allowed some manifestations of religious practice to continue—but they had frozen religious scholarship and eroded religiosity as the older, more traditional generation died out.

Independent Azerbaijan's re-entrance into the Shiite world has at times been rocky. Iran's state-sanctioned, hardline clergy have persistently sought to fill the vacuum, often conflating the Iranian regime's own interpretation of Shi'ism with antagonism toward the West.² Shortly after Azerbaijan held its first post-independence parliamentary elections in 1995, the Islamic Republic's official *Iran News* chided Azerbaijan for its Western political and cultural orientation. “The Zionists and the pro-Zionist American lobby are active in Baku trying to safeguard their own financial interests rather than Azerbaijan's national and regional interests.” These interests, the article continued, lay with Iran,³ and Abrar, another hardline Iranian daily, declared the same day that a desire for “friendship and closeness with Iran [was] a sentiment that emanated from the hearts of the [Azerbaijani] people.”⁴ The pressure from Iranian politicians continues. In May 2012 the Iranian government hung the flag of Azerbaijan upside down during a visit by the Azerbaijani defense minister to Tehran, so that that a green band symbolizing Islam appeared on top.⁵ On 3 April 2013 the Iranian daily *Kayhan*, whose editor, currently Hossein Shariatmadari, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei appoints and which Iran watchers both inside and outside the Islamic Republic therefore believe speaks for the Supreme Leader, published an official editorial calling for a referendum inside Azerbaijan on that country's reincorporation into Iran.⁶ Just over one year later Iranian Parliamentary Speaker Ali Larijani lectured Azerbaijanis that only “promotion of Imams' teachings [will] lead to your country's blossoming.”⁷

Politics of Clergy in Azerbaijan

The Soviet Union strictly regulated religion. Within the historically restive Caucasus, Soviet authorities appointed a Shi'ite theologian to lead the Muslim Spiritual Administration, under whom a Sunni served as deputy. The leader provided administrative oversight to the Soviet Union's various Shi'ite communities, while his deputy oversaw the Sunni communities of the Caucasus.⁸ The collapse of the Soviet Union imbued the body with new importance, as Muslim communities both grew and re-embraced their identity. For this, they relied largely upon Allahshukur Pashazadeh, a native of Cil, a southern Azerbaijani village just 20 miles north of the Iranian border. Pashazadeh had long been active in Soviet-era religious bureaucracy. He had become chairman of the Caucasian Board of Muslims in 1980, and also served as the Sheikh ul-Islam of Azerbaijan. In the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse, he had also served as the chairman of the Muslim Advisory Council.



After a tumultuous decade after regaining independence in which independent missionaries had free reign to proselytize in often radical directions, President Heydar Aliyev also created the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations to regulate and monitor religious activity. Islamic scholar Rafiq Aliyev was its inaugural head, but was replaced in 2006 by former presidential aide Hidayat Orucov. The Committee has broad power over publication and dissemination of religious publications, and also registers places of worship.⁹ A 2009 Religion

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Continued: Azerbaijan's Iran Problem

Law requires all mosques to join the Caucasian Board of Muslims. The Board has used its power to shut down mosques which agitate against the state.¹⁰ While this is a common practice in the region and the broader Islamic world, it effectively drives radicals underground.

Pashazadeh has used his position as Azerbaijan's top religious cleric to promote tolerance, often calling upon religious leaders to unite to fight terrorism and separatism. He walks a tightrope, however, as he also meets frequently with Iranian officials and seeks to ameliorate them, at times and at least according to Iranian sources, by embracing some Iranian positions. He has, for example, endorsed Tehran's conference on the Palestinian Intifada, an annual event in which Islamist radicals demand Israel's annihilation.¹¹

Iranian authorities are unwilling to accept mere lip service, however. While they have modulated pressure with time, the Iranian government still seeks a more radical future for Azerbaijan. In July 2005 Azerbaijani security forces raided the Juma mosque in Baku's ancient old city in order to curtail the increasingly radical preaching by Ilgar Ibrahimoglu, an Iran-trained preacher.¹² More recently, Tehran's main tool for this effort has been Sheikh Taleh Bagirov a 29-year-old cleric who from 2005-2010 studied in Qom, Iran's main clerical center. Upon his return to Azerbaijan in 2011, Bagirov began preaching at the Hazrat Abulfaz Aga Mosque, often targeting the moderate positions of state religious bodies. He also began to agitate against the ban on headscarves in schools, a regulation Azerbaijan upholds to prevent coercion by religious radicals against schoolgirls, eventually receiving 18 months imprisonment.¹³ Incarceration did not moderate him. Upon his release he used his sermons to attack the government. "No matter how many evil-doers there are in this world, how many men in black masks and guns, Allah is with us. You have stolen people's land, you have stolen the oil, and you still sit there with no one to say anything to you," he declared in one sermon. "Now you want to rule in the mosque too? No matter how influential an official is, he cannot rule inside the mosque."¹⁴



Prominent Islamic scholar in Azerbaijan Sheikh Taleh Bagirov.
Source: <http://www.crescent-online.net/2013/04/aliyev-regime-arrests-sheikh-taleh-bagirov-again-crescent-onlinenet-3731-articles.html>

The Nardaran Flashpoint



Allahshukur Pashazadeh
Source: <http://en.trend.az/news/society/1498025.html>

Bagirov has his power base in Nardaran, a small town on the Abşeron peninsula just 16 miles northeast of Baku. A nondescript suburb but for Hezbollah's flag flying from buildings and pro-Iranian graffiti on compound walls, it has for well over a decade been a flashpoint for pro-Iranian, anti-Azerbaijan government agitation. Its atmosphere of strict Islamic conservatism stands in sharp contrast to the rest of Azerbaijan.¹⁵ The town was, in 1991, the birthplace of the Islamic Party of Azerbaijan (IPA), a party which supports closer relations between Tehran and Baku, promotes an anti-West, anti-Israel platform, and is often at the center of anti-government agitation. The IPA campaigned against the Azerbaijani government's efforts to ban the rebroadcast of Iranian television inside Azerbaijan, but suffered a blow in 1995 after the Azerbaijani government passed a law banning clerics from running for political office.¹⁶ That same year Azerbaijani security arrested several party leaders on accusations of spying for Iran and seeking to overthrow the government, after which they stripped the IPA of registration. The lack of legal status, however, did not end the IPA; it has continued its activities illegally and with the support of Iran to the present day.

In 2002 protests over lack of services and employment led to an escalating series of clashes with police. A truce negotiated by Pashazadeh restored an uneasy calm in February 2003, but protests re-erupted in 2006 after locals responded violently to an article in Sanat, an obscure newspaper that blamed Islam for Azerbaijan's lack of economic development.¹⁷ The crisis was entirely manufactured by Nardaran's radicals and their supporters in the Islamic Republic. After the article appeared, Islamists from Nardaran wrote to Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Fazel Lankarani, a strong supporter of Ayatollah Khomeini's philosophy and the product of a Persian mother and Azerbaijani father, explaining, "Recently one of the Azeri newspapers... published an article from Rafiq Taği, an apostate journalist causing fury and wrath among Muslims of the region...." They continued falsely, "The writer of the article is trying to conclude with his analysis that Europe and its religion, Christianity are superior in all aspects to the Mid-

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Continued: Azerbaijan's Iran Problem

dle East and its religion, Islam. He describes Islam as inferior to Christianity in all aspects. In a section of his article he has insulted the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and ridiculed all sanctities of Islam.” “What is the duty of Muslims with regard to this unbearable issue?” they asked. Lankarani answered, “He is considered as someone who has insulted the Prophet and in any case, given his confessions, it is necessary for every individual who has an access to him to kill him. The person in charge of the said newspaper, who published such thoughts and beliefs consciously and knowingly, should be dealt with in the same manner.”¹⁸

The Iranian government was wholly behind the crisis, which became the Azerbaijani equivalent of the 1989 Salman Rushdie crisis, when Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini called for the British-Indian author to be killed for his alleged blasphemy. Just as Khomeini’s call for Rushdie’s murder rallied both Islamic and Western liberals to his defense, so too did the Lankarani fatwa rally Azeri intellectuals. Forty prominent Azeri scholars and civil society leaders published an open letter calling for Iran to cease its support for religious extremists inside Azerbaijan.¹⁹ There, the similarity ends, however. For while Rushdie remains a free man and increasingly public figure, assassins ambushed Taği in a Baku parking lot on 19 November 2011; he succumbed to his stab wounds four days later.

In January 2011 Azeri authorities arrested several dozen IPA activists after party chairmen Movsum Samadov called for the overthrow of the Azeri government. “The Azerbaijani people should rise and put an end to the despotic regime and the leader with a face of Yazid,” he declared, comparing President Ilham Aliyev to an early Islamic caliph despised by Shi’ites for killing revered Imam Hussein bin Ali.²⁰ The following day, on 7 January, an Azeri court charged Samadov with plotting to create mass unrest and perpetrate terrorism.²¹ Then, between March 2011 and March 2012, Azerbaijani authorities arrested 40 locals—most IPA activists—whom they accused of spying for Iran or planning sabotage against the Eurovision contest to which Baku played host in May 2012.²²

In March 2013 protests re-erupted in Nardaran after Azeri forces re-arrested Bagirov for possession of heroin, a charge which his supporters say the state based on planted evidence.²³ Protestors not only chanted “Down with corrupt officials of Azerbaijan,” but also took up the common Iranian regime refrain, “Death to America” and “Death to Israel.”²⁴ Members of parliament accused Iran of seeking to infiltrate mosques to incite supporters against the Azerbaijani government and promote radicalism in response.²⁵

Iranian Soft Power

Beyond sponsoring political proxies, agitators, and activist clergy, the Islamic Republic also employs charities to further its influence. Initially, the Iranian government and regime-linked charities began building mosques and sponsoring Iranian-trained mullahs. As of 2008 there were 200-250 Azerbaijani students studying in Qom’s religious seminaries.²⁶ Rather than provide scholarships directly, Iranian-sponsored mosques throughout Azerbaijan often apply religious donations to send Azerbaijani students to Iranian seminaries.²⁷

Tehran also dispatched the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (IKRC), the regime’s chief external aid agency, to Azerbaijan, where it won hearts and minds by providing services to refugees displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh following the Armenian invasion and occupation of that territory.²⁸ This, of course, was ironic, given that Iran largely sided with Armenia against Azerbaijan as a means to keep the Islamic Republic’s Shi’ite competition weak and in check.

With assets supplied by the Supreme Leader, the IKRC has also sponsored programs similar to those conducted by Western nongovernmental organizations, providing, for example, assistance with housing, food aid, and vocational training, even if some of its activities took on a religious hue.²⁹ While such activities might look benign, the IKRC’s track record is more sinister. In 2010, the U.S. Treasury Department designated its branch in Lebanon as a terrorist entity because of its financial and operational links to Hezbollah.³⁰ With both the Revolutionary Guards and Relief Committee funded from the same trough, it is possible that Committee offices in Azerbaijan now also provide cover for Revolutionary Guards operations. This fact certainly has not been lost on Azerbaijani authorities who have kept IKRC offices and other Iranian charities under close surveillance and have, on occasion, closed IKRC projects. However, the Iranian government maintains pressure on Baku to reopen its offices and projects when shuttered.³¹



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (L) and Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev meet in Baku. Source: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/151361.html>

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Continued: Azerbaijan's Iran Problem

As with Bahrain and Iraq, the Islamic Republic also makes ample use of its media to extend its influence in Azerbaijan. Iranian propaganda is often sophisticated. Rather than confront the Aliyev government head on, Iranian media often adapt the theme that Iran can best protect Azerbaijani interests.³² The Iranian-based Sahar television broadcasts regionally in both Azeri and Talysh, and carries not only religious programming, but also music and sports. News broadcasts regularly disparage the United States and Israel and condemn the supposed moral laxness and inequity of Western society, while depicting Iran's Shi'ite culture as liberated and free.³³

While such media may have some impact over time, the basic fact that Azerbaijan enjoys greater social freedom undercuts the effectiveness of the Iranian media campaign. Whereas in 1991 Baku paled in comparison to Tabriz, the capital of Iranian Azerbaijan and once the capital of Iran itself, in recent years Baku has surpassed Tabriz both in quality of life and affluence. This is a fact not lost to tens of thousands of Iranian tourists and vacationers who visit Baku for holidays and during Nowruz—Persian New Year—celebrations. Iranian accents are rife in Baku's restaurants and Azerbaijan's Caspian Sea beach resorts, as Iranian women enjoy the opportunity—literally—to let down their veil and enjoy the equality with which Azerbaijan empowers women.

The Politics of Trade

In Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, states in which Tehran seeks diplomatic dominance, Iranian companies often flood the markets with cheap foodstuffs and manufactured goods. This is deliberate, as Khatam al-Anbia, the economic wing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, dominates Iranian manufacturing and trade.³⁴ If trade is a metric of influence, then declining trade between Iran and Azerbaijan reflects diplomatic difficulties. While the Islamic Republic was a leading trading partner for Azerbaijan in the 1990s, over the past decade the Iranian share of the Azerbaijani market has declined. Bilateral trade in 2007 was \$540 million, but by 2011 it was only \$305 million, representing a mere 0.8 percent of Azerbaijan's total trade.³⁵ While the figures cited—without sourcing—by some Iranian officials are slightly higher, they still represent only a miniscule portion of Azerbaijan's total trade.³⁶

The Iranian government will be unlikely to bolster its trade with Azerbaijan significantly until it tempers its often aggressive behavior in the Caspian Sea. The core of the Iran-Azerbaijan maritime dispute is whether the Caspian Sea is a sea or lake: if a sea, then international precedents determine the extent of territorial waters, but if a lake, then the Caspian might be divided like a pie.³⁷ The littoral states have negotiated a com-



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Continued: Azerbaijan's Iran Problem

plex series of interweaving bilateral and multilateral treaties which differentiate between the waters of the Caspian and the oil-rich sea-bed. Of the five littoral states, all but Turkmenistan have agreed to demarcate the waters as if the Caspian were a lake, albeit one with a shared center. With just 13 percent of the Caspian coastline, Iran also refuses to accept the decision of the other littoral states that the seabed should be treated as if the Caspian were a sea, for that would limit Iranian drilling offshore in what would then become Azerbaijan's territorial waters. That Azerbaijan's Abşeron juts out 37 miles into the Caspian only extends Azerbaijan's territorial waters under such a division.

Rather than resolve the dispute at the Iran has, however, resorted to military force in order to encroach on what otherwise would be Azerbaijani territorial waters. In 2001 an Iranian naval vessel confronted an Azeri vessel doing research for British Petroleum inside Azeri waters.³⁸ In 2009 Iranian vessels towed a drilling rig into waters claimed by Azerbaijan and proceeded to drill for oil.³⁹

In May 2012 Iran announced that it had discovered a 10 billion barrel oil deposit, the first new Caspian field in more than a century.⁴⁰ Iranian Oil Minister Rostam Qasemi claimed sole ownership: "Sardar Jangal ... is within Iran's territory. It belongs to our country."⁴¹ The problem was that the oil field was in waters Azerbaijan claims. Tehran has been willing to use its military to enforce its claims. While Azerbaijan has sought to purchase U.S.-made patrol boats to help defend its territorial water, American Armenian activists have sidelined any U.S. military assistance to Baku, even that which could not be used against Armenian forces occupying Nagorno-Karabakh (NKR). Rather than fold to such Iranian pressure, the Azerbaijani government has responded by redoubling efforts to establish cooperation with NATO.⁴²



Conclusion

Wedged between two domineering powers and with Armenian forces occupying seven districts beyond Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan straddles religious, sectarian, and geopolitical fault lines. That Azerbaijan remains independent from the political domination of its neighbors continues to be an immutable U.S. interest. While Russia might believe it should have preponderant influence in Azerbaijan because of its Soviet heritage, the Iranian challenge is in many ways more serious. Simply put, the combination of Azerbaijan's pre-nineteenth century Iranian past, modern Azerbaijan's embrace of secularism and independent Azerbaijan's relative economic success challenges the very legitimacy of Iran's Islamic Republic. After all, if Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's 1979 revolution brought divinely-inspired rule to Iran, then Iran's ruling clerics must explain why increasingly Azerbaijanis have a higher quality of life and are on a trajectory to surpass Iran's per capita income.

In response to the challenge, Iranian authorities have sought to undermine and destabilize Azerbaijan by seeking to co-opt the religion sphere. Azerbaijan's state oversight of religious institutions has contained the challenge. While dissident clerics might appeal to human rights activists and embassies with regard to the alleged discrimination they face at state hands, the rhetoric of these clerics delivered to their own constituents belies any notion that they subscribe to liberal or democratic values. Simply put, given the persistent pressure and security challenge Baku faces from Tehran, the Azerbaijani government's strategy has been both restrained and effective.

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Continued: Azerbaijan's Iran Problem

END NOTES:

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