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Special Essay:

Turkey's Political and Legal Crisis:

THE FALLOUT FROM THE CORRUPTION SCANDAL

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Regional Analysts and Expert Contributors

Africa

Robert Feldman
Jason Warner

Middle East

Michael Rubin
Lucas Winter

Turkey

Karen Kaya

China, Korea

Cindy Hurst
Youngjun Kim
Tim Thomas
Jacob Zenn

India, Southeast Asia

Ivan Welch

Mexico, South America

Geoff Demarest
Brenda Fiegel
Kevin Freese
Cynthia Gonzalez
Blaise Zandoli

Central Asia

Matthew Stein

Russia, Eastern Europe

Chuck Bartles
Anna Borshchevskaya
Ray Finch
Les Grau
Emily Kangas
Scott McIntosh

Editor-in-Chief

Tom Wilhelm
Ray Finch
Harry Orenstein
Hommy Rosado

FMSO Contact

usarmy.leavenworth.tradoc.mbx.fmso-web@mail.mil

The End of the Rule of Law?

“The citizens of this country are no longer under the protection of an ‘independent judiciary.’ May God help us all... The name of this regime is no longer democracy.”

OE Watch Commentary: On 15 February 2014, the Turkish parliament passed by a vote of 210-28, a bill which would subordinate the judicial branch to the executive branch, effectively ending judicial independence, the separation of powers and rule of law in Turkey. The bill pertains to the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK in its Turkish initials), which appoints senior members of the judiciary, including judges and prosecutors. The bill proposes to give control of HSYK to the government. The accompanying passages from the Turkish press demonstrate the overwhelming sense in Turkey that the country can no longer be called a democracy.

As these passages illustrate, the bill is viewed as an attempt by Prime Minister Erdoğan and his Islamist-rooted Justice and Development Party (AKP) government to stifle a corruption investigation, launched on 17 December 2013, that led to the arrests of 26 people close to the government (see the Special Essay in this OEW issue). The Republican People’s Party (CHP), the main opposition party, vowed to take the bill to the Constitutional Court. Erdoğan has attributed the corruption allegations to a network of prosecutors, judges and police affiliated with the Gülen movement- a religiously conservative civil society movement. Erdoğan claims this “parallel state” has brought the corruption investigation as an attempted judicial coup to unseat him in the upcoming elections. As such, he and his officials allegedly want to change the rules to eradicate Gülenists from the judiciary.

In light of the recent police and judicial purges following the launch of the investigation, along with attempts to control the flow of information (e.g., last month’s controversial Internet bill, which aims to control, monitor and restrict Internet use), the HSYK bill is viewed as the latest in a series of steps that the government is taking to protect itself



The High Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK) appoints senior members of the judiciary. Source: <http://www.sondakika.com/haber/haber-hsyk-345-hakim-ve-savci-hakkinda-sorusturma-izni-5507516/>

Source: Ertuğrul Özkök, “Artık bu rejimin adını koyalım (It’s time to call this regime what it is),” Hurriyet.com, 16 February 2014, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/25819453.asp>

- As of yesterday morning [Feb 15, 2014], Turkey is no longer a country with the rule of law.
 - The Constitution’s “separation of powers” principle has effectively been frozen.
 - As of yesterday morning, Turkey has shelved one of the most important aspects of the Copenhagen Criteria, which outlines the democratic framework of the European Union.
 - The job security of judges and prosecutors are now up to the Prime Minister.
 - The innocence of the children of cabinet members are eternally guaranteed.
 - The citizens of this country are no longer under the protection of an “independent judiciary.” May God help us all... The mentality that says, “I am the national will, I can do everything I want” has taken the historic step to tie the judiciary to the executive [branch]. The time has come to name this regime.
 - The name of this regime is no longer democracy.
 - This country is no longer a country with the rule of law.
 - This Constitution is effectively no longer valid.
- And by the hands of the Parliament...

(continued)

Continued: The End of the Rule of Law?

in the future against politically embarrassing revelations and allegations. As the final passage demonstrates, many believe that the government's reaction actually reveals its sense of powerlessness and helplessness.

The AKP government's turn towards authoritarianism has been a subject of intense debate since it was elected for the third time in June 2011, and particularly after the crackdown against protesters during the Gezi Park protests, which erupted in late May 2013.

End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)

Source: Hasan Cemal, "Gül, Erdoğan'ın tek adamlık serüvenine dur diyebilecek mi? (Will Gül be able to say 'Stop' to Erdoğan's one-man adventure?)," T24.com, 18 February 2014, <http://t24.com.tr/yazi/gul-erdoganin-tek-adamlik-seruvenine-dur-diyebilecek-mi/8569>

"With the new HSYK bill, democracy and the rule of law have been dealt a fatal blow. With the new regulation, the Erdoğan government ignores the 'separation of powers' [principle] and kicks the backbone of democracy once again.

Because with this regulation, the judiciary is being taken over by the executive.

More openly: A new judicial order is being established in this country such that, everything will be left to the discretion of the Prime Minister and the Justice Minister.

Long story short: We are bidding farewell to judicial independence.

Prime Minister Erdoğan's judicial coup, which he is carrying out in order to cover up corruption and bribery investigations, is deepening with this new HSYK bill.

....

Will President Gül [veto] the HSYK ve Internet bills and say 'stop' to Prime Minister Erdoğan's one-man adventure?"

Source: "Judiciary even weaker than in coup times with new HSYK law," Today's Zaman, 16 February 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-339610-judiciary-even-weaker-than-in-coup-times-with-new-hsyk-law.html>

"Gündel [a retired public prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals]..said the government wants to bury the ongoing corruption investigation with the HSYK law. "The government wants to create a HSYK that it will like with this new law. It wants to appoint judges and prosecutors close to the government in key posts, and it has already begun doing so with the latest appointments and reassignments in the judiciary. The main objective is to [sweep the corruption and bribery investigation under the carpet] and prevent similar investigations from being launched in the future," he stated."

Source: Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, "Akademik bir soru: Rejimin adı ne? (An academic question: What is the name of the regime?)," Milliyet.com.tr, 17 February 2014, <http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/akademik-bir-soru-rejimin-adi-ne-/siyaset/ydetay/1837734/default.htm>

"The main problem of the current government is a democracy deficit... It is its deteriorating record on the issue of individual rights and freedoms...[But] this democracy deficit comes up not because it has absolute power, but because it constantly feels itself to be 'powerless' and 'helpless.'"

Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan Discuss Afghan Security post-2014

“The [Bilateral Security Agreement] is also significant for other NATO allies.. It is hard for other countries to deploy troops in Afghanistan, without the presence of American troops.”

OE Watch Commentary: As the U.S. prepares to draw down its forces in Afghanistan, Turkey claims that it can play a unique critical role in Afghan stabilization efforts, given its good relations with both Afghanistan and Pakistan. On 12-13 February 2014 Turkey hosted Afghan and Pakistani leaders for trilateral talks, during which military, intelligence and government officials from the three countries focused on ways to improve Afghan security after NATO forces withdraw at the end of 2014, and efforts to negotiate with the Taliban and restore peace in the country and region.

As the accompanying passages discuss, a critical issue was the planned Bilateral Security Agreement between the U.S. and Afghanistan. Karzai, who is due to step down after presidential elections on April 5, claims that progress on peace talks with the Taliban are crucial before Afghanistan signs a security deal with the U.S., which would allow about 10,000 troops to stay in Afghanistan after 2014.

Turkey has close ties with both the Afghan and Pakistani governments. It initiated the Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Dialogue mechanism in 2007, with the goal of improving dialogue and relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Each year the focus of the meetings are different, but they generally involve dialogue on economic cooperation, cooperation in the fight against terrorism, and cooperation in the intelligence, political and military fields, as well as security and training. As the accompanying passages demonstrate, Turkish officials highlight their country's position as having “brotherly” relations with both Afghanistan and Pakistan and Turkey's ability to bring them together.



From left to right: Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Afghan President Hamid Karzai, Turkish President Abdullah Gül and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.
Source: <http://www.tgrthaber.com.tr/politika/9209.html>

Source: “Cumhurbaşkanı Gül: Türkiye, Afganistan ve Pakistan’ın yanındadır (President Gül: Turkey stands with Afghanistan and Pakistan),” Bugun.com.tr, 13 February 2014, <http://www.bugun.com.tr/son-dakika/cumhurbaskani-gul-turkiye--haberi/973145>

“The Eighth Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Summit was held at the Presidential Palace. President Gül said, “In this difficult period, Afghanistan and Pakistan will continue to see their sibling Turkey stand by them in sincerity, as we do here today.”

The theme of this year's summit was, “Sustainable Peace in the Heart of Asia”. President Abdullah Gül said that the efforts are focused on political dialogue, security cooperation and development. Gül said, “Our cooperation takes its strength from the ties of friendship and brotherhood among our peoples. Ties between the three countries are based on our historical ties and are relationships of peoples and hearts.”

President Gül, who highlighted that the first Trilateral Summit meeting took place in 2007 said, “Since the very beginning, we aimed to accelerate cooperation and increase the culture of joint cooperation among our institutions. To this end, we included not just our delegation leaders but also our Foreign and Interior Ministers as well as economic, intelligence and security officials. Thanks to this mechanism, we have succeeded in establishing mutual trust, dialogue and understanding among our institutions, on the issues that are of interest to all of us.”

‘A turbulent period will be left behind’

President Gül, who assessed that we are in a critical period, expressed that Pakistan successfully passed a very important democracy test in the last year. Gül also highlighted that 2014 is a very important year for Afghanistan, saying “In April, Afghanistan will have

(continued)

Continued: Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan Discuss Afghan Security post-2014

This is particular important for Turkey to emphasize at a time when Turkey's regional influence has waned. Both Pakistan and Afghanistan welcome these diplomatic initiatives by Turkey and view them as especially valuable due to Turkey's membership in NATO.

*This year's summit is taking place shortly before important political and security transitions in Afghanistan, including the presidential and provincial elections on 5 April 2014 and the withdrawal of NATO forces by the end of the year. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)***

“Afghan President Karzai said, ‘As Afghanistan and Pakistan, we have come a long way in many different areas. All of this happened with Turkey's support and facilitation. 2014 will be an important transition year for Afghanistan.’”

Presidential elections. As of the end of the year, ISAF operations will end and the withdrawal process of an international military presence in Afghanistan will be complete. As such, with the support of the international community, a period of success but also turbulence will be left behind.”

President Gül expressed that it would be impossible to achieve sustainable peace in the wider geography without securing Afghan peace and said, “In this difficult period, Afghanistan and Pakistan will continue to see their sibling Turkey stand by them in sincerity, as we do here today.”

Source: “Türkiye-Afganistan-Pakistan Üçlü Zirvesi 8. Toplantısı (Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Summit Eighth Meeting),” Haberler.com.tr, 13 February 2014, <http://www.haberler.com/turkiye-afganistan-pakistan-uclu-zirvesi-8-5665988-haberi/>

“Afghan President Karzai said, “As Afghanistan and Pakistan, we have come a long way in many different areas. All of this happened with Turkey's support and facilitation. 2014 will be an important transition year for Afghanistan....

“We are not opposed to the Bilateral Agreement”

When answering a question regarding the planned Bilateral Security Agreement between the U.S. and Afghanistan, Karzai said that the agreement could only be implemented with a security guarantee. Karzai said, “The Bilateral Security Agreement has the support of the Afghan public. This is an important topic because we will have an agreement with the U.S. and we hope to have peace and stability in our country. Therefore, the Bilateral Agreement would help us only if our country has peace and stability.”

Karzai said, “The peace process should start before the Bilateral Security Agreement can be signed. Having this position does not mean that we are opposed to the agreement. On the contrary, it means paving the way for and easing the signing of the agreement. We are not opposed to the Bilateral Agreement but the way to make the signing of it easier is to start the peace process.”

Source: “Afghan, Pakistani leaders in fresh round of Turkey talks,” Middle East Institute, 13 February 2014, <http://www.mei.edu/content/afghan-pakistani-leaders-fresh-round-turkey-talks>

“Intelligence officials and high-level military officials from the two countries were expected to hold closed-door talks on the sidelines of the Ankara meeting, the theme of which is “sustainable peace in the heart of Asia”.

Karzai, who is due to step down after presidential elections on April 5, is pushing for Pakistan to help start peace talks with the Taliban.

He has demanded progress on talks before Afghanistan signs a security deal with the U.S. that would allow about 10,000 troops to stay in the country after this year.

The supporters of the pact, known as the Bilateral Security Agreement, say it is crucial to Afghanistan's stability after the draw-down of NATO forces by December 31, 2014.

“This agreement is also significant for other NATO allies,” a Turkish official said.

“It is hard for other countries to deploy troops in Afghanistan, without the presence of American troops”.

Revolutionary Guards: America is Weak

2 February 2014

“We have identified points [of weakness] that can create shock for America”

OE Watch Commentary: While U.S. and Iranian diplomats continue their efforts to hammer out a nuclear deal, the most powerful Iranian body not at the negotiating table remains the elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). A body that serves not only to defend the territory of Iran but also its ideology, the IRGC in recent decades has grown functionally independent from Iranian government control. Whether Iranian negotiators are sincere or not, they do not hold sway over the IRGC and cannot control its activity.

The 1 February anniversary of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s return to Iran and the victory of the Islamic Revolution are normally the time for hardline polemical statements, and remarks by Brigadier General Salami, the IRGC’s deputy commander, suggest that the IRGC continues to see the United States as its number one enemy. Traditionally, the IRGC drilled confronting the U.S. military using asymmetrical means, either by hit-and-run terrorism via a proxy like Hezbollah on land or by swarming attacks by small boats at sea. However, Salami appears prepared to take Iranian threats to a new level with the suggestion that Iran might use its increasing missile capability against U.S. targets.

Growing Iranian strength—and the IRGC’s apparent perception of American weakness—also leads the IRGC deputy commander to offer advice to Iran’s nuclear team, urging them to stick firmly to their position in the firm belief that the Islamic Republic—and not the United States—holds the cards that matter. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**



Brigadier General Hossein Salami, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC)’s second-in-command.
Source: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/09/03/321942/syria-war-will-incite-antius-feelings/>

Source: “Ghadarat-e Nizam-e Iran Peshtevaneh Tim Hasteha-ye Ast,” (“The Iranian Military Supports the Nuclear Team”), Sepah News, 2 February 2014. <http://sepahnews.com/shownews.Asp?ID=226c8765-c3e2-4012-a5c3-1a9a648b91c5>

Revolutionary Guards: America is Weak

According to Sepah News, Brigadier-General Hossein Salami, deputy commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), speaking on the live “One Look” television program, reviewed Islamic Iran’s defensive capability on the 35th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution...

General Salami said, “The expansion of our military strength and structure has expanded in a form that it is not only able to protect Iran’s vital interests, but it will also endanger the enemy’s vital interest in the region at every level.” He added, “America’s military option makes no difference to us. They can use their military option but they must take responsibility for its destructive aftermath... We have diagnosed America’s military strategy, have reviewed it and also shaped our capabilities. We have identified points that can create shock for America....”

General Salami added, “Our naval power is completely ready on the basis of a destiny-shaping naval battle. Our cruise and ballistic missiles have reached a higher level of precision. Our ballistic missiles can travel at several times the speed of sound, and have entered the earth’s atmosphere to destroy moving targets.”

“The nuclear men [negotiations team] must know that they are sitting alongside powers that possess large weaknesses. We have no concerns and urge our officials to be self-confident, strong and pursue national interests.”

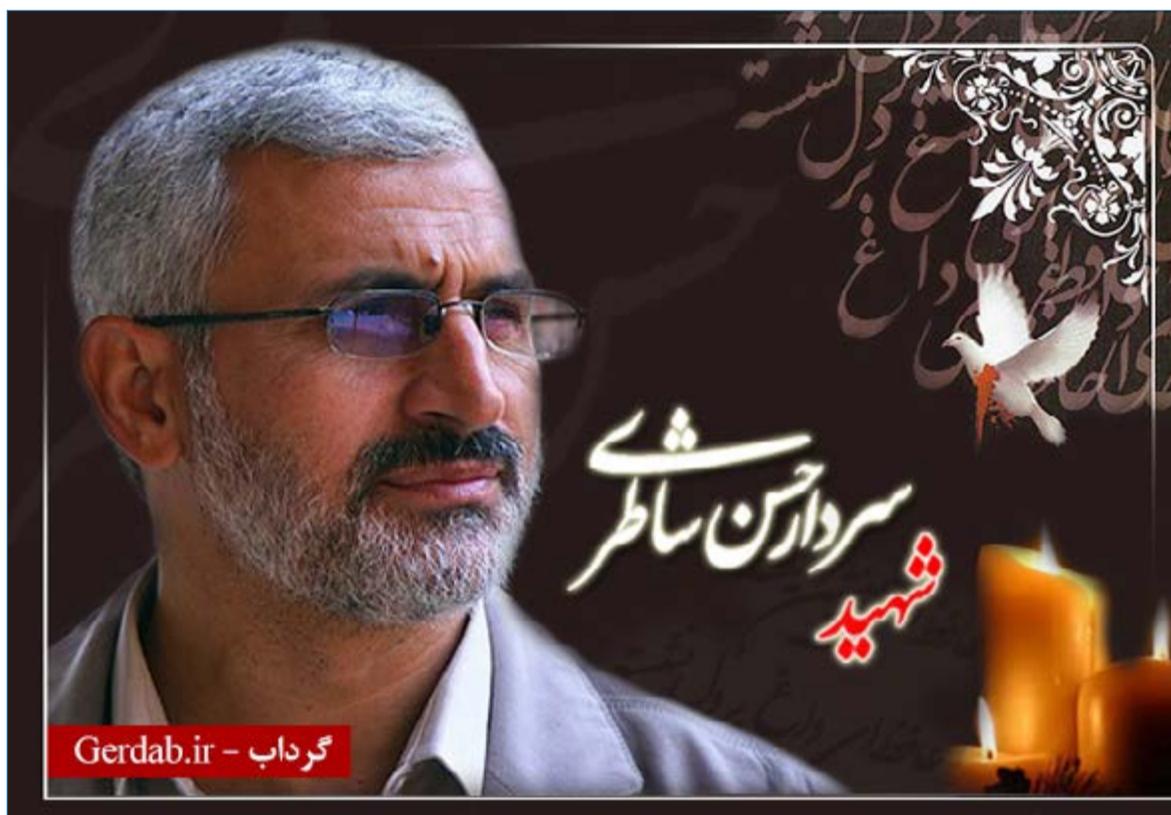


“...No country other than Iran is prepared for this serious responsibility of leading the Islamic world.”

OE Watch Commentary: Underlying Western concerns regarding Iran is the fact that the Islamic Republic is not a status quo power, and that it seeks to export revolution and amplify its influence throughout the region. A recent speech by Qassem Suleimani, the head of the Qods Force, an elite unit of the Revolutionary Guards charged with export of revolution and designated by the U.S. government as a terrorist group, reinforces such concerns.

Using the first anniversary of the death of Hassan Shateri, an IRGC general killed by an Israeli air strike in Syria, as the backdrop, Suleimani declared that no other country but Iran could lay claim to leadership in the Islamic world, because only Iran is willing to put its money where its mouth is when it comes to standing up to the United States and supporting Islamic resistance, a euphemism for groups like Hezbollah and Hamas, which the United States government also designates as terrorist groups.

While the excerpts translated here come from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)'s own news outlet and so show what the IRGC wants its members to internalize, Iranian news outlets emphasized other parts of Suleimani's speech, for example, when he declared that nationalism is a lie. Such a statement goes to the heart of a conflict over Iranian identity. Many Iranians take nationalist pride in their civilization, which dates back to the ancient Persian (Achaemenid) Empire in the sixth century BC. However, the Islamic Republic seeks to promote Islam above nationalism, both because Ayatollah Khomeini's ideology was more religious than national, and because emphasizing Islam rather than nationhood allows the Islamic Republic's ideology to cross ethnic and national borders. That 35 years after the Islamic Revolution Iranian officials still work to de-emphasize and delegitimize national sentiment suggests that many Iranians continue to see themselves as Iranian first, rather than simply soldiers of an Islamic revival. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**



Hassan Shateri
Source: <http://www.parsebuy.ir>

Source: “Hich Keshavarz Joz Iran Qader be Rahbari Jahan-e Islam Nist,” (“No Country Other Than Iran is Able to Lead the Islamic World”) Sepah News, 14 February 2014. <http://sepahnews.com/shownews.aspx?ID=a598ca2d-e572-492e-9db1-43ab215efbf2>

No Country But Iran Is Able to Lead the Islamic World

According to Sepah News, Brigadier General Qassem Suleimani, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force, speaking on the first anniversary commemoration of the martyr Hajji Hassan Shateri at the Holy Shrine of Imamzadeh Yahya in Semnan, said, “Although some countries today claim leadership of the Muslim world, no country other than Iran is prepared for this serious responsibility.” He reiterated, “From the distant past until now, countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have claimed leadership of the Islamic world and made great efforts in that regard, but none of them but Iran is capable of accepting this responsibility.” The Commander of the Qods Force added, “None of these countries are capable of leading the Islamic world because they lack two important elements in the Muslim world, and these two elements are found exclusively in the Islamic Republic of Iran.” He said, “These are supporting Islamic and revolutionary movements as well as defending Muslims and Islam against the assaults that take place against the Islamic world, have enabled Iran to take leadership of the Islamic world.” He added, “It is unlikely for another country other than Iran to take on such a role because [other] Islamic countries do not have this capacity in their foundation.”

“The Mazandaran Gas Company expects widespread cuts.”

OE Watch Commentary: While the Islamic Republic of Iran likes to project an image of outward strength, decades of sanctions and, more importantly, corruption and mismanagement have led to a declining infrastructure, especially outside of major cities and in the country's periphery.

With mountains that rival the Rockies, winters in northern Iran can be harsh. Abnormally heavy snow this past winter has strained the Iranian government's capacity to provide services such as electricity and gas. Such issues can destabilize Iran quickly: during the winter of 2007-2008 heavy snows and subsequent gas shortages led bread prices to jump between 200 and 700 percent across northern Iran and ultimately forced the Iranian government to deploy the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to keep order across northern Iran.

Against the backdrop of the February storms, several members of the Iranian parliament criticized President Hassan Rouhani's administration for unbalanced, unplanned, and incorrect relief distribution and warned that the government bungled relief in a way that could cause the people's dissatisfaction with the system and subsequent protesting.

Western governments understandably approach Iran through the diplomatic lens, but the Iranian government's own domestic failures and the Iranian military's domestic deployments reflect a fundamental infrastructure weakness and popular discord that continues to afflict some areas of Iran even 35 years after its Islamic Revolution. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**



Homayoun Haeri, the Managing Director of Iran Power Generation Transmission & Distribution Management Company (TAVANIR). Source: <http://english.farsnews.com>

Source: “Bahran-e Barf Sarasari Shod/Bahran-e Gaz dar Rah Ast.” (“The Nationwide Snow Crisis/A Gas Crisis is Coming”) Fararu.com, 4 February 2014. <http://goo.gl/hdNKbD>

A Gas Crisis is Coming

According to Fararu's correspondent, after the past two days, the crisis in the northern part of the country due to heavy snowfall, the situation in this region has led to frustration. Reports suggest that Mazandaran province's urban centers have electricity.

Homayoun Haeri, the chief executive officer of Tavanir [Iran Power Generation and Transmission Company], stated that the power supply and water in all snow-bound northern cities has been established, and said, “Right now, there is electricity in all the cities of Mazandaran, and especially the west of this province.”

The CEO of Tavanir, recalling that more than two meters of snow had fallen in some areas, said that some electrical equipment had been buried under snow and led to power cuts to villages, added, “The main problem for the provision of electricity to villages without power is a lack of communication, and we hope that with the provision of access roads to villages without power, villages without electricity will be identified and energized....”

Tonekabon [a city in Mazandaran] was said to be the epicenter of the [snow] crisis, with some reports stating that four people died because they were unable to reach the hospital. Today, however, the province is grappling with a crisis arising from a gas pressure drop. Some areas of Mazandaran are facing gas cuts. The Mazandaran Gas Company expects widespread cuts...



OE Watch Commentary: *The viability of Libya's post-Qaddafi arrangement is coming under increasing pressure. The most recent warning began in the oasis town of Sebha (Sabha), when a dispute between the Tibu (an ethno-linguistic group found in the Sahel regions of Libya, Chad and Niger) and the Awlad Suleiman, a local Arab tribe, quickly morphed into broader and heavier clashes. According to media reports, the fighting pitted local Tibu, Chadian mercenaries and Qaddafi loyalists on the one hand against Libyan military forces and allied local tribes on the other. When the rebels briefly occupied the nearby Tamenhant Airbase, Libya's transition parliament (the General National Congress, the body that is Libya's closest thing to a central government) sprang into action, declaring a national state of alert to counter what it described as a push by Qaddafi loyalists to undermine the state. The state of alert led to the mobilization of various pro-government "rebel" militias, purportedly under army command. In the case of Sebha, fighters from one of Libya's most powerful militias (from Misrata) and others deployed south to support the beleaguered Libyan Army's 6th Brigade and 322nd Border Guard Battalion. Backed by airpower, the government-allied forces forced the rebels to retreat. As the first accompanying article notes, though, instability is likely to remain in the south.*

Several other parts of Libya were swept up by the state of alert. Most problematic was the heavy fighting that broke out in areas inhabited by members of the Warshefana tribe (south and west of Tripoli), one of Libya's largest. The second accompanying article explains how it all started. According to Warshefana leaders, a small public demonstration of sympathy for the Qaddafi regime in their territory was

“Many people in the south did not join the banner of the revolution but were forced to accept its reality and live with it.”

Source:

القدس العربي، تكشف حقائق تحركات موالين لنظام القذافي في ليبيا
 “Al-Quds al-Arabi Uncovers the Facts about the Mobilization of Qaddafi Regime Sympathizers in Libya,” 23 January 2014, al-Quds al-Arabi. <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=126576>

Article 1:

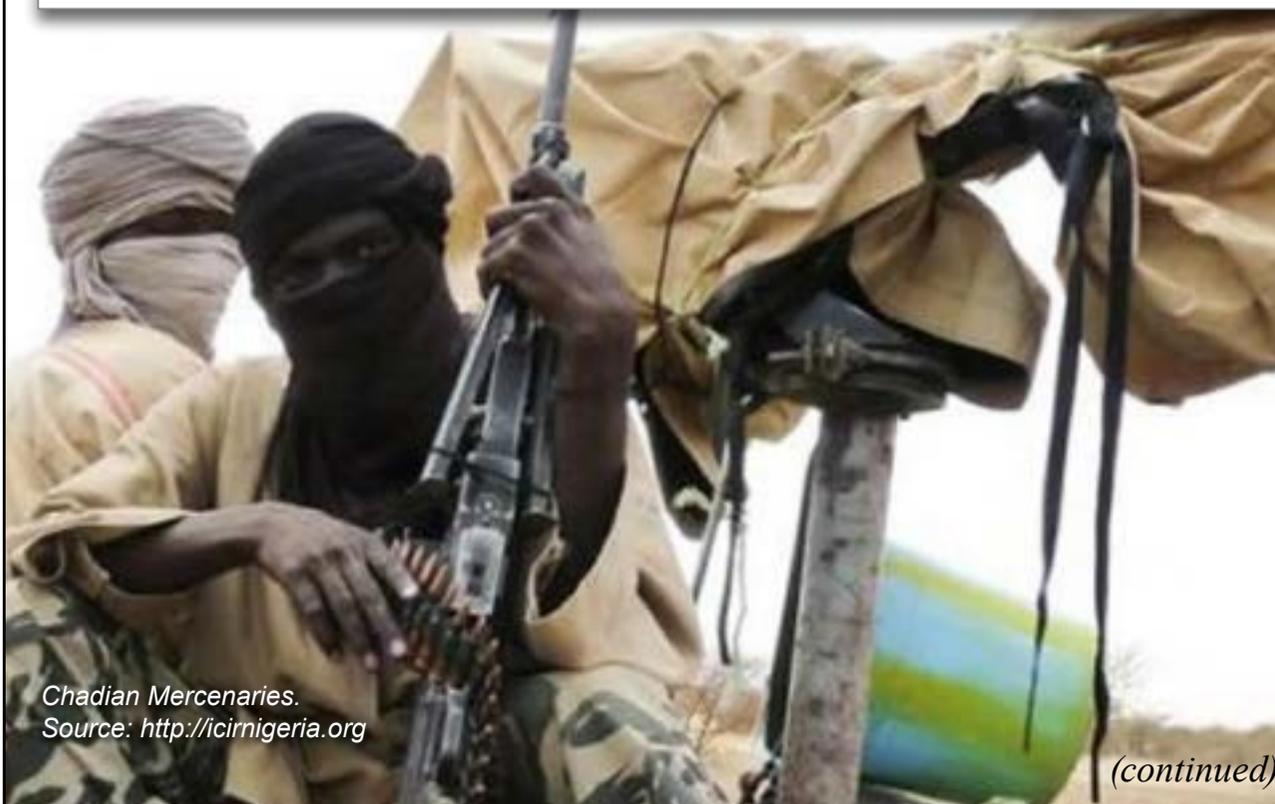
[The Tibu] controlled many areas as a result of support from the Libyan state and of being encouraged to defect from Qaddafi in exchange for material benefits, power and positions... the Tibu felt that the state had deceived them and broken its promises, leading them to revolt in several areas and join supporters of the former regime... Many people in the south did not join the banner of the revolution but were forced to accept its reality and live with it.

Source:

عاد أنصار القذافي للواجهة فحرّك زيدان 'ثوار' مصراتة
 “Qaddafi's Supporters Return as Zeidan Mobilizes Misrata's Rebels,” 18 January 2014, Middle East Online. <http://www.middle-east-online.com/?id=169623>

Article 2:

Rumors appeared on social media sites about pro-Qaddafi marches occurring in places west of Tripoli, especially Warshefana and al-'Ajilat. Some pictures emerged on Facebook without having their accuracy confirmed; these rumors were also stoked by pro-Qaddafi channels broadcast from outside of Libya. Ali Zeidan warned against spreading these rumors, which were according to him aimed at creating a crisis in the country.



Chadian Mercenaries.
 Source: <http://icirnigeria.org>

(continued)

Continued: Libya: Green Flags and Red Flags

quickly brought under control from within the community. The following day militias from the outskirts of Tripoli (Janzour and Suq al-Jumaa) entered Warshefana territory, guns blazing. They were later joined by other militias, as the third accompanying article notes. Pro-government sources argue that security forces entered Warshefana territory to detain a group of wanted men in the context of the national alert and were greeted with gunfire. Regardless, the clashes raise serious questions about who from the Libyan military, if anyone, was commanding the pro-government rebels.

Events in the second half of January thus exacerbated intercommunal resentments and further eroded popular support for the government. The need to rein in the militias is as pressing as ever, only the government is in disarray and unable to do anything of the sort. The General National Congress recently extended its constitutional mandate until December 2014, after it was set to expire on 7 February. Discontent and uncertainty are such that on 14 February Major General Khalifa al-Haftar, the former chief of staff of the post-Qaddafi Libyan army, attempted to carry out a coup. Appearing in uniform in a video uploaded to YouTube, the retired general vaguely explained that the General National Congress's work would be suspended, while intimating that the military would take over the affairs of the state. Several of Libya's ministers quickly dismissed the whole affair as ridiculous, and most analysts wondered what state and what military al-Haftar was referring to, as the fourth accompanying article notes. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

Source:

مناوشات مع «فلول القذافي» جنوب طرابلس وتعزيزات من مصراتة للسيطرة على سبها
 “Skirmishes with ‘Regime Remnants’ South of Tripoli and Reinforcements from Misrata to Control Sebha,” 21 January 2014, al-Hayat. <http://alhayat.com/Details/595045>

Article 3:

In the meantime, rebels from parts of Tripoli and its suburbs, as well as from Nalut, Yafran and al-Qalaa (al-Jabal al-Gharbi) joined units from the Libyan Army in a massive operation to clear the area of Warshefana south of the Libyan capital of “gunmen loyal to the former regime who were robbing, setting up checkpoints on the roads and killing and kidnapping”... A group of Warshefana tribes issued a statement condemning the security operation in their areas without consulting local leaders. The statement condemned the reliance on forces from other places, further exacerbating the regional divisions in the country... The statement accuses “the General National Congress of participating in a conspiracy to extend its existence and remain in power” by exacerbating fears of security gaps and linking them to supporters of the former regime...

Source:

انقلاب في ليبيا.. على من؟
 “Coup in Libya... Against Whom?” 14 February 2014, Rai al-Youm. <http://www.raialyoum.com/?p=52821>

Article 4:

Several puzzling questions are raised by the two contradictions regarding the announcement of a failed coup attempt by Maj. Gen. Khalifa Haftar, former head of the Libyan ground forces. First: There is no state in Libya to be seized via coup; even if there were such a thing, there is no army in the true sense of the word that might carry out such an endeavor, given that the militias are stronger than the fragile army...

“... the length of the war... could lead to radical changes in the demographic composition of Syria...”

OE Watch Commentary: Internecine fighting among Syrian jihadists has received significant attention in both Western and Arabic-language press. Broadly speaking, the battle pits the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) against Syria's other rebel Islamic factions, most important among them Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) and the Islamic Front (IF), led by Ahrar al-Sham. The international Salafi-jihadi intelligentsia has largely come out against ISIS; from Saudi-based Syrian televangelist 'Adnan 'Arour to the deeply influential Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (from his Jordanian prison cell) all the way to Ayman al-Zawahiri and his cohorts in al-Qaeda's Shura Council (from their hideouts), all have spoken out against ISIS. On the ground ISIS is being attacked on several fronts by Syria's most powerful rebel forces. How has it survived?

In mid-January 2014 Mohammed al-Mohaisany, a young Syria-based Saudi Salafist, embarked on a much publicized mediation attempt. His proposal immediately gained the support of the IF, JN and several others. The response of ISIS was longer in coming, and when it did arrive it set forth two preconditions, as noted in the first accompanying article: first, that the parties involved make a clear statement on their position vis-à-vis political arrangements and organizations that contravene Islamic rule, to include democracy and the non-Islamic rebel factions and organizations; second, that the parties involved make a clear statement regarding their relationship to foreign governments and intelligence agencies, both Arab and Western. Not surprisingly, the other groups refused to negotiate with these preconditions.

The two preconditions set by ISIS encapsulate both the group's political platform and its reason for fighting. The rejection of anything other than government by Shari'a and repudiation of foreign government support are indeed the pillars on which ISIS has built its resilient Syrian strategy. The message is simple and consistent. The second accompanying article argues that partly for this reason ISIS is unlikely to represent a threat to Syria as it is presently constituted. Ominously, the article also notes that Syria's demographic and socio-economic features may shift to the point that such a message might, in fact, become resonant among the broader population. This has, to some extent, already happened, and ISIS is likely betting on its continuation.

ISIS's repudiation of formal support from foreign governments is of more than just ideological importance, as it also helps the group remain unified and coherent. Indeed, a key lesson from the collapse of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) is the problem of coordinating between local and foreign-based components. In the FSA case, the growing divide between the "hotel generals" based in Turkey and Jordan and the Syrian-based fighters contributed to the organization's disunity

Source:

الدولة“ تلتف على مبادرة ”المحييني“ وتطالب ”الثوار“ بتوضيح موقفهم من الديمقراطية ودول الجوار“
 “ISIS Addresses al-Mohaisany's Initiative and asks Rebels to clarify their Stance on Democracy and Neighboring Countries,” 28 January 2014, Zaman al-Wasl. <http://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/45984.html>

Article 1:

In order to show the Muslim Umma the nature of this battle in the Levant and the truth of the parties that are fighting the Islamic State project and for an initiative such as this one to succeed... we asked those behind this initiative and the concerned parties to abide by two important conditions... once the concerned parties put forth a clear position on these two issues and declare it publicly, the judicial arrangements and the subsequent specific measures linked to this initiative or any other will God willing be easily achieved.

Source:

الكتائب الإسلامية بين مسالك الاعتدال و اتهامات التطرف
 Ghiath Bilal. “The Islamic Brigades: Between Moderation and Accusations of Extremism,” 23 January 2014, Syrian Center for Statistics and Research. <http://csr-sy.org/?action=readMore&cID=501&l=2> (Translation via: <http://therepublicgs.net/2014/01/24/the-islamic-brigades-between-moderation-and-accusations-of-extremism/>)

Article 2:

Areas of war and conflict where the control of the government is absent are considered as attractive places for people who are oriented towards Jihadist Salafism because practicing “Jihad” becomes easier which is the most important activity to build the Islamic state according to their view... According to the above mentioned analysis we can conclude that such organizations do not constitute any strategic threat for the future of Syria after the fall of the regime. There might be some combats against such organizations in the future, but generally it cannot exist for long... It is still important to point out that the length of the war in Syria and its extension for many years could lead to radical changes in the demographic composition of Syria and consequently lead to the change of the social, cultural, and economic composition of Syria in a way that can be completely different from what the situation was prior to the revolution. This will create new standards and basis that are different from the basis of this analysis.

(continued)

Continued: ISIS, the FSA and the Islamic Front

and consequent decline. For ISIS there is no equivalent disconnect between outside interest and realities on the ground.

Simple and consistent messages have proven to be crucial in the Syrian uprising, and ISIS's simple focus on Shari'a rule evokes a further contrast with the FSA. The FSA was able to grow, in part, due to its simple unifying goal of regime overthrow by military means. Syrians everywhere flocked to this idea; once it became clear that this goal was often all they had in common, the FSA banner collapsed. Newfound rebel unity in fighting ISIS may prove to be just as illusory.

For ISIS the basic goal of instituting Islamic rule constitutes both its reason for fighting and its programmatic platform. This goal is straightforward and non-negotiable. The IF, in contrast, is facing internal debates about the exact contours of its political vision, as well as regarding the Islamic legality of attacking ISIS. As noted in the third accompanying article, from the Lebanese daily al-Akhbar, these debates are threatening to create splits within the IF. Not all is bad for the IF, of course. Quite the opposite: the fighting has bolstered its image as a moderate alternative in the eyes of many both in and outside of Syria. This in itself is a problem for the future of Syria, according to the fourth accompanying article. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

Source:

مصير «الجيبة الإسلامية» في مهيب المصالحة
Suhaib Anjerana. "Reconciliation and the Fate of the Islamic Front," 7 February 2014, al-Akhbar (Lebanon). <http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/200287>

Article 3:

Sources confirm to al-Akhbar that serious divisions emerged within Suqqr al-Sham. Indications are that something similar is happening within Ahrar al-Sham, raising questions about the fate of the Islamic Front...

Source: "Islamic Front no answer for Syria conflict," 13 January 2014, al-Monitor. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/render/live/en/sites/almonitor/contents/articles/originals/2014/01/islamic-front-isis-rebel-clashes-syria.html>

Article 4:

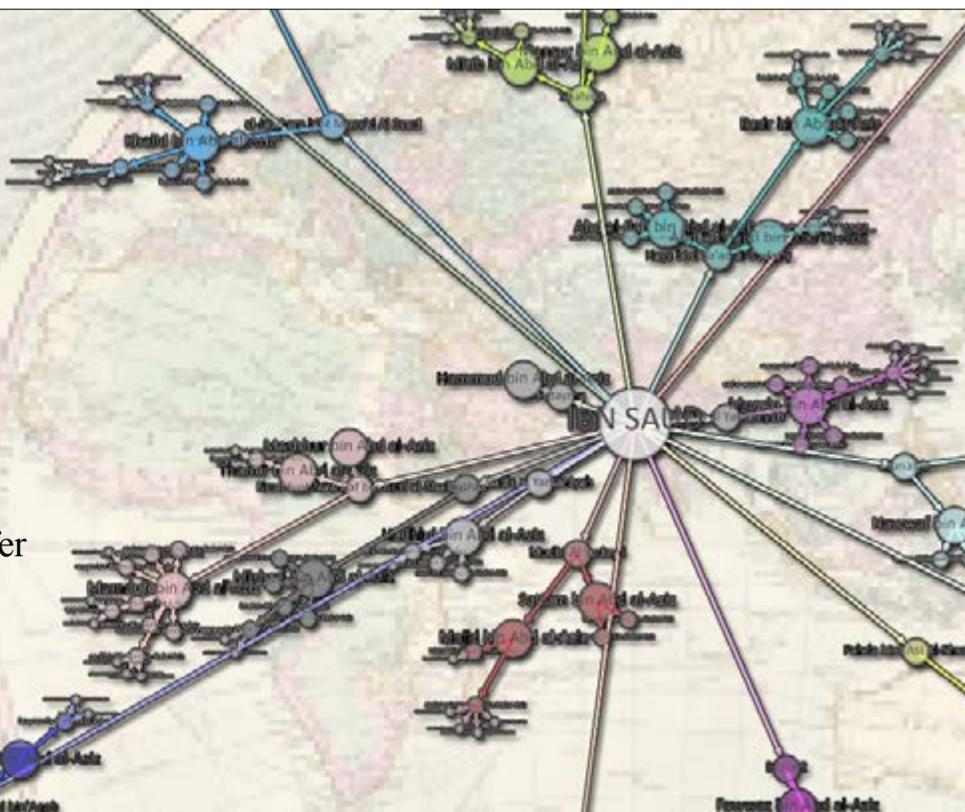
Ironically, Jabhat al-Nusra, another al-Qaeda affiliate endorsed by Ayman al-Zawahri and designated by the United States as a terrorist organization, has joined in the fight against ISIS. Will they be the next to go? Or will they be assimilated, repackaged and sold to the world as a more palatable jihadist group, along with the Islamic Front? Whatever the outcome of this latest rebel showdown, the Islamic Front is certainly no answer to the Syrian conflict. What is needed, as has been repeated, is a political process that ostracizes the extremists, not incorporates them into the political fabric.

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>



“... The advances made by the Huthis in their battle with Hashid fighters have an impact on the traditional balance of Yemen’s tribal fabric ...”

OE Watch Commentary: In the first two months of 2014 fighters from the Huthi Movement (Ansar Allah), a Zaydi revivalist group that controls northern Yemen’s Saada Province, notched two battlefield victories that will reverberate across Yemen for months, and perhaps years to come. The first was the defeat of a group of Salafists based in an internationally renowned religious school in the town of Dammaj, in Saada Province. The Huthis banished from Saada those who were not killed in the fighting. The second and more important clashes pitted the Huthis and their allies against members of Yemen’s powerful and influential Hashid tribal confederation. After months of escalation the Huthis overran the city of Huth (a Hashid stronghold) and stormed into the town of Khamri, the seat of Hashid power.

Hashid’s inability to fend off the Huthi advance could mark a major shift in the balance of power in Yemen, as the first accompanying article notes. It may also be the opening salvo in a new civil war. The Huthis’ battlefield prowess alone is not enough to explain their ability to breach Hashid territories. What gives? The easy answer, peddled by much of Yemen’s independent media, is that the Huthis have become allies of, if not proxies for, former president Ali Abdullah Saleh. Saleh retains sizeable influence within Hashid and in Yemen as a whole, as noted in the second

Source:

دراسة: التقدم الحوثي .. من دماج إلى حاشد ومستقبل الدولة اليمنية
Mustafa Shafiq. “The Huthi Advance... From Dammaj to Hashid and the Future of the Yemeni State,” 8 February 2014, Nashwan News. <http://nashwannews.com/news.php?action=view&id=30701>

Article 1:

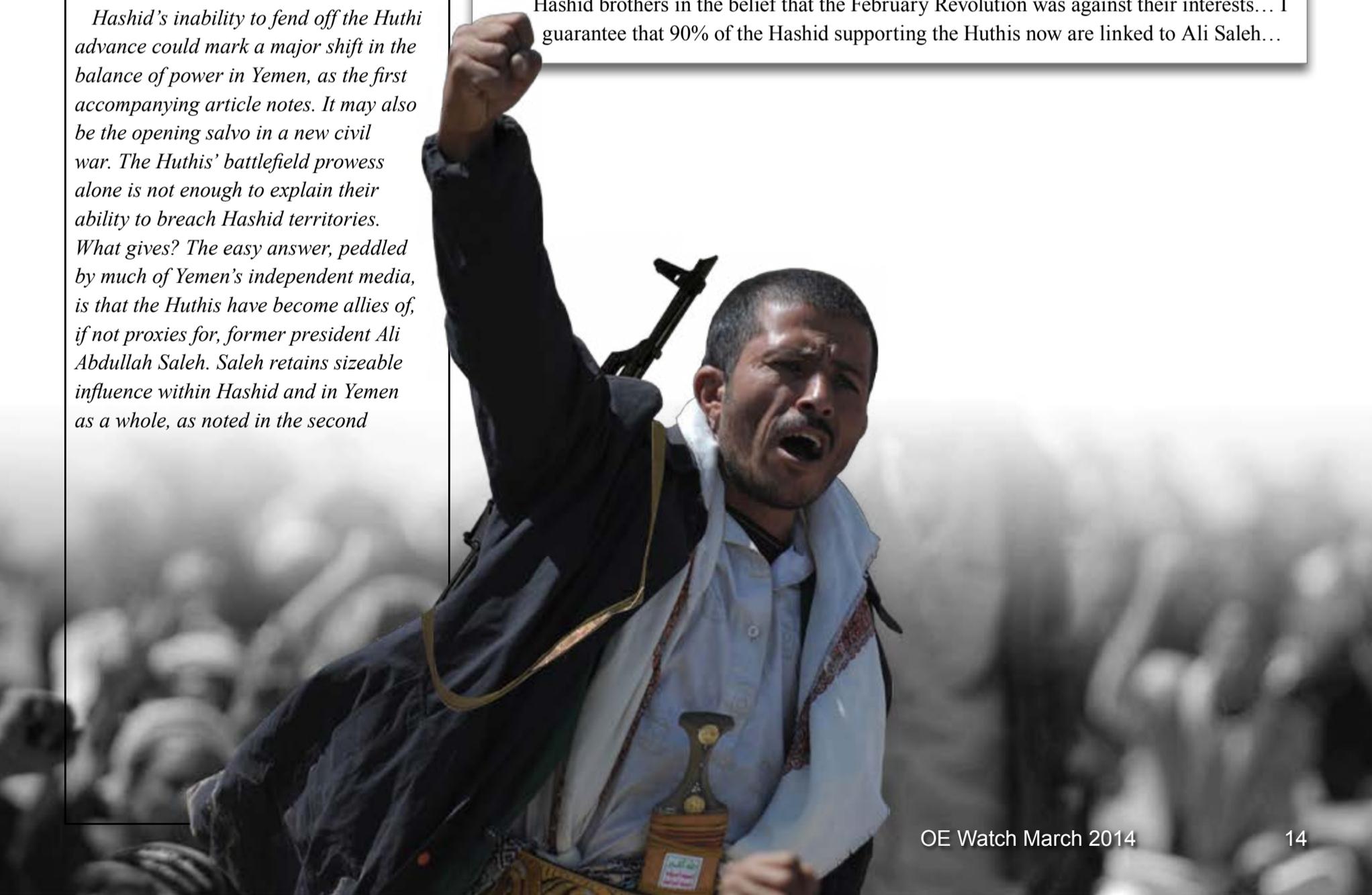
The advances made by the Huthis in their battle with Hashid fighters have an impact on the traditional balance of Yemen’s tribal fabric. Despite having fought for the past ten years, the Huthis do not have the power or influence of the Hashid tribes, which during the era of Ali Abdullah Saleh held many key positions in the state, especially in the upper military ranks.

Source:

الشيخ حميد الأحمر في حوار مطوّل يُجيب على سؤال اللحظة: ما الذي حدث في حاشد؟
“In Extended Interview Shaykh Hamid al-Ahmar Answers the Question of the Moment: What Happened in Hashid?” 9 February 2014, al-Masdar Online. <http://almasdaronline.com/article/54531>

Article 2:

Given that Ali Abdullah Saleh is from Hashid, he has been able to mobilize some of his Hashid brothers in the belief that the February Revolution was against their interests... I guarantee that 90% of the Hashid supporting the Huthis now are linked to Ali Saleh...



Continued: The Huthis are Coming!

accompanying article, an interview with a leading member of Hashid. Thus, the Huthis did not face a unified Hashid front, but rather were able to flip several groups onto their side. The true conflict, in this view, pits Saleh against the powerful al-Ahmar family. The al-Ahmar brothers retain enormous influence in Yemen as fabulously wealthy businessmen, leaders of the Hashid confederation and the most prominent backers of the Islah Party. Former allies of Saleh, they publicly supported the protest movement that overthrew the former president.

These incidents have also raised questions about the Yemeni state, which has been virtually absent during the fighting. As the third accompanying article notes, President Abd Rabo Mansour Hadi is largely powerless; Yemeni Defense Minister Mohammed Nasser Ahmed, on the other hand, has increased his leverage over the last two years and may emerge as a potential strongman within the state. Not surprisingly, Yemeni media are now linking him to the interests of Saleh and the former regime.

The fighting has taken place as Yemen's national dialogue finally draws to an end. The dialogue produced a final proposal to divide Yemen into six regions, one of which would join the provinces of Saada and 'Amran, Huthi and Hashid strongholds respectively. The fourth accompanying article excerpts the official Huthi response to the federalism proposal. Some of the Southern factions have joined the Huthis in rejecting the plan. Thus as Yemen's protracted transitional period draws to a close, the contours of the next stage are as much of a mystery as ever. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

Source:

عشرات الآلاف يستعيدون وهج الثورة في صنعاء ونظام هادي يواجه خطر الانهيار
Khalid al-Hamadi. "Tens of Thousands Rekindle the Flame of the Revolution in Sanaa as Hadi's Regime faces Collapse," 7 February 2014. al-Quds al-Arabi. <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=131507>

Article 3:

The sources noted that he (Mohammed Nasser Ahmed) had developed close ties to former president Ali Saleh and the Huthis. He is also close to the UAE and Saudi Arabia, both of which support him greatly and may lead him to play the role of [Egypt's] Sisi in Yemen in the next stage if things continue as they are, especially given that these powers have become clearly aligned against President Hadi and his regime... Republican Guard forces have been isolated along the security belt surrounding the capital Sanaa, making Hadi feel insecure in the presidential residence, putting him at the mercy of these forces which are loyal to Saleh and forcing him to remain in his home on Seteen Street in Sanaa despite having been president for nearly two years.

Source:

بيان المجلس السياسي الرفض لما سمي بوثيقة الأقاليم الصادرة اليوم في صنعاء
"Statement by the Political Council Rejecting the so-called Regions Document Issued Today in Sanaa," 10 February 2014, Huthi Facebook Page. <https://www.facebook.com/www.ansaruallah/posts/587664194658783>

Article 4:

... we announce our rejection of this plan and we hold the powers behind it and those who agreed to sign it fully responsible for the dangers that threaten everyone...

Nigeria's FY2014 Budget: Misplaced Priorities?

“The Federal Government proposes to spend just 2 billion naira on a pilot initiative to ameliorate the poverty in Nigeria’s northeast.”

OE Watch Commentary: *With the release of the Nigerian federal budget, many in the country are questioning the rationale behind Abuja’s security-related allocations. Analysts are left bewildered: the relatively paltry funds being allocated in attempts to resolve the poverty that serves as one of the root causes of the Boko Haram insurgency in the north pale in comparison to the large funds reserved for the Niger Delta amnesty program.*

As the accompanying article details, the Nigerian FY2014 budget allocates some 63.28 billion naira (or USD \$387 million) to be doled out to former insurgents from the Niger Delta. In contrast, the Federal Government announced that it would spend only around 2 billion naira (or USD\$12.3 million) on poverty alleviation initiatives in the northeastern states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa, where the rise of Boko Haram has been attributed to a lack of economic opportunities. As a comparative metric, some underline the fact in the same budget Nigeria’s Nollywood film industry is set to receive a \$3 billion naira (USD\$18.4 million) subsidy.

For their part, governors from Nigeria’s northeastern states have had mixed reactions to the allocations, though, for the most part, they have been negative. While the governors of Yobe and Gombe states expressed mild gratitude for the funds, other politicians have gone on the offensive, asserting that the paltry funding shows a lack of commitment to the north, a historical charge that has been leveled at Abuja. For instance, Ahmad Lawan, a senator from Yobe, asserted in December that the paltry allocation for poverty alleviation aimed at thwarting Boko Haram came as a shock and disappointment to many from the northeast. Noting that billions have been poured into mitigating the spates of violence in the southeastern Niger Delta that have only recently come to a relative close, he asserted that the northeast situation deserves the same serious and focused attention.

A parallel development of interest in the fight against Boko Haram relates to a sea change of sorts regarding who should shoulder responsibility for the failures to date. While historically there has been a sense that federal and state government forces, along with the military, have been at the root of the impotence, observers are increasingly making concessions that, rather than a failure of military strategy, Boko Haram endures because of a failure of political will. Indeed, many in the country appear to be sympathetic towards the Nigerian military, which is understaffed, overdeployed, and purportedly fatigued from searching for Boko Haram insurgents in the rocky hinterlands of the north.

With political will being cited as the primary cause for failure, the federal government’s lackluster funding efforts are doing little to inspire opinions to the contrary. End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)

Source: “Niger Delta ex-militants to gulp N63b in new budget,” PM News (Lagos, Nigeria) 2 January 2014: <http://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2014/01/02/niger-delta-ex-militants-to-gulp-n63b-in-new-budget/>

Article:

Nigeria’s Federal Government will spend N63.28 billion on Niger Delta former militants in 2014, figures in the new budget reveal.

Out of the amount, stipends and allowance for an estimated 30,000 militants will gulp N23.6 billion, about half of the N48 billion spent on the militants in 2012.

There is an additional charge of N546 million this year, meant for what is called ‘reinsertion, transition safety allowances’ for 3,642 former militants who fall under a third phase of the amnesty program.

Statistically, Nigeria will spend an estimated N2 million on every militant captured by the program this year.

In contrast, the Federal Government proposes to spend just N2 billion on a pilot initiative to ameliorate the poverty in Nigeria’s northeast, where a five year insurgency by Boko Haram militants has cost thousands of lives, and created a climate of insecurity.

The Federal Government special allocation to the three states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, represents just a part of what the program will cost as the states in the region are also expected to make contributions.

Foreign and local analysts have blamed the raging insurgency in the region to poverty and have called on the government to do something about it.

The Federal response to these calls, which President Jonathan hinted at a program in Gombe recently is the N2 billion allocation.

New Dimensions of Chadian Troop Involvement in CAR

“While Chad cannot be blamed for the sectarian hatred which has ripped CAR apart, it played a significant role in the lead up to Bozizé’s overthrow, and its continued interference has not been welcomed.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Central African Republic (CAR) and Chad have long had an up and down relationship, though the recent collapse of the former has led to the renewal of old tensions, in addition to creating new political, religious, and military fault lines.*

As the first of the two accompanying articles details, imperative to note is that President of Chad Idris Déby was, in fact, responsible for helping to install former CAR President François Bozizé into power in 2003. Interestingly, Déby’s machinations are very possibly at the core of both Bozizé’s and his replacement’s downfall as well. Many observers believe that Déby gave his tacit approval to the head of Séléka, Michel Djotodia, to overthrow Bozizé in March 2013. The support he offered was not simply diplomatic: others believe that Déby may have helped Djotodia cobble together some combination of ex- and current Chadian military members for the purpose of joining the Séléka insurgency. Once Séléka succeeded and Djotodia was installed, however, things began to get messy for Chad and Déby.

Indeed, Déby and his foreign policy team suffered from one major miscalculation: while they assumed that pitting Séléka against his one-time ally Bozizé would create an internal war within CAR that would benefit the goal of pulling insurgents away from the Chadian border, this did not, in fact, prove to be the case. Rather than insulating his country from cross-border violence that has historically marked the Chad-CAR relationship, Déby’s decision to back Séléka has now forced his country to commit troops to the conflict. It has also generated massive streams of refugees seeking to enter Chad to escape the violence. Thus, as the writer of the first article astutely notes, “While Chad cannot be blamed for the sectarian hatred which has ripped CAR apart, it played a significant role in the lead up to Bozizé’s overthrow, and its continued interference has not been welcomed by some of CAR’s political class.”



Fighters from a Christian militia known as the anti-balaka.
Source: <http://www.npr.org/>

Source: Celeste Hicks, “Chad: Déby’s Misstep in the Central African Republic,” ThinkAfricaPress, 27 January 2014: <http://thinkafricapress.com/chad/deby-overstretch-car-central-african-republic-seleka-djotodia>.

For those who keep an eye on goings-on in central Africa, it came as no surprise that the recent resignation of Michel Djotodia, the Central African Republic’s (CAR) short-lived president, came during a regional summit in Chad.

Having influence, however, doesn’t mean things will always go your way, and in a sense, Chad has some responsibility in the crisis that has unfolded in the CAR. A year ago, Chad is believed to have given tacit approval to the Séléka rebel alliance – then led by Djotodia – as they embarked on a second push towards Bangui. A number of irregular Chadian soldiers and former Chadian rebels are understood to have been among their ranks, and the Séléka eventually overthrew President François Bozizé.

One reading of Déby’s decision to back the Séléka over his former protégé Bozizé is that the Chadian president was emboldened by his foreign policy success in Mali and wanted to put an end to the constant rebellions in the CAR. According to a UN security adviser in N’Djamena, it seemed Déby calculated that his former rebel opponents could be drawn into Séléka’s fight, pulling them away from Chadian territory.

It now seems clear that decision to switch allegiance to Séléka was “indeed a miscalculation” as Roland Marchal, a Chad expert at Sciences-Po University in Paris.

While Chad cannot be blamed for the sectarian hatred which has ripped CAR apart, it played a significant role in the lead up to Bozizé’s overthrow, and its continued interference has not been welcomed by some of the CAR’s political class.

Déby’s bottom line has always been survival. Rather than ending instability, however, his decision to tacitly support the Séléka has made the situation on Chad’s southern border worse than ever. The country is now faced with thousands of displaced citizens – some of them Chadians who had lived in the CAR for years, trying to get home – and the prospect of recriminations and violence across the border for months to come.

(continued)

Continued: New Dimensions of Chadian Troop Involvement in CAR

Yet developments between CAR and Chad have become even messier still, due to the new religious undertones that mark the sides of CAR's internal – and increasingly international – conflict. On one side are the pro-Djotodia, ex-Séléka fighters, who hail from the country's northern Muslim minority. On the opposite side are the pro-Bozizé fighters (also known locally as “anti-balaka”), who are Christian. After Djotodia stepped down from power in January 2014, ceding power to new president Catherine Samba-Panza, members of the Christian majority have been ruthlessly attacking members of the Muslim minority associated with Séléka, blaming them for causing chaos in the country. Making the situation all the more tricky, however, is that, as the second article details, mainly Muslim Chadian troops serving in the African Union's peacekeeping force have begun to target and harass Christians themselves. Chadian troops have also been accused of helping the remaining members of Séléka, whom they are ostensibly supposed to be imprisoning.

*While exactly how the conflict in CAR will end is unclear, what is likely is that – for better or for worse – Chad will have some hand in whatever outcome prevails. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)***

Source: Hugues Marcel Tchoua, “Imbroglie sur l'implication des soldats tchadiens dans les exactions en Centrafrique,” (“The quagmire of implications for Chadian soldiers in CAR”), Cameroon Tribune, 10 February 2014: http://www.cameroon-tribune.cm/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=79493:exactions-en-centrafriqu-imbroglio-sur-limplication-des-soldats-tchadiens&catid=39:politique&Itemid=5.

The locality of Boali north of the Central was the scene last Wednesday of further violence. Chadian soldiers opened fire on civilians...as a reprisal for the attitude of the anti-balaka [Christian militias] in this city, where more than 800 Muslims have sought refuge in a parish for some 15 days, under the protection of Congolese troops from the African Union's Misca mission.

The NGO Human Rights Watch has requested the suspension of Chadian troops from Misca after these new abuses, accusing the men from N'djamena [the capital of Chad] of duplicitous behavior. These Chadian troops have also been accused of helping to facilitate the movement of some of the heads of Seleka by protecting them in their exit from the bases in which Misca forces had confined them in in the town of Bossangoa. Chadian troops have also been accused of enabling the regrouping of several rebel chiefs and some of their men in the northeast of the country.

On Wednesday, the Chadian authorities denied having provided any sort of support for Seleka.

Confronting Africa's Sobels (Soldiers by Day, Rebels by Night)

By FMSO analyst Robert Feldman and noted geographer Michel Ben Arrous

While the sobel phenomenon (soldiers by day; rebels by night) described within these pages may appear to be an African problem, the Western world's increasing involvement in fighting terrorists on that continent make it one America's military forces might encounter. Unfortunately, it could add a significant layer of complexity to US operations as American troops attempt to differentiate allies from enemies. In Africa, sometimes they are one and the same.

Parameters Winter 2014-2014

http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/issues/Winter_2014/7_FeldmanArrous.pdf



Fighting Irregular Fighters

Sibylle Scheipers

Robert J. Bunker

Robert L. Feldman and Michel Ben Arrous

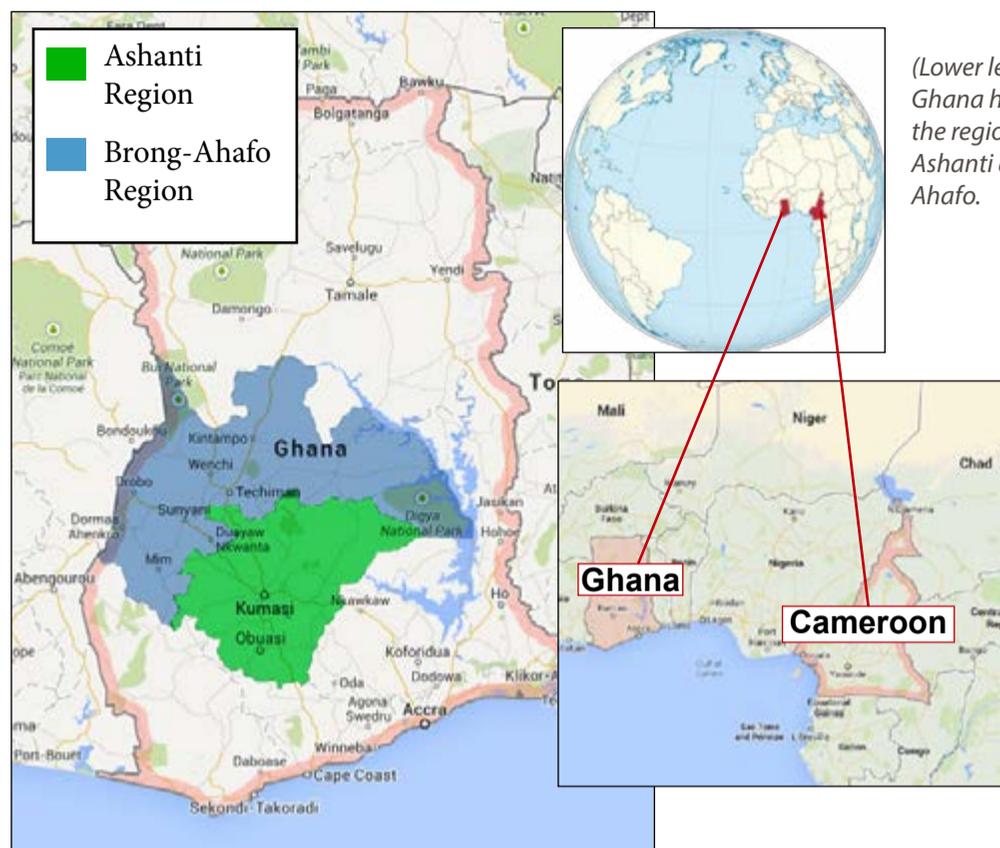
Artisanal Arms Widespread in Cameroon

OE Watch Commentary: While in most regions of the world the circulation of small arms typically refers to the movements of mass-manufactured weapons, in Sub-Saharan Africa local insurgents and criminals are just as likely to use homemade weapons that are every bit as deadly as their mass-produced counterparts. As the accompanying article details, this is increasingly the case in Cameroon, where authorities are seeing an uptick in the prevalence of artisanal arms used in small-scale crimes.

Production of artisanal arms in Sub-Saharan Africa is by no means a new phenomenon, but rather one that has been going on for at least a century. Indeed, metallurgy as a practice – particularly in West Africa – dates back to the 1st century CE. As concerns the addition of gunpowder, as the article below details, the sorts of small homemade arms in circulation today have been made via processes that predate African colonization by Europeans, which is to suggest prior to the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885.

Nor is the prevalence of artisanal arms unique to Cameroon. A 2006 report in Ghana relayed that there were an estimated 2500 blacksmiths in just two regions of the country – Ashanti and Brong Ahafo – capable of manufacturing their own guns. And the arms were prevalent, to be sure. That same year a spokesman in the capital of Accra relayed that, like Cameroon today, Ghana in 2006 was seeing a distinct uptick in the use of artisanal weapons for robberies. He estimated that four to four-and-a-half out of five cases of armed robbery use locally manufactured arms.

To be sure, the benefits of using locally produced weapons are numerous for criminals and/or insurgents. While less reliable than mass-manufactured weapons, artisanal weapons are harder to trace, given their lack of serial numbers, though when they do work they can be just as lethal. Second, because weapons can be produced even in remote locations, they are particularly likely to be used by citizens in hinterlands who lack access to networks of dealers (either domestically or internationally) of imported weapons. Yet the greatest advantage of such weapons tends to be their cost: for instance, in Ghana one report has revealed that a hunting rifle can be purchased for a paltry USD \$4.50 and the local equivalent of an AK-47 can be procured for under USD \$100. As the article details, the cost of artisanal guns is similar in Cameroon. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)**



(Lower left) Map of Ghana highlighting the regions of Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo.

Source: Yvette Mbassi-Bikele, “La Menace des Armes Artisanales,” (“The Menace of Artisanal Arms,”) Cameroon Tribune, 11 December 2013: http://www.cameroon-tribune.cm/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=78213%3Asecurite-la-menace-des-armes-artisanales&catid=3%3Adossier-de-la-redaction&Itemid=5.

Article:

[In Cameroon], in the arsenal used by criminals to do their dirty work, generally one or more is a homemade weapons. This is the case for the gang known as “Salvador Feuwo Tagne” which worked in Loum, Melong, Mbanga, Kekem, Baham and Logbaba, (a district of Douala), before being apprehended in July. The thugs had in their possession at least seven homemade guns. During their interrogation by police, the alleged robbers said they had acquired these weapons in a village in the northwest from men named Fomekong Robert and Jean Ernest Tchinda.

According to the authorities in charge of security, homemade weapons are proliferating in Cameroon. Although the damage they cause has been recorded around the country, their points of origin have been clearly identified in the regions of the west and northwest. “This is not a stigma for the areas concerned. It only proves that the people who live there practice an ancestral tradition of the manipulation of metals, iron, sulfur, and gunpowder. Even before these people are in contact with the white man during colonization, they already knew the firearms. In addition, their use in traditional ceremonies is regular and status symbol. Unfortunately, the malicious spirits are grafted to these sources for supplies and commit crimes,” said an official at the National Gendarmerie.

Thus, not a month goes by without highway robberies occurring at the barrels of homemade weapons. According to police sources, 108 robberies were reported in the only in the western region in 2011, and each time, the bandits held up their victims with these very “toys.” Travelers, traders, politicians, mothers, anonymous ... are regularly victims of attacks on roads or homes. “In truth, the situation is more worrying because these weapons are available to all. With 25,000 or 50,000 F, you get one of these deadly weapons at a blacksmith around the region. In particular, in the villages where this art is secular,” says a policeman anonymously.

Community of Latin American and Caribbean States

OE Watch Commentary: CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) is a new Latin American international organization inspired and led by the region's ideological far left. At its recent summit, held in Havana this January, CELAC formally took up the question of the Puerto Rican revolutionary movement. (It should be noted that the United States, including the territory of Puerto Rico, is not a CELAC member.) Ultimately, the membership voted down a measure that would have openly supported the movement by admitting Puerto Rican independence organizations as members of CELAC. Although not willing to take that step, the accompanying articles suggest that the issue of "decolonization" and "independence" of Puerto Rico could likely again return to the CELAC agenda. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



CELAC promotional poster.

Source: Digital Granma International, "“El Foro de Sao Paulo es un extraordinario laboratorio politico” afirma la presidenta de Brasil, Dilma Rousseff, en la inauguración oficial del XIX Encuentro" (At the official inauguration of the XIX Encounter, President of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff affirms, 'The Forum of Sao Paulo is an extraordinary political laboratory') Digital Granma International, August 3, 2013, <http://www.granma.cu/espanol/nuestra-america/3agosto-elforo.html>

Article 1:

"During the opening ceremonies of the XIX Encounter of the sessions of the Forum (the Forum of Sao Paulo), celebrated in Sao Paulo, there was a message disseminated by Rouseff (President of Brazil), who saluted 'the progressive parties that formulated the projects and the alternatives that are changing Latin America.' ... Rouseff assures, 'Mercosur, UNASUR and CELAC have the seal of approval of the Forum of Sao Paulo,'" according to (the press agency) EFE." ...the Puerto Rican delegate, Jorge Enríquez, affirmed that the dream of Latin America and the Caribbean to reach complete integration will always be at risk so long as colonialism exists. The situation in Puerto Rico is emblematic considering that it was first a colony of the Spanish crown and then of the United States, and as long as this problem is not resolved, continental integration will actually be in danger."

Source: Graça Salgueiro, "Entre Davos e Havana, o coração da presidente elege o socialismo" (From Davos to Havana, the president's heart is with socialism), Midia sem mascara, January 29, 2014, <http://www.midiasemmascara.org/>

Article 2:

"It bears noting that CELAC is a mere arm of the Forum of Sao Palo, and was created in 2011 by Hugo Chávez, ex-president of Venezuela."

Source: Gabriel Solano, "La CELAC le da la espalda a Puerto Rico" (CELAC turns its back on Puerto Rico), Fin del Capitalismo, February 2, 2014, <http://findelcapitalismo.blogspot.com/2014/02/la-celac-le-da-la-espalda-puerto-rico.html>

Article 3:

"Latin Americans and Caribbeans rejected the proposal, formulated by Venezuela, to incorporate Puerto Rican organizations that fight for its independence from the United States as members of the body created in 2011(CELAC), which brings together all of the countries of the continent with the exception of the United States and Canada."

Source: Contrainjerencia, "Puerto Rico: celebran el apoyo de la Celac a la descolonización" (Puerto Rico: They celebrate CELAC's support of decolonization), February 2, 2014, <http://www.contrainjerencia.com/?p=82381>

Article 4:

"Berríos (Rubén Berríos, president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party), for whom this point is fundamental, punctuated, 'They entrusted the matter to a commission composed of four countries (Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, and Trinidad & Tobago) to push for decolonialization of Puerto Rico in the UN and other pertinent international fóruns.... Simply put, from now on Latin America as a block will push the decolonization agenda and the independence of Puerto Rico,' he rejoiced"

Beautiful Girl Dying

OE Watch Commentary: Doctors had reported the prognosis of Génesis Carmona, a Miss Tourism, as “reserved” after she took a bullet to the head during a demonstration in Valencia, Venezuela, Thursday, 19 February. Unfortunately, she did not survive. Venezuela is especially proud of its beauty queens, and Génesis is not the only one to die violently in the recent past. Monica Spear, a Miss Venezuela, was killed in an armed robbery in early January.

The deaths are emblematic and perhaps in themselves prognosticative. It appears the situation in Venezuela is no longer slipping toward instability: local observers feel Venezuelan instability is now slipping toward chaos.

Conditions in Venezuela are taking over center stage in Colombian politics. The situation in Venezuela, home to one of the world’s largest oil reserves, is of immediate and significant importance to its regional neighbors. The communist regime in Cuba has taken extraordinary steps to maintain an ideologically sympathetic, if not subordinate party in control there. On the other side of what could become an active geopolitical contest, Colombia, a US ally, is almost literally wedded to Venezuela. Hundreds of thousands of families are simultaneously Colombian and Venezuelan. Colombia stands to suffer the brunt of a massive Venezuelan population displacement if one should occur. Meanwhile, one of the underlying reasons why the Colombian government has not defeated the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) is that guerrilla group’s enjoyment of sanctuaries inside Venezuela. A collapse of the current Venezuelan regime could ultimately expose the FARC militarily. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



Photos of Génesis Carmona after she was shot in the head during a demonstration.
Source: <http://redcubalibre.blogspot.com/2014/02/genesis-carmona-el-principio-de-la.html>

Source: Yakary Prado and Tibusay Romero, “Falleció Miss Turismo 2013 herida de bala ayer en Valencia” (Yesterday in Valencia Miss Tourism 2013 died of a bullet wound), Última Hora, February 19, 2014, http://173.246.50.18/sucesos/Fallecio-Miss-Turismo-herida-Valencia_0_358764191.html

Article 1:

“Another six wounded were taken to the emergency room of that private hospital after anti-government protests that occurred in the city of Valencia and were harshly repressed.”

Source: El Colombiano (Editorial), “Maduro se inventa una guerra,” (Maduro [President of Venezuela] invents himself a war) El Colombiano, Medellín, February 19, 2014, http://www.elcolombiano.com/BancoConocimiento/M/maduro_se_inventa_una_guerra/maduro_se_inventa_una_guerra.asp

Article 2:

“The situation will have to get worse as the days pass, but from there to conclude that the movement (opposition movement in Venezuela) can provoke the collapse of the ‘bolivarian revolution’, there remains quite a distance. Neither can it be hoped that the situation can revert toward a negotiated solution with the opposition.”

(continued)

Continued: Beautiful Girl Dying

Venezuelan anti-government protests in Caracas.
Source: <http://www.tpnn.com>



Source: Redaccion Bucaramanga, “Álvaro Uribe recoge un millón de firmas por Venezuela” (Alvaro Uribe collects a million signatures for Venezuela) El Tiempo.com, February 18, 2014, http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/oriente/uribe-recoge-un-milln-de-firmas-por-venezuela_13521295-4

Article 3:

“In the midst of dozens of people who walked with him along the halls of a shopping center in Bucaramanga (northeastern city of approximately 1,200,000 inhabitants) , the Senate aspirant announced that a democratic letter of support to the (Venezuelan) opposition would be sent in the coming days.”

Source: Emili Blasco, “Cuba envía más de 2,000 agentes para apuntalar a en el poder,” ABC.es, March 13, 2013, <http://www.abc.es/internacional/20130313/abci-venezuela-cuba-cubazuela-201303122116.html>

Article 4:

“Cuba played hard in the political management of Hugo Chávez. Illness, and now throws itself into assuring that the electoral process benefits Nicolás Maduro. In addition to almost 46,000 Cuban collaborators who officially live in Venezuela, all with the mission of guaranteeing the chavista revolution, Havana is sending a detachment of agents for electoral control, which could reach 2,500 individuals, according to intelligence that has come out of the island.”

Colombian Coal Train to China

February 2014

OE Watch Commentary: Colombia is a major world coal producer, most of it extracted from complexes in the north and shipped out of Atlantic ports. One of the larger coal customers is China. As the bottlenecks and backlogs at the Panama Canal make using it increasingly more inefficient, another opportunity has arisen. The accompanying article shows that a transcontinental rail crossing has held out hope as a potential competitor to the isthmian canal, a hope that seems perhaps to have new energy.

Work on expanding the canal has ground to a halt, so this Colombian rail project is getting a serious sounding. It would be one of a suite of mega-projects underwritten by Chinese interests, this in contrast to Colombia's free trade agreement with the United States, the long delay of which has frustrated many Colombians. It is doubtful that the rail project would face effective delaying actions within Colombia, but there exist evident environmental concerns and regional elbowing. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

Source: Caracol, "Colombia y China están cerca de negociar vía ferroviaria en el Pacífico," (Colombia and China are close to negotiating a railway in the Pacific) Caracol Radio, October 17, 2013, <http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/economia/colombia-y-china-estan-cerca-de-negociar-via-ferroviaria-en-el-pacifico/20131017/nota/1996303.aspx>

Article 1:

"Minister of Mines Amylkar Acosta assured that the bilateral agreement with China is progressing, and that very soon results will be known."

"El Minminas Amylkar Acosta, aseguró que el acuerdo bilateral con China está avanzado, y que muy pronto se conocerán resultados."

Source: Caracol, "China quiere construir en Colombia un ferrocarril que sea alternativa al Canal de Panamá" (China wants to build a railway that would be an alternative to the Panama Canal), Caracol Radio, February 14, 2014, <http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/economia/china-quiere-construir-en-colombia-un-ferrocarril-que-sea-alternativa-al-canal-de-panama/20110214/nota/1425483.aspx>

Article 2:

"[You ask if] this is a real proposal?...It is very far along. The studies have been done (the Chinese) regarding the transport costs per ton, the investment costs, everything speaks in support', explained Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos to the Financial Times (of London)."

Source: Gonzalo Duque Escobar, Ferrocarril Interoceánico Verde para Colombia (Green Inter-ocean Canal Route for Colombia), Manizales, Colombia: Universidad Nacional De Colombia Sede Manizales (National University of Colombia, Manizales), 2014, <http://www.bdigital.unal.edu.co/11520/1/gonzaloduqueescobar.201402.pdf>

Article 3:

"...the truth is that they are speaking about two very different projects with very different objectives...The first project is absurd and that is worth highlighting: although the rail way is shorter, it could be more costly and has no financial viability...On the other hand, the project to connect the Caribbean region with the port of Buenaventura is not only feasible from the financial point of view, it is urgently necessary for the development of the country..."

Source: Gonzalo Duque Escobar, Ferrocarril Interoceánico Verde para Colombia (Green Inter-ocean Canal Route for Colombia), Manizales, Colombia: Universidad Nacional De Colombia Sede Manizales (National University of Colombia, Manizales), 2014, <http://www.bdigital.unal.edu.co/11520/1/gonzaloduqueescobar.201402.pdf>

Article 4:

"Connection of Colombia's two seas suggests the development of an interocean canal between Urabá and Cupica, by the means of the Green Railway that is being proposed, transiting the Antioquian Atrato River in order to mitigate the environmental impact and not affect native cultures in the Darién and by that route seeking coordination with the Colombian transport system."

Text Messages between Brazilian Narco Pilot and Peruvian Drug Trafficker

Source: “Captan diálogos entre narcos peruanos del Vraem y pilotos brasileños de narcoavionetas.” La Republica. Accessed on 12 January 2014 from <http://www.larepublica.pe/08-01-2014/captan-dialogos-entre-narcos-peruanos-del-vraem-y-pilotos-brasilenos-de-narcoavionetas>

Text Messages between Brazilian Narco Pilot and Peruvian Drug Trafficker Shed Light on Clandestine Airstrips and Cocaine Trafficking in the VRAEM Region of Peru

OE Watch Commentary: According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Peru has officially surpassed Colombia as the world’s premier producer of cocaine. This is the first instance in the last ten years that any country in South America has successfully out-produced Colombia. In fact, since 2000 cocaine production in Peru has increased by 40%, whereas in 2012 alone, land used for the production of cocaine decreased by 25% in Colombia from 150,000 acres to 119,000. Key factors that have precipitated coca production in Peru include widespread poverty, the success of coca eradication efforts in Colombia, and the lack of governmental involvement outside Lima, particularly in the Andean and jungle regions, where cocaine production is prevalent.

In an attempt to thwart the exportation of cocaine to neighboring countries, including Bolivia and Brazil, the Peruvian government has started what is popularly being called a “war of exhaustion.” This war is being executed in Peru’s VRAEM region of Peru (Valleys of the Apurimac, Ene, and Mantara Rivers), which is known for its high cocaine production. Operations involve the systematic bombing of clandestine airstrips utilized by traffickers to ship the cocaine out of the country. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel and Gonzalez)**

In an effort to thwart outbound aerial drug shipments from Peru to Bolivia and Brazil, Peruvian authorities have waged what they are calling a “war of exhaustion” against traffickers by systematically bombing clandestine airstrips in key cocaine production areas. Bombing an airstrip takes authorities roughly 2 hours. Rebuilding a bombed airstrip takes traffickers three weeks. According to Vicente Romero, the Chief of the Peruvian Anti-Drug Police, “they (referring to drug traffickers) are going to get frustrated and will have to take the drugs out by road, and that is when we will jump on them. We aren’t going to stop.”



A picture retrieved from one of the six phones seized.

Romero was not far off point when he said that traffickers would become frustrated. Shortly after this statement was released, Peruvian authorities seized six cell phones in close proximity to an airstrip that had been built along the Tambo River in Atalaya, Peru. These phones contained a series of text messages between a Brazilian pilot and a Peruvian trafficker that clearly demonstrate how authorities are impacting daily cocaine exports by destroying airstrips.

Brazilian pilot: When are you going to find out about the landing strip?

Peruvian trafficker known as Negro Barboza:

I’m going to be in Ayachuco early tomorrow.

Brazilian pilot: Okay.

Peruvian trafficker: What I told you is 100% accurate. Today a friend was helping me with another landing strip.

Brazilian trafficker: Okay, but help me for the love of God. (The Brazilian trafficker was frustrated because the landing strip in which the plane was going to be loaded had been destroyed by Peruvian authorities).

Peruvian trafficker: Relax, I never let my friends down.

Brazilian trafficker: Yes, but I’m screwed because I don’t have a landing strip there.

Peruvian trafficker: What happened with your landing strip?

Brazilian trafficker: They (Peruvian authorities) blew it up.

Peruvian trafficker: Shit!!! I am leaving now and will look for a way to fix this.

Brazilian trafficker: Help me. I am putting my trust in you.

The conversation above demonstrates the frustration of Brazilian and Peruvian traffickers, but it also demonstrates how traffickers from these two countries are working together to supply Brazil’s internal cocaine market; the second largest behind the US. This cooperation has precipitated the construction of multiple clandestine airstrips that seem to pop up overnight in the Peruvian jungle. La Republica, a Peruvian news media source, reported that there are at least 72 clandestine runways being utilized by Peruvian, Bolivian, and Brazilian drug traffickers in the VRAEM. This same source reported that an estimated three to four planes leave the VRAEM every day, each one carrying some 350 kilograms of cocaine.

OE Watch Commentary: At the start of the civil war in Syria in 2011, the primary narrative of the opposition was that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was an oppressive dictator who deserved to be overthrown. As the conflict persists into its third year now, this narrative is shifting to a sectarian one pitting Sunni Muslim rebels against an apostate Alawite Shi'a regime. This newer narrative is also the lens through which much of the Sunni Muslim World, including Indonesian extremists, views the Syrian conflict.

In 2013 Indonesian Sunni extremist groups began employing the sectarian narrative in Syria to mobilize supporters against minority religious sects in the country, including Shia's and Ahmadiyahs. An article in Indonesia's tribunnews.com discussed how the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) now passes out booklets that warn about the deviation of the Shi'as from true Sunni Islam. According to MUI, the Shi'a, who are less 5% of Indonesia's Muslims, are responsible for splits between Muslims and could also threaten the territorial integrity of Indonesia like they have in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon.

The Shi'a appear to be the preferred topic of Islamist extremists in Indonesia after years of the latter focusing on opposing Indonesian democracy and the United States, which failed to gain resonance because Indonesia's political system is functioning well and U.S. businesses and pop culture are generally viewed positively by the population. The Shi'a issue, however, may resonate because of the extremists' argument that the Shi'as will divide Indonesia, which lost East Timor to secession in 1998, and because of the sympathy that the suffering of the Syrian people receives in Indonesia.

With little government pushback on this anti-Shi'a rhetoric, the extremists may succeed in further polarizing Indonesian Sunnis and Shia's. In addition, the extremists' exploitation of Syrian conflict to demonize Shi'as may revitalize their movement. As a result, what began as a move to stigmatize Shi'as could ultimately lead to the targeting of other groups that do not accommodate the worldview of the extremists, including Christians, foreigners and secularists. In Indonesia, which already sees frequent attacks on churches and minority Muslim sects, an increase in hostile rhetoric could easily lead to an increase in violence against minorities as well. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



"Indonesians protest against Iran, which many in the country blame for backing the Shi'a Alwaite al-Assad government in Syria, with a sign that says 'Iran: No to the Islamic Republic that Supports the Massacre of Muslim Syria'". Source: <http://www.dakwatuna.com/2013/06/11/34822/bahaya-penyebaran-syiah-di-negara-negara-sunni-bagian-keempat-rukun-iman/>

Source: "MUI Minta Umat Islam Mewaspada Aliran Syi'ah (MUI Asks that the Muslim Community Beware of the Shi'a Trend), tribunnews.com, 3 February 2014.

MUI Asks that the Muslim Community Beware of the Shi'a Trend

The presence of Shiites in Indonesia should make us wary. In addition to deviating from Islamic theology, this trend could potentially undermine the integrity of the united Republic of Indonesia. Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) hopes Muslims in the country do not fall into this cult.

[Shiite theology] also claims to understand that it is most entitled to hold the reins of leadership over the Muslims is Ali bin Abi Talib. One of the popular Shiite fatwas are misguided justifying mut'ah (temporary marriage) and alcoholic beverages (khamr) .

The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in collaboration with the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council (DDII) are two agencies that disseminated information about the irregularities of Shiite fatwas in Indonesia in the main hall of the Hajj Information Center (PIH) in Batam Center on Sunday, February 2, 2014.

"The [Shi'a] have opposed the verses of the Koran and the Prophet and are infidels. Their presence is a threat ideologically, namely to damage the homeland. The emergence of a united Shiite movement will damage and split Muslims," said Prof. Dr. Muhammad Baharun in his presentation.

MUI has issued a fatwa that khamr and mut'ah and are impure, but for Shiites these two things actually lawful. Therefore, MUI has published a guide book about Shiism in September 2013 entitled "Recognizing and Awareness about Shiites in Indonesia."

This book was distributed to participants totaling 500 people. As expressed in the foreword, the author and team intend the booklet to be a guideline for Muslims across Indonesia in order to recognize and be aware of irregularities of Shi'ites .

An official of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) appealed to all Indonesian people to get to know and learn more profoundly. MUI also described in the book about that Indonesia should learn about the historical facts that occurred in foreign countries, such as Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon, where Shiites were able to threaten the integrity of the Republic because the group is in the interests of Iran.

Indian Navy Conducts Space-Networked Exercise for the First Time

13 February 2014

“India is steadily bolstering military force-levels on the eastern coast and Andaman and Nicobar archipelago to counter China’s strategic moves in the IOR.”

OE Watch Commentary: As reported in the October 2013 edition of *OE Watch*, India’s launch of GSAT-7 (AKA “Rukmini”) and its subsequent maneuver into Geostationary Orbit constituted a qualified achievement for India. The exercise TROPEX 2014 has provided India the opportunity to transform that limited success into a more complete success. As the first article describes, GSAT-7 has enabled two networked fleets to participate in the exercise.

The second article highlights the exercise in the context of India’s military space program, which has lagged behind civilian space operations. Space-networked fleets are a major step for India to demonstrate its advances. The article also alludes to Indian and Chinese maritime rivalries, as India continues to be concerned with China’s “Far Seas Strategy,” which involves forward presence in the Indian Ocean to ensure security of China’s own national interests (particularly maritime commerce).
End OE Watch Commentary (Freese)

“India has been a very slow starter in the use of space for military operations despite having a robust civilian programme.”



Indian Navy press release photograph of Chief of Naval Staff Admiral DK Joshi and Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Naval Command Vice Admiral Anil Chopra aboard INS VIRAAT during flight operations conducted as a part of EX TROPEX 14.
Source: <http://indiannavy.nic.in/press-release/exercise-tropex-2014-gets-underway-eastern-coast>

Source: Staff Author(s), “Exercise ‘TROPEX 2014’ gets underway on Eastern Coast,” Indian Navy, 14 February 2014, <http://indiannavy.nic.in/press-release/exercise-tropex-2014-gets-underway-eastern-coast>

Article 1:

The combined Eastern and Western Fleets are currently engaged in a month-long major exercise. Amongst the large number of participating units are included the Aircraft Carrier Viraat and the nuclear submarine Chakra. ... The exercise will be conducted against the backdrop of two completely networked fleets, widely dispersed across the Indian Ocean Region, operating in a dense maritime environment. ... This year’s exercise will witness the maiden participation of the recently acquired P8I maritime reconnaissance aircraft ...

Source: Rajat Pandit, “Navy Kicks Off Largest Combat Exercise With Dedicated Satellite Above,” The Times of India, 13 February 2014 <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Navy-kicks-off-largest-combat-exercise-with-dedicated-satellite-above/articleshow/30349037.cms?referral=PM>

Article 2:

... the Navy has kicked off its largest exercise with both the western and eastern fleets amassing in the Bay of Bengal for intensive combat manoeuvres. ... over 50 warships ... as well as scores of fighters, helicopters and drones is a yearly feature. But what is new this year is that the month-long exercise is being held for the first time under the gaze of India’s first dedicated military satellite GSAT-7 or “Rukmini” ... beaming signals from its UHF, S, Ku and C-band transponders to network all Indian warships, submarines and aircraft with operational centres ashore through high-speed encrypted data-links. ... the “theatre” for the exercise is also significant since India is steadily bolstering military force-levels on the eastern coast and Andaman and Nicobar archipelago to counter China’s strategic moves in the IOR. ... the entire Navy is now getting networked for all to get a composite picture of the IOR and swiftly respond to any exigency. India has been a very slow starter in the use of space for military operations despite having a robust civilian programme.

Magindanao Province, Philippines – Fighting Continues Despite Peace Agreement

“The current fighting in the southern Philippine province of Maguindanao between government forces and a breakaway rebel group could imperil the signing of the final peace agreement between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).”

OE Watch Commentary: After a decades-long insurgency in Maguindanao Province, it had appeared as if things might finally be calming down as the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) signed the fourth and final annex of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB). However, violence broke out even before the ink dried.

The region has suffered an endless cycle of unrest, as different Moro insurgent groups have sought autonomy. This time it is the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), a breakaway group of the MILF, who are fighting to achieve their goal of setting up an independent Muslim state in Mindanao.

The following article offers an excellent summary of what has been taking place since the fourth and final annex to the FAB was signed on 25 January 2014. In hopes of trying to ward off further protests and violence, the Philippine military had launched operations against the BIFF only one day after the last annex was signed. Meanwhile, the article brings up several concerns tied to the peace agreement. For example, some observers question the constitutionality of the agreement. Others question how the agreement might impact non-Muslims living in the newly established Muslim state.

Under the peace deal the MILF agreed to end the violence in exchange for establishing Bangsamoro, a political entity vested with sovereign powers similar to those enjoyed by a federal state. This would replace the current five-province Autonomous Regions in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), which is an offshoot of a 1996 peace agreement between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Philippine government. (Note: MILF was a splinter group that emerged from the MNLF.)

Philippine President Benigno Aquino is aiming to have the peace accord, which is expected to be signed within weeks, to be fully implemented before he steps down in mid-2016. The question remains, however, whether or not all parties will ever come to full agreement and whether those who seem to be consistently anxious to take up arms, will accept peace. Only time will tell. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**



RENEGADE. Ameril Umbra Kato, leader of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters. Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F87cZcKuROs>

Source: Alito L. Malinao, “News Analysis: Clashes in Mindanao, Critics Reaction Could Imperil Peace Deal with Moro Rebels,” Shanghai Daily, January 30, 2014, http://www.shanghaidaily.com/article/article_xinhua.aspx?id=197361

News Analysis: Clashes in Mindanao, Critics Reaction Could Imperil Peace Deal with Moro Rebels

The current fighting in the southern Philippine province of Maguindanao between government forces and a breakaway rebel group could imperil the signing of the final peace agreement between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

(In four days), the death toll in the fierce fighting between the Philippine military and members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) has reached 41, including child combatants and one soldier.

At the heart of the last document is the deactivation of 11,000 MILF fighters. The government and the MILF had already signed the annexes on power-sharing, wealth-sharing and transitional arrangements.

... Senate Minority Leader Juan Ponce Enrile cautioned the public against prematurely celebrating the deal, saying, “We have to study that very carefully. It involves a very major security and political issue and constitutional problem for the country so we cannot just make a judgment on that until you have seen and read the whole text of the agreement,”...

In the House of Representatives, Minority Leader Ronaldo Zamora on Wednesday dared the government to reveal fully the effects of the newly signed annex on normalization and peace pact to non-Muslims living in Bangsamoro territories.

“Keep in mind that Muslim Mindanao is part of a larger Mindanao territory and communities and we would like to make sure that all Filipinos living in Mindanao and ARMM have their rights protected,” Zamora stressed.

“The scheme has been dogged by corruption and accusations the government has hidden its true cost.”

OE Watch Commentary: Recent political protests and calls for the ouster of the current Thai government have a déjà vu quality that is uncanny. In 2006 the same anti-government yellow shirts raised barricades and banners against the then Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his red shirt supporters, turning central Bangkok into a battleground of rival political forces. A military coup ensued and held power until national elections were held in late 2007. Shinawatra’s political party, which had held power since 2001, was banned and all party executives were precluded from running for election for the next five years. Despite this ban, a newly formed People’s Power Party (PPP), which supported Shinawatra, won this election (Shinawatra’s original political success was built upon his personal success in new industry and a focus on the more rural areas of northern and eastern Thailand).

The PPP faced political and judicial challenges immediately. Opposition forces (yellow shirts) occupied main government buildings in Bangkok and demanded the resignation of PPP Prime Minister Sundarvej. In September 2008 a Constitutional Court dismissed Sundarvej, yet street protests against the PPP government continued, including occupation and closing of the Bangkok International Airport. A Constitutional Court ruling disbanded the PPP for election fraud and barred its leaders from elections for five years. For the next two years tens of thousands of supporters of Shinawatra and the banned political parties conducted massive street protests in Bangkok. In 2010 the military moved to break up these large-scale protests, and as many as 90 civilians were killed. The next year Pheu Thai, the pro-Shinawatra political party, won national elections in a landslide and his sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, became the new Prime Minister. A key to this comeback was the continuous support and political action of the Thai rice farmers, especially from the rural north. The new government created a rice subsidy scheme to ensure guaranteed prices to Thai rice farmers. The Bangkok Post reported last year that the scheme was seen



Protesters blow whistles in front of the Government Savings Bank to campaign against its funds being used to shore-up the rice-pledging scheme. (Photo by Pornprom Sarttarbhaya)
 Source: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/local/390553/commerce-ministry-urges-state-banks-to-help-pay-for-rice-pledging>

Source: The Bangkok Post, “IMF calls on Thailand to end costly rice subsidies”, November 13, 2013 <http://www.bangkokpost.com/learning/learning-from-news/379634/imf-warns-govt-to-stop-rice-scheme>

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) called on Thailand to drop its multibillion baht subsidies for rice growers, saying the programme is undermining confidence in the country’s finances...

The rice buying programme, a flagship policy of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra’s government to win support in Thailand’s vote rich farming regions, has accumulated losses of at least US\$4.46 billion since it was introduced in 2011...

“With the pledging prices about 40% above market prices, it is inevitable for the government to incur losses as long as the scheme remains unchanged,” the IMF said in its report...

Rice is Thailand’s staple grain and one of the country’s main exports. But India and Vietnam surpassed Thailand as the world’s top rice exporters in 2012 as the Thai government stockpiled rice to avoid even bigger losses.

The IMF also said lack of data about the rice purchasing program has diminished confidence in Thailand’s public finances.

Thai officials said in the report that a reduction in the pledging prices or a purchase limit might be necessary to sustain the policy but insisted the scheme was aimed at reducing economic inequality in the Southeast Asian nation...

... the current scheme has its roots in the populist policies of Ms Yingluck’s brother, former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who won landslide victories in two elections before he was ousted in a 2006 coup...

(continued)

Continued: Thailand Turmoil: Role of the Rice Farmer

“Currently, the caretaker government owes about 130 billion baht (4 billion U.S. dollars) to around 1 million farmers nationwide.”

as a failure in the international market. As the accompanying article points out, the failure of this ill-conceived scheme has the potential to change the political dynamics once again.

By the middle of 2012 anti-government (yellow shirts) protests had grown to match previous levels of government blockades and street disruptions in Bangkok. 2013 saw a political situation much like 2006, complete with fears of a military coup. New elections in February 2014 were boycotted and disrupted by the political opposition, yet the results were upheld by a Constitutional Court and the current government remains in power.

An article in the online Xinhua English News reports the impact of these subsidy debts on the national banking sector. As pointed out in the additional Bangkok Post article, discussions between the government and the Thai Farmers Association are ongoing. Subsidy payments are overdue and much needed. As the impact of the failed rice subsidy unfolds, the key role of the Thai rice farmer will become more evident.
End OE Watch Commentary (Welch)



Protesting rice farmers from western provinces picket outside the Commerce Ministry. The farmers are holding placards attacking the caretaker government and Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra over delayed payments in the rice-pledging scheme. PATTANAPONG HIRUNARD Source: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/learning/learning-from-news/393739/pm-should-quit-says-priyathorn>

Source: Xinhuanet, “Thai bank president resigns after protests against loans for rice farmers,” February 18, 2014, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2014-02/18/c_133124947.htm

Thailand’s state-owned Government Savings Bank (GSB) President Worawit Chailimpamontri resigned Tuesday after its clients and employees protested against loans to help the caretaker government make overdue payments to rice farmers...

Clients nationwide withdrew on Monday a total of 30 billion baht (924 million U.S. dollars) from the GSB for fear that their deposits would be used to pay rice farmers owed under the rice-pledging scheme...

It is reported the GSB has already decided to suspend further lending to the state-run Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) to fund the rice scheme...

In a televised speech on Tuesday, caretaker Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra said the rice scheme will be continually implemented and attributed the government’s delay in paying the farmers to prolonged anti-government protests...

PRC Expert Sees U.S. Military's Reliance on Space Infrastructure as a Fatal Weakness

“The fatal weakness in U.S. military affairs nowadays is that a military that possesses advanced weapons and equipment depends heavily on support and assistance from space infrastructure; this gives all countries with space attack capabilities the ability to conduct “pinpoint” strikes against it (the space infrastructure) to win the initiative in asymmetric warfare.”

OE Watch Commentary: *A recent Chinese press report claims that the U.S. military, which possesses advanced weapons and equipment, could be rendered vulnerable because of its overdependence on space infrastructure. Throughout the article Yang Minqing, a research fellow from the World Affairs Research Center of Xinhua News Agency, offers a snapshot of the evolution of U.S. space systems and policies. Of most interest, however, is Yang's conclusion that U.S. overdependence on its space infrastructure has become the U.S. military's “fatal weakness.” He points out that, compared to foreign militaries that do not possess military space capabilities, the U.S. military has an incomparable absolute superiority. However, those countries that do possess military space capabilities, such as China, Russia, and certain Europe countries, may take advantage of a U.S. weakness of overdependence and crush the U.S. military through strikes against its space assets to defeat it.*

Over the past two decades, China has been carefully studying U.S. military strategy. Likewise, the United States has been studying Chinese military strategy. For China to point a finger at the United States and claim that U.S. heavy dependence on space infrastructure is a weakness is like calling the kettle black. China has also come to depend heavily on its own infrastructure in space. Therefore, as Yang's reasoning goes, China is equally vulnerable.
End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)

Source: “Yang Minqing, “美軍軟肋「防不勝防」 (The Weakness of the U.S. Military ‘Defending Without Being Successful at Defense,’) Ta Kung Pao (Hong Kong), February 10, 2014, <http://news.takungpao.com.hk/paper/q/2014/0210/2265122.html>”

The Weakness of the U.S. Military ‘Defending Without Being Successful at Defense’

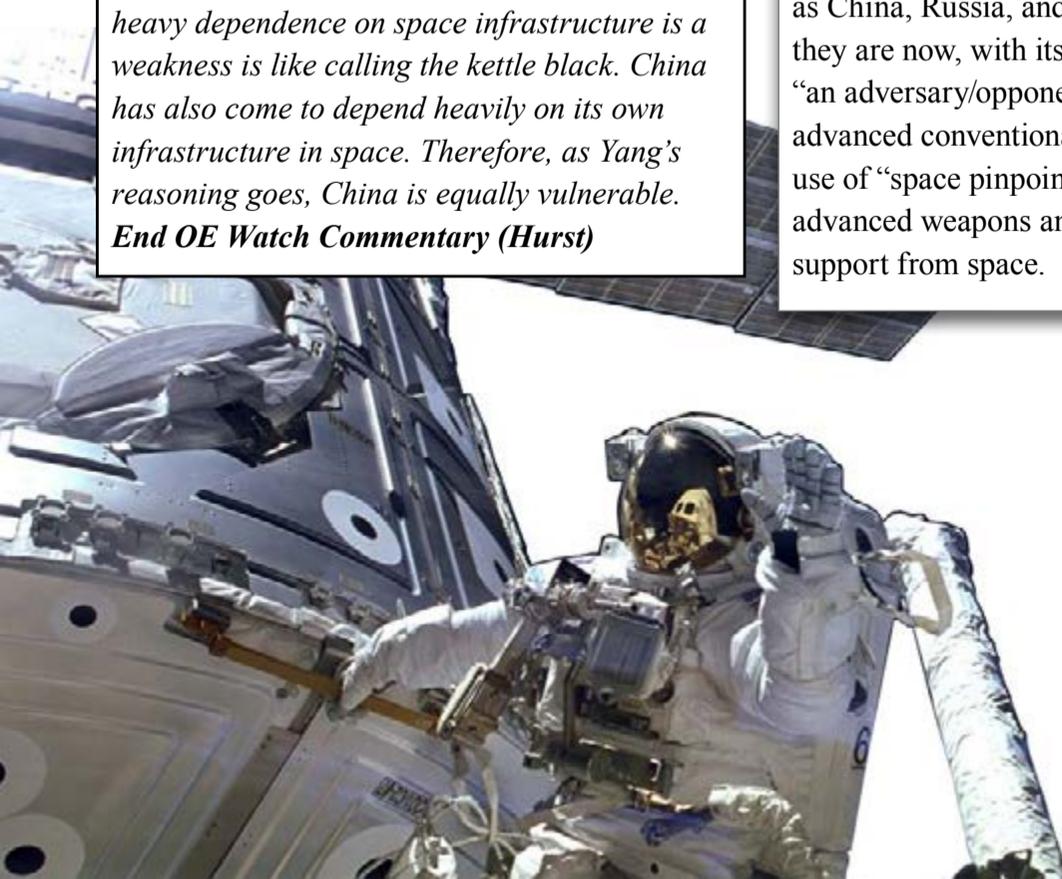
The fatal weakness in U.S. military affairs nowadays is that a military that possesses advanced weapons and equipment depends heavily on support and assistance from space infrastructure; this gives all countries with space attack capabilities the ability to conduct “pinpoint” strikes against it (the space infrastructure) to win the initiative in asymmetric warfare. This creates a bitter pill for the United State's New Revolution in Military Affairs.

...

In modern warfare, for the side that possesses satellites, quickly winning victory in war is of great support. However, in the future, space systems will be confronted with a variety of challenges, from needing to defend against enemy attack to needing to respond to quickly changing technology and support requirements. Satellites' inherent weaknesses and their lack of response capabilities make it difficult for them to respond to future challenges. It is precisely for this reason that the United States for many years has been focusing increasing attention to space building to support military affairs and is increasingly worried about any challenges to its absolute leading position in space. Because of this, the United States is constantly developing and adjusting its space strategy, assembling space laboratories and experimental space units, and constantly strengthening its space warfare units.

...

Compared to the militaries of countries that don't possess military space capabilities such as Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, and Afghanistan, the U.S. military indeed has an incomparable absolute superiority since the New Revolution in Military Affairs. However, compared to countries and regions that possess military space capabilities such as China, Russia, and Europe, the U.S. military never thought things would be the way they are now, with its fatal weakness exposed to its adversaries. Even though a side (i.e., “an adversary/opponent”) that possesses space attack capabilities doesn't have the other advanced conventional weapons the U.S. military possesses, it can still make effective use of “space pinpoint” strikes to defeat it, thereby rendering useless the numerous advanced weapons and equipment of the U.S. military that relies on assistance and support from space.



China Shares Victimhood with Africa after Yasukuni Shrine Visit

“Both China and Africa need a peaceful and stable world, and an excellent environment for economic and social development... We must by no means allow invaders and colonizers to deny and whitewash their crimes.”

OE Watch Commentary: In 2009, when China overtook the United States as Africa’s largest trading partner, Chinese scholars and government officials began researching ways to boost China’s “soft power” in Africa. China has often relied on building infrastructure, including the African Union headquarters in Addis Abbaba, Ethiopia, and trade in arms to gain influence with African countries, but soft power could be an alternative – and cheaper – way for China to achieve certain foreign policy objectives. One such objective includes pressuring the remaining several African countries that recognize Taiwan, such as Burkina Faso and Sao Tome and Principe, to recognize China. Second, an improved image of China in Africa could help safeguard Chinese laborers in Africa, who have become the targets of attacks by rebel groups, criminals and disgruntled local employees in recent years.

China’s greatest difficulty in acquiring soft power in Africa is that its Communist political system and language have less resonance and familiarity with Africans than the political systems of the United States and Europe and languages such as English or Arabic. What China does have in common with most of Africa, however, is that China was “humiliated” and “semi-colonized” in the 20th century by European countries (and later Japan). Africa, too, was colonized by European countries during the same period and can identify with Chinese history and its triumph over colonialism. The charge d’affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Kenya used this shared history in an opinion article for Kenya’s CapitalFM to emphasize how the “African people and Chinese people both experienced the sorrows brought by invasion and colonization” and that these “encounters and misfortunes have bound” both peoples together.

The trigger for this article was Japanese Prime Minister Abe’s visit to Yasukuni Shrine, which commemorates Japanese war criminals from World War II. The charge d’affaires also said that Abe’s Liberal Democratic Party dropped Japan’s “no-war pledge” in its working policy for 2014 and that Japan could be an emerging threat to international security in the future.

Thus, while bringing China, Kenya and other former colonial powers together based on shared histories, the charge d’affaires may also be preemptively ratcheting up support for China in the diplomatic arena should China and Japan clash over the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands in the South China Sea or other bilateral issues. At the same time, China may win sympathy from African countries like Kenya, which will strengthen relations with China at the expense of Western nations or China’s other competitors. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

Source: “China, Africa must not permit historical tragedies to recur,” capitalfm.co.ke, 28 January 2014.

China, Africa must not permit historical tragedies to recur

On December 26, 2013, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe brazenly paid a visit to Yasukuni Shrine, which honors 14 Class-A war criminals of World War II, provoking joint condemnations and strong opposition from the international community.

During WWII, Japan launched aggressive wars in many Asian countries, China included, with notorious crimes that are too numerous to record. During its invasion of China, Japan committed many horrible crimes such as the Nanjing Massacre, Unit 731’s chemical and biological experiments on living human beings, forceful recruitment of laborers and sex slaves and so on. In the course of the war against Japanese aggression, China suffered 35 million casualties, countless dislocated and broken families, and \$600 billion in economic losses.

If one can clearly recall the humiliating history of African countries being colonized and the Rwandan Genocide’s unprecedented levels of brutality 20 years ago, it will not be difficult to understand the great calamities and irreparable sorrows that Japan’s invasion in China had brought on the Chinese people.

Nevertheless, the virtuous, tolerant and peace-loving Chinese people have always believed that China and Japan are close neighbors, that the Japanese people are also victims of the war, and that the responsibilities of the war crimes shall only be borne by the small number of militarists.

Abe’s wilful visit to the Yasukuni Shrine shall only expose his false nature and make the world feel deeply worried about the ugly and dangerous resurgence of the Japanese militarism. As the Kiswahili saying goes, “Mchimba Kisima huingia mwenyewe”. If Abe persists in continuing his tortuous and vicious course towards militarism, he will finally pay for his own wrong doings.

The African people and Chinese people both experienced the sorrows brought by invasion and colonization. During the colonial authority’s armed repression on Kenya’s national independent movements, at least 12, 000 were killed and nearly 80, 000 were persecuted to varying degrees. Similar historical encounters and misfortunes have bound the Chinese people and the African people, Kenyans included, closely together.

Both China and Africa need a peaceful and stable world, and an excellent environment for economic and social development. Towards any act that goes against the historical trend to sabotage regional and world peace and security, we must jointly send out a clear and definite message by saying “NO” and “NEVER”. We must by no means allow invaders and colonizers to deny and whitewash their crimes. We must never permit historical tragedies to recur.

Blaming the U.S. for Xinjiang's Security Crisis?

January 2014

OE Watch Commentary: Since 2013 violent incidents between ethnic Uyghurs and Chinese police and civilians in Xinjiang Province have become increasingly common. There is wide debate about the causes of these incidents, in which more than 150 people were killed in 2013. Since mid-2012 China has blamed anti-Chinese terrorist groups led by Uyghurs in Pakistan, which send jihadist propaganda materials and militants into Xinjiang to indoctrinate locals and launch attacks. Human rights organizations, often based in the United States and Europe, however, often question China's claims of terrorist plots on China and suggest that Chinese restrictions on Uyghur freedom of speech, the practice of Islam, discriminatory economic policies, and the destruction or gentrification of Uyghur historic sites create a backlash that leads to localized violence.

The most recent issue of contention between human rights organizations and the Chinese government relates to the arrest of Ilham Tohti, a Uyghur professor at Central University for Nationalities in Beijing, in January 2014. Nearly one year earlier, in February 2013, Tohti and his daughter were also detained at Beijing Capital Airport before Tohti was about to board a plane for the United States, where he had been awarded a one-year fellowship at Indiana University. While human rights groups call for Tohti's release from prison, China alleges that support for Tohti is equal to supporting terrorism and unjust meddling in China's internal affairs. An article from the military section of China's people.com, for example, criticized the U.S. State Department for acting like an "international judge" and condoning terrorist behavior.

While the U.S. and China both have an interest in preventing terrorism in Central and South Asia, their domestic values and priorities can be starkly different. The case of Tohti exemplifies this. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



Ilham Tohti, (black suit, white shirt), a Tibetan activist and anti-government dissident and artist, Ai Weiwei, took a "selfie" together in May 2013. The causes that they support receive sympathy in the U.S. and Europe, but China claims their activities are "against the public interest," and associates Tohti's collaboration with human rights organizations with "support for terrorism." Source: <http://beigewind.wordpress.com/2013/11/21/the-legacy-of-ai-qings-xinjiang-poetics/>

Source: "新疆人民痛恨所谓民族精英 美却赞暴徒是斗(Xinjiang's People Hate the So-Called Democracy Elites, but the American Mob is Fighting)" military.people.com.cn, 27 January 2014.

Xinjiang's People Hate the So-Called Democracy Elites, but the American Mob is Fighting

Xinjiang's Public Security Department released news that Central University for Nationalities teacher Ilham Tohti and "East Turkistan" forces colluded to use the Internet to advocate "Xinjiang independence" and use his platform to carry out sedition to "overthrow the government."

The U.S. State Department and a number of media powers also paid great attention to the arrest... For a long time, the United States has been the "international judge" and keen to make irresponsible remarks on the internal affairs of other countries, while often ignoring the actual situation in its own country and selling its so-called "universal values." It often overlooks or condones objective facts of terrorist and extremist nationalist behavior. In its double standards, it protects some terrorist or extremist nationalist organizations and individuals often under the guise of safeguarding democracy and freedom and the rule of law.

In fact, in today's Xinjiang, the vast majority of people are experiencing a life that continues to improve, and they enjoy the freedom of information, but also cherish the great policy of the party and state apparatus. They are very disgusted at democracy and human rights, propaganda, agitation, ethnic separatist thinking, which are really the driving force behind the violence in Xinjiang and terrorist activities.

However, the U.S. does not seem happy to see the reality of this situation. From a series of violent terrorist incidents, the U.S. government and some media mobs expressed a degree of "understanding and sympathy" for those involved in violent incidents that killed innocent victims. In short, in Xinjiang, it seems that "the more chaotic the better" because they can discredit China.

In China, people such as Ilham [Tohti] who are engaged in illegal propaganda, inciting violent and secessionist ideology and terrorist activities must be subject to legal restrictions and sanctions. This is China's internal affair and does not require the United States meddling.

Xi Jinping to Head New Security Commission



From left to right: Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang and Zhang Dejiang. Source: news.xinhuanet.com

OE Watch Commentary: *It has not taken Chinese President Xi Jinping long to attain central control over much of China's foreign policy, military, and domestic agenda. He has assumed the following titles since October 2012: General Secretary of the Communist Party of China; Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC); President of China; head of a new National Security Commission (NSC); and head of a Central Leading Group for Comprehensive Reform (CLGCR).*

It is reported that, as the head of the NSC, Xi's work will relate to the planning and coordinating of national security issues. The NSC, the focus of this report, developed due to the arrival of nontraditional security threats to China (culture, cyber issues, separatist/terrorist issues in western China, ideological struggles, etc.). The NSC will be responsible for decision-making and deliberation of national security issues that ensure domestic stability. Xi will report the commission's work to the Politburo and the Politburo Standing Committee (PSC).

Other Chinese leaders had been unable to establish such a commission, a demonstration of his stranglehold on power. Xi is expected to continue to safeguard China's sovereignty and political security through the NSC, as well as other agencies. He continues to stress that the people's active participation is needed to ensure that a "China Dream" of advancement will be possible.

Two other members of the PSC, Premier Li Keqiang and legislator Zhang Dejiang, are deputy chiefs. The commission is within the Party system and, to date, no parallel commission has been established under the State as has been established for the CMC. Thus, no legislative process for approval was required. As head of the

*CLGCR, Xi named three members of the PSC as appointees. The latter are thought to be better able to help control powerful interest groups in the government and thus further advance Xi's agenda. Thirty years of growth has resulted in the development of many vested interest groups in China. The leading group for reform has six categories: economics and ecology, culture, democracy and law, social systems, party building, and party discipline. Some believe the commission and leading group for reform will become more important than ministries, which just implement policies that these two groups would make. **End FMSO Commentary. (Thomas)***

Source: Liu Yunlong, "Xi Jinping to Head New Security Commission," Global Times Online (in English), 26 January 2014.

President Xi Jinping will head the new central national security commission, the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee decided on Friday. Premier Li Keqiang and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress Zhang Dejiang were appointed as deputy heads to the commission, according to a decision adopted at a political bureau meeting. The commission, which will answer to the political bureau and its standing committee, will be the CPC Central Committee agency responsible for decision-making, deliberation and coordination on national security work, said a document issued after the meeting. It will be in charge of "making overall plans and coordinating major issues and major work concerning national security." Zhang Xixian, a professor with the Party School of the CPC Central Committee, told the Global Times that the functions of the commission will cover both foreign policy-making and maintaining domestic stability, which will unify external and internal elements to maintain the security of the country. Before establishing the commission, the tasks of protecting State security were scattered throughout different departments, and the new commission will act as a coordinator and decider that integrates these scattered powers, said Fu Siming, another professor with the Party School. "Different departments will join in the security commission system," said Fu, adding that State security issues would also be diverse, ranging from protecting the country's sovereignty to anti-terrorism and cyber security. According to Fu, the commission may also serve as a directing body to cope with major emergencies in the country. The establishment of a national security commission was a decision made at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee in November 2013, and President Xi publicly gave an explanation of the commission's main responsibilities after the session. "Establishing a national security commission to strengthen the unified leadership of State security work is an urgent need," Xi said in the explanation.



OE Watch Commentary: *A favorite tactic of any tyrant is to blame others for problems and to divide any opposition. The North Korean regime has proved adept at denouncing its primary enemy (the US), claiming that Washington is the source of all Pyongyang's problems. Conjuring up old hatreds, the North Korean leadership also highlights the US alliance with Japan, suggesting that these two countries have been in concert in subjugating Korea. In this regard, they have worked tirelessly to drive a wedge between the US and South Korea, appealing to the common ethnicity of the Korean people. The author of the brief excerpt tries to exploit these fears and animosity, overlooking the disastrous role which the North Korean leadership has played in dividing the Korean peninsula.*

Despite their peace-loving rhetoric, leaders in Pyongyang have used the argument for better relations between the two Koreas before every act of aggression against the South, e.g., the invasion of the North Korean People's Army in 1950, the Blue House Raid in 1968, and the Cheonan sinking in 2010. By emphasizing peace and Korean sovereignty, the North Korean regime has tried not only to lull its neighbors into complacency, but also to increase anti-US feelings among the South Koreans.

*Almost half of the South Korean people have supported the "Sunshine Policy" of the last two administrations in Seoul, designed to improve North Korean attitudes towards the South by encouraging interaction and economic assistance (e.g., the Kaesung industrial complex and the Kumkangsan tour). The Pyongyang leadership understands the ethnic and historic appeal of a united Korea, and uses this strategy to solicit more aid from the South. Most importantly, the Pyongyang leadership believes that better relations between the North and South will allow North Korea more time to achieve its primary strategic objective, developing delivery methods for nuclear weapons. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kim)***

Source: Pak Ch'o'l-chun, "A Bad-Natured Rash Act Throwing Ashes on a Banquet Table"; Rodong Sinmun Online, 8 February 2014. <http://www.rodong.rep.kp/ko/>

DPRK Party Daily Denounces US

At a time of growing expectations at home and abroad toward an improvement in North-South relations following our proactive measure, there is a force that is expressing disapproval and making cynical remarks about this. It is none other than the United States.

Despite the fact that we disclosed our principled stance regarding an improvement in North-South relations through the National Defense Commission's important proposal and open letter and are taking practical actions, the United States says it is concerned with "only the North Korean nuclear issue," saying this and that about how it will continue to demand "a promise of denuclearization" and "the fulfillment of international obligations"...

...In other words, the United States is plotting to thwart a rare opportunity to improve North-South relations with an anti-Republic nuclear racket.

The United States' maneuver is not only an outright interference into the issue of North-South relations, which is an issue of our nation, but also a bad-natured, anti-unification rash act that incites South Korean authorities to respond to their fellow countrymen's important proposal and open letter by confronting it with the nuclear issue.

The United States, as the culprit that divided Korea, should feel due responsibility for the suffering of our nation and refrain from acts that create North-South confrontation and the risk of war. But the United States through generations has been displeased with reconciliation and unity between the North and South and has obstructed in every direction the improvement of North-South relations. In particular, every time there has been progress in North-South talks and cooperation through our active efforts, the United States' anti-unification maneuvers have reached their peak.

That the United States is now actively publicizing again the nuclear issue and tarnishing the atmosphere of improvement in North-South relations is an extension of this. The Obama Administration in its speech publicizes that it "supports" the improvement of North-South relations. But this is no more than simply a deceptive act to veil their true intention and hide their identity as the anti-unification ringleader...

...Recently, Japanese Prime Minister Abe confessed himself the existence of a secret US-Japan treaty that allows the US military to bring in nuclear weapons to Japan without prior discussion with Japanese authorities, creating a stir. Through this, one can clearly know the aggressive identity of the United States, which has made South Korea and Japan nuclear outposts, using them as stepping stones to provoke a nuclear war of northward aggression, and, going further, has gone mad in an aim to militarily dominate Asia.

Even a few days ago, the United States deployed formations of "B-52" nuclear strategic bombers into the skies above Korea's West Sea, carrying out a nuclear strike drill aimed at us, at a time when negotiations were being held between the North and South in P'anmunjo'm on the reunions of separated families. The fact that these people are brazenly firing back with the nuclear issue in response to our efforts to improve North-South relations and throwing ashes on a banquet table is arousing the surging rage of all the people.



“The 1995 agreement was basically exchanging information. The new air defense agreement of Kazakhstan and Russia – defeating enemy targets in the air. Additionally, Russia will supply Kazakhstan with modern air defense resources...”

OE Watch Commentary: Kazakhstan's involvement with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) makes it easy to forget that the country has been a longstanding member of the Commonwealth of Independent States' collective air defense system. The accompanying article includes an interview with the commander of Kazakhstan's air defense forces and reveals some information on the country's defense industry and its partnership with Russia.

There has been speculation in the past year that a 2010 agreement between Kazakhstan and Russia for deliveries of S-300 surface-to-air missile systems from the latter to the former never took place and that this damaged their partnership. However, it appears from the interview that it could still take place. In any case, the two governments reached an additional agreement on joint air defense, though the details were not included in the interview. It does not appear that the air defense partnership between Russia and Kazakhstan has suffered.

The author implies that the cost of being a member of the CIS air defense system and conducting annual joint exercises is not worthwhile. While threats to Kazakhstan's airspace may not be the biggest concern for the country's Defense Ministry, a comparison of the cost of membership in the CIS air defense system (and an unknown amount for the joint exercises) at 573 million Tenge (\$3.1 million) to the total defense budget at 333 billion Tenge (\$1.8 billion) is fairly small. The defense budget is also set to increase in 2014 by around 30 billion Tenge (\$162 million). The air defense commander mentions one other thing about the country's air defense that is worth noting: the company “Granit” is working on modernizing weapons and equipment. It is not known what modernization efforts are taking place, but the Ministry of Defense has mentioned in the past that technical expertise is lacking among defense companies in Kazakhstan. If “Granit” is, in fact, involved in modernizing some of the country's weapons and equipment, it could be a sign that technical expertise has made some strides. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

Source: Severny, Vladimir. “В чьём сейфе ключи от неба? (In whose safe are the keys to the sky?),” Megapolis, 20 January 2014.
http://www.megapolis.kz/art/V_chyom_seyfe_klyuchi_ot_neba

In whose safe are the keys to the sky?

Any country is defenseless without an effective air defense system... The commander of the air defense forces of Kazakhstan Colonel Nurzhan Mukanov answered questions, but did not allow me outside his office...the Colonel opened with “There are strict security measures here...”

(Author) “The agreement on the establishment of a joint air defense system of the CIS took place on February 10, 1995...What changed with the adoption of the recent agreement? How is it beneficial to Kazakhstan?”

(Col. Mukanov) “The 1995 agreement was basically exchanging information. The new air defense agreement of Kazakhstan and Russia – defeating enemy targets in the air. Additionally, Russia will supply Kazakhstan with modern air defense resources...”

(Author) “Certainly Moscow is prepared to provide Astana with the ultramodern S-400 “Triumph” or maybe the S-500?”

(Col. Mukanov) “No. We only expect, as a minimum, the S-300...”
 ...According to the Ministry of Defense of Kazakhstan, as a member of the CIS air defense system, the country will spend 573 million Tenge in 2014...The annual joint air defense exercises also require considerable cost...This cost, according to the presidents of Russia and Kazakhstan, is justified. It is understood with the air defense agreement, Russia “pulls” Kazakhstan under its anti-aircraft cover...Who will be the head of the joint air defense command post in Almaty? A Russian or Kazakh representative?”

(Author) “Does the (new) agreement indicate that fighter pilots in Russia and Kazakhstan can cross the border without a political decision?”

(Col. Mukanov) “There is an operational plan for responding in peacetime and war within the framework of the agreement...We have excellent cooperation with LLC “Granit”. The defense industry enterprises are engaged in repair and modernization of weapons and equipment...”

Who Provides Assistance for Tajikistan's Border Guards?

31 January 2014

“The explosion, which showed that Russia’s Sochi Winter Olympics is an ‘excessive investment,’ is actually aimed to support the focal point of the terrorist forces, which is to gain media attention.”

OE Watch Commentary: *There have been numerous news articles in the past year about how stability in Afghanistan will affect the countries of Central Asia. As the accompanying articles show, this continues to be discussed, particularly in relation to Tajikistan. The articles focus on a few of the organizations and programs that have been working with the Tajik Border Guards and highlight some of the accomplishments and projects that have been implemented. While the assistance has had some kind of impact on the continuing development of the Tajik Border Guards, there is no mention in the articles about coordination among any of the organizations or programs. Coordination among these organizations might be the most overlooked, but no less important, aspect of strengthening border security in Tajikistan.*

Source: “ОБСЕ помогло таджикским пограничникам обучиться патрулированию в зимних условиях (The OSCE assisted the Tajik Border Guards learn how to patrol in winter conditions),” Asia-Plus, 31 January 2014. <http://news.tj/ru/news/obse-pomoglo-tadzhikskim-pogranichnikam-obuchitsya-patruirovaniyu-v-zimnikh-usloviyakh>

Today in Hissar the Tajik Border Guards completed a two week OSCE course of patrolling in winter conditions...As reported by the OSCE office, fifteen officers of border detachments on the Tajik-Afghan border attended the training course. The training took place in the mountains of Khoja-Obigram, about 50 kilometers north of Dushanbe at an altitude of more than 2000 meters above sea level...They were trained in the use of topographic maps, avalanche sensors, and other equipment used to patrol in winter conditions...

Source: “Страны СНГ согласуют решение об оказании помощи Таджикистану для укрепления границы с Афганистаном (The countries of the CIS agree on a solution of providing assistance to Tajikistan for strengthening the border with Afghanistan),” Asia-Plus, 7 February 2014. <http://news.tj/ru/news/strany-sng-soglasuyut-reshenie-ob-okazanii-pomoshchi-tadzhikistanu-dlya-ukrepleniya-granitsy-s->

An additional meeting for a draft proposal for providing assistance to Tajikistan to strengthen border security on the Tajik-Afghan border will be held by members of the CIS on February 13 in Minsk...“This situation is influenced by the armed opposition in Afghanistan, the revitalization of Islamic radicals, and the illegal activities of criminal groups trafficking drugs on the territory of the CIS,” reported the (CIS) Executive Committee. The draft proposal was already discussed last November in Minsk. Representatives of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, the Council of Commanders of Border Guards, and the CIS Executive Committee attended the meeting...

Source: “В помощь пограничникам (Helping the border guards),” Asia-Plus, 28 December 2013. <http://news.tj/ru/newspaper/article/v-pomoshch-pogranichnikam>

This year the Border Management Program in Central Asia (BOMCA), funded by the European Union and implemented the UN Development Program, celebrates its tenth year of existence...BOMCA provides technical assistance to the Tajik Border Guards, customs officials, the Agency for Drug Control (AKN) and other agencies...

...from 2004 to 2013 the program provided technical assistance, built and equipped the border guard academy of the GKNB of Tajikistan in Dushanbe, provided new equipment to three international checkpoint facilities on the Tajik-Afghan and Tajik-Uzbek borders, built a canine training center for the AKN in Dushanbe, and built a new border post “Dashti Yazgulom.”...Along with BOMCA the counter narcotic program CADAP has been active in Tajikistan...

(continued)

“A Tajik Border Guard patrols along the Tajik-Kyrgyz border”

Source: <http://centralasiaonline.com/ru/articles/caii/features/main/2011/01/29/feature-01>

Continued: Who Provides Assistance for Tajikistan's Border Guards?

*There has, however, been some coordination, such as the Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA) working with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) or representatives from the Russian government and security services attending conferences sponsored by the Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP). Outside of CADAP, BOMCA has coordinated some of its activities with Russian advisors working with the Tajik Border Guards, though the two sides did not initially have a good relationship. One other issue that is not brought up in the articles is how the assistance could help with a significant problem for Tajikistan's border security - the undemarcated border areas. Outside of providing training and equipment, the only organization mentioned in the articles that is actively involved in coordinating policy among its members is the Council of Commanders of Border Troops. Ultimately, the recent incident between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (see: February 2014 OE Watch, "Debriefing the Latest Border Incident") illustrates how undemarcated borders pose as much of a threat as drug trafficking or incursions by extremist groups. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)***

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>



“The main task for each educational institution is to ensure a level of training of graduates of DOSAAF schools that will enable them, on arriving in the troop units, to perform their duties without additional training.”

- Sergey Mayev, chief of the DOSAAF

OE Watch Commentary: *The Volunteer Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Fleet (DOSAAF) is a government-sponsored sports and outdoor enthusiast organization that promotes militarily useful skills, such as hiking, camping, shooting, skiing, parachuting, driving, and athletics, for young people. The predecessors to the organization were invaluable in the Great Patriotic War (Second World War) by providing skilled servicemen to the Armed Forces. DOSAAF, in one form or another, still exists in many states of the former Soviet Union. It is particularly valuable for the conscription-based manning system that the Russian Federation utilizes to man its rank and file, but would be an inefficient way of imparting skills to a fully professional (non-conscript) army. Conscripts who have participated in DOSAAF activities gain skills that would be difficult to impart to troops who are only drafted for one year.*

*The DOSAAF system is so well ingrained into the Russian military system that a DOSAAF representative sits on each draft board in order to advise the state on the best way to utilize each conscript. For example, a conscript that has participated in a DOSAAF parachuting club in youth would be more likely to be assigned to an airborne unit. The accompanying article discusses the Russian Federation's efforts to expand the program. Russia's expansion of DOSAAF implies that mass mobilization and conscription will remain cornerstones of Russian state security. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Source: Viktor Khudoleyev, “Much Work Lies Ahead, 87 Years of DOSAAF,” Krasnaya Zvezda, 23 January 2014, <www.redstar.ru>, accessed 12 February 2014.

Much Work Lies Ahead, 87 Years of DOSAAF

Sergey Mayev, chief of the DOSAAF Rossii [Russian Voluntary Society for the Promotion of the Army, Aviation, and Navy], tells Krasnaya Zvezda about the results of the activities of the country's Defense Society over the past few years, about the organization today, and about its tasks for the future...

Today the main aim of the DOSAAF Rossii is the creation of a new federal system for preparing young people for service in the Army based on the Defense Society.

The main task for each educational institution is to ensure a level of training of graduates of DOSAAF schools that will enable them, on arriving in the troop units, to perform their duties without additional training. This means the ability to respond to an alert, to take equipment to areas of concentration, and to perform a 24-hour march. In addition, in connection with the adoption of the decision to transfer the Russian Federation Armed Forces to manning on a contract basis, we set ourselves the task of organizing the training of contract service members.

It is our firm conviction that the process of preparing young people for service in the Army must begin not just three or four months before the draft but on the school bench, laying the foundations of initial military training and providing young people with the opportunity simultaneously to acquire a civilian profession. The DOSAAF Rossii has already taken the first steps in this direction. Under an agreement concluded between the Defense Society and the Ministry of Education and Science we have begun our work in educational institutions. In this connection, in the context of teaching driving specialties, work on military-patriotic and sporting education has been organized with young people in the eighth to 11th grades...

We plan to have local branches in every municipal formation by 1 January 2015 and to extend their powers as the main players carrying out federal and regional programs for preparing young people for service in the Russian Federation Armed Forces and military-patriotic education. By 2015 it is planned to bring together more than 900,000 members of the DOSAAF Rossii in 18,000 primary branches.

We believe that the federal system that is being created on the basis of the Defense Society should ensure the performance of tasks both in preparing a draftee in military specialties and in preparing citizens for service under contract, as well as preparing the mobilizational reserve through the teaching of mass technical professions, including for enterprises in the military industrial complex. Every year under the leadership of more than 6,000 teachers and masters of industrial training some 600,000 people acquire civilian professions within DOSAAF and more than 1.5 million learn applied military and technical forms of sport...

...A task of considerable importance that the Defense Society is prepared to take on is the training of mobilizational reserves. The aim of this training is to provide the mobilizational reserves with specialists for the deployment of troop units. To this end we propose that every troop formation be allocated a regional DOSAAF center where training musters will be held for the one-time training of a service member in a specific specialty.



DOSAAF Flag
Source: <http://rosto-dosaaf.lipetsk.ru/>

OE Watch Commentary: Historically, Russian Aviation was primarily focused on support of the Ground Forces. The Ground Force commander directly controlled Air Force aviation units that were part of his unit. The post-World War II years shifted the primary role of aviation from Ground Forces support to strategic bombing. This doctrinal shift required aviation to be centrally managed, no longer allowing for the Ground Forces commander to have organic aviation assets at his beck and call. This change in doctrine put the Ground Forces commander in a similar position as his American and NATO colleagues: he is now required to request his aviation support.

The authors of the accompanying article lament the loss of operational control of aviation assets and argue that control of Army Aviation should be handed back to the Ground Forces commander in order to more efficiently utilize air assets. They believe this would more fully develop the combined arms concept. Presumably, the pilots, planes, and aviation units would still remain in the Russian Air Force, but would be operationally attached to the Ground Forces brigades that they support.

A similar assault on Air Force assets is being conducted by the Ground Forces' sister service, the Russian Airborne (VDV). Colonel General Shamanov, the charismatic and well connected leader of the VDV, has made direct control of the VDV's supporting Air Force transport aviation (VTA) regiments a top priority.

Although there has been little or no public comment from the Russian Air Force about such proposals, they would likely not be thrilled about losing operational control over a majority of their assets. These proposals would effectively reduce the Russian Air Force to a branch proponent with control of a few operational assets. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

“Many years of research into combat employment of, and cooperation between, army aviation and ground units have yielded evidence that the greatest synergistic effect of their joint operation is achieved where the army aviation units are subordinated to the combined arms commander to accomplish combat tasks facing a ground task force in a period of direct threat of aggression and during combat operations”

Source: Col. (ret.) Nikolai Malyshev, Lt. Col. Ivan Korolyov, Lt. Col. Vyacheslav Silyuntsev, “Army Aviation Today,” Military Thought, Volume 4, 2013.

Army Aviation Today

The Russian Armed Forces stationed today in the continental theaters of operations are made up of ground task forces and Air Force units capable of engaging in military operations in a very fluid operational or tactical situation. These two branches of military service are profoundly different from one another in the structure of their forces, the weapons they are equipped with, and conditions under which they are going to fulfill their tasks. Their teamwork and cooperation have always been at the top of priorities. Still, these two functions have been all but overlooked within the framework of the ongoing reforms in the Armed Forces. What is more, withdrawal of army aviation from ground task forces in the past decade, even though it fulfills a special role in combined arms operations, has reduced the scale and efficiency of the task forces' capability to hit an enemy with their firepower and slowed down their troops' mobility in combat actions...

The hands-on experience of armed conflicts in the past few decades shows, though that taking orders from the headquarters of the Air Force and Land Forces slows down its feedback and has a negative impact on the combat readiness and combat capability of army aviation units on the battlefield and on development prospects for its weapons and equipment...

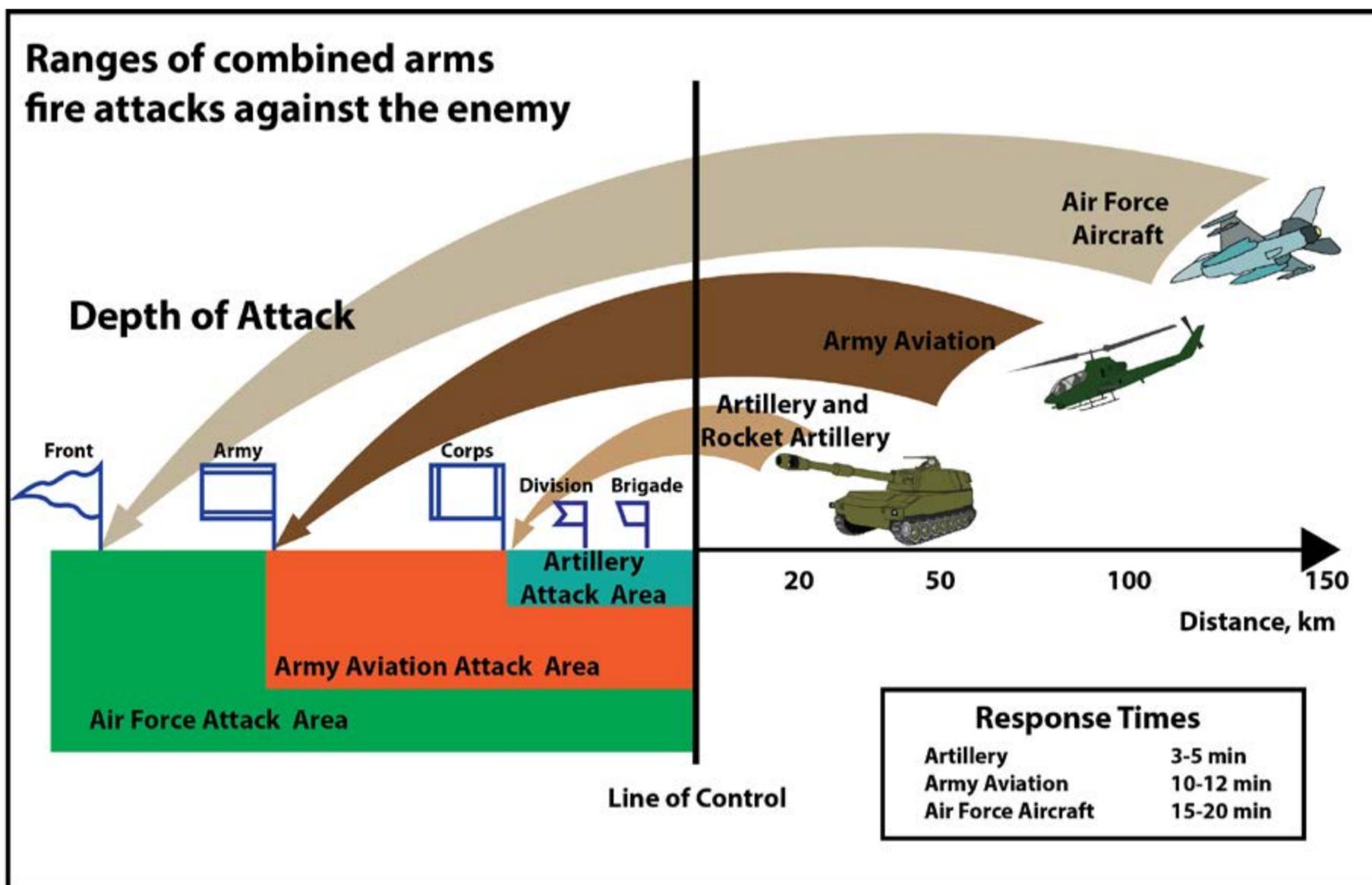
Continued: Russian Ground Forces Want Control of Army Aviation

To these authors' mind, the current situation far from contributes to the operational-tactical cohesion of ground troops and army aviation. It undercuts their synergistic combat potential and efficiency of joint task forces in operations in general. The synergistic potential, as we understand it, is the fullest possible exploitation of the combat power of weapons the task forces are equipped with to hit enemy targets simultaneously or successively to the full depth of enemy lines (order of battle) under joint plans of operations (combat actions)...

Many years of research into combat employment of, and cooperation between, army aviation and ground units have yielded evidence that the greatest synergistic effect of their joint operation is achieved where the army aviation units are subordinated to the combined arms commander to accomplish combat tasks facing a ground task force (or another formation) in a period of direct threat of aggression and during combat operations...

A significant point to make here is that where army aviation takes orders directly from the ground task force commander, the response time (beginning with the time when the troops in the field make a request for support with fire and ending with a strike delivered at the designated target) can be reduced from the statistical average. With army aviation units equipped with modern helicopter gun-ships directly under him, a ground task force commander will have one of the most powerful components of the combined fire attack systems within easy reach.

Accordingly, the authors believe that reinstatement of the army aviation command within the Land Forces' High Command is a top priority for army aviation resurgence...



Putin's Proposal for the EU to Join the Eurasian Economic Union

OE Watch Commentary: On 28 January European Union (EU) leaders and Russian President Vladimir Putin held a summit in Brussels. While the ongoing political crisis in Ukraine and Russia's \$15 billion loan to the Ukrainian government dominated the summit's discussions and Western press reports about them, some Russian sources reported on Putin's proposal, upon the conclusion of the summit, for the EU to join the free trade zone with the Eurasian Customs Union (a precursor to what Putin plans to develop into a Eurasian Union). The accompanying excerpts provide examples of such reports in the Russian-language press.

One Russian expert quoted in the first excerpt, from Vestnik Kavkaza (Caucasus Herald), immediately brings the discussion back to Ukraine and the Eastern Partnership, however, when commenting on Putin's proposal. If his proposal is accepted, he says, there would be no need for Ukraine and other Eastern Partnership countries to sign free trade agreements with the EU.

His comment is quite revealing. It shows how much the Kremlin wants Eastern Partnership countries, particularly Ukraine, to join Russia's sphere of influence, rather than that of Europe, and how far Putin is willing to go. He is framing Russia-EU relations in the context of how to convince Eastern Europe to choose Russia over Europe.

Massive protests in Ukraine broke out precisely because Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich chose at the last minute not to sign an association agreement with Europe in November 2013. Prior to this Putin pressured Yanukovich and other Eastern European countries not to sign or initial association agreements with Europe.

Notably, the second excerpt, from Aktau-Business.com, focused on Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbaev's public support of Putin's idea. This is not surprising, as Kazakhstan itself is a member of Russia's Customs Union, along with Belarus. Nazarbaev also hints that in time the Customs Union could be more than a solely economic-focused organization.



Political satire cartoon.

Source: <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/eu-agreement-turns-ukraine-into-a-concubine/489485.html>

Source: “Назарбаев поддержал идею Путина о зоне свободной торговли с Евросоюзом (Nazarbaev Supported Putin's Idea of Free Trade Zone with European Union),” Aktau-Business.com, 5 February 2014. <http://www.aktau-business.com/2014/02/05/o-zone-svobodnoy-torgovli-s-evrosoyuzom.html>

...”We hear and see different expert interpretations and opinions on the Eurasian Economic Union. I think it is necessary to study it more deeply and understand that this is not a political organization. But is it possible? Anything is possible. In the future anything is possible, but today it is a purely economic cooperation, which was necessitated by the needs of our countries “, - Nursultan Nazarbayev said on Wednesday at a traditional meeting with accredited in Astana heads of foreign diplomatic missions, the news agency Novosti-Kazakhstan reported...

Nazarbayev noted that he supports the proposal of the Russian president of the future formation of a free trade zone between the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union...

Continued: Putin's Proposal for the EU to Join the Eurasian Economic Union

*This context is crucial to analyzing comments in the third excerpt, also from Aktau-Business.com, by Ingo Mannteufel, Director of the Eastern Europe Department and the Chief Editor of the Russian edition of Deutsche Welle, who says that Europe should take Russia's offer. This context is crucial to understand exactly what accepting Putin's offer entails. Mannteufel correctly observes that Ukraine's economic situation is dire. Putin's solution, however, which entails the offer to the E.U., is ultimately designed to take freedom from Ukraine, and other Eastern Partnership countries, to make a choice for themselves between Russia and the E.U. It is designed to pull these countries further into Russia's orbit—economically and politically—through the Customs Union. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***

Source: “Deutsche Welle: ЕС должен принять предложение Путина о зоне свободной торговли от Лиссабона до Владивостока (EC should take Putin's offer of a free trade zone stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok),” Regnum.ru, 4 February 2014. <http://www.aktau-business.com/2014/02/05/o-zone-svobodnoy-torgovli-s-evrosoyuzom.html>

Instead of just planning financial assistance for Ukraine and the future of the country after the departure of Yanukovich, the EU should offer something to Russia also, for example, the free trade zone, believes the director of Eastern Europe department and the chief editor of the Russian edition of Deutsche Welle Ingo Mannteufel.

In his view, in political and economic terms Ukraine is bankrupt. “President Yanukovich... ruined the country. Without financial and political support for Russia, he may have to give up his positions. Therefore it is right that the E.U. and the U.S. are planning financial assistance to Ukraine after the end of the Yanukovich era. However, this financial assistance for Ukraine should be part of a larger strategy, encompassing Russia. Otherwise, these plans will exacerbate political chaos in Kiev and push the actors on the Ukrainian political scene into a civil war,” he underscored...

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>

How Stable Are the South Caucasus? New Hostilities over Nagorno Karabakh?

OE Watch Commentary: *With the backdrop of the ongoing Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, a resort city north of Russia's border with Georgia and along the Black Sea near the Caucasus, the Russian-language press discussed the possibility of a war breaking out in this neighborhood between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh.*

In the early 1990s, as the Soviet Union crumbled, Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenians fought a war over the mountainous Nagorno-Karabakh (literally, "mountainous black garden") enclave inside Azerbaijan. The roots of the conflict are deep and go back to Stalin's territorial divisions in the 1920s.

The war, in which around 30,000 people died, ended with an uneasy truce in 1994, but without a formal peace treaty. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has been working since 1992 to find a solution to the conflict through the so-called Minsk Group, currently co-chaired by France, Russia, and the United States. The group has not reached a solution thus far. Some experts describe the situation as a frozen conflict, while others note that much is going on underneath the surface, and the situation is important to monitor.

Russia's role remains important. Experts disagree on Russia's intentions and interests—some believe Russia is not interested in resolving the conflict and has effectively hijacked the Minsk Group.

The first excerpt is from Kavkazskiy Uzel (Caucasian Knot), written by Memorial, a prominent human rights group that covered, among other things, human rights abuses in the North Caucasus. Kavkazskiy Uzel publishes viewpoints on current events in the Caucasus. In this excerpt the publication quotes political scientist Vahram Atanesyan, who believes Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed on a truce during the Sochi Olympics and that "major powers" (meaning Russia) are trying to ensure that hostilities do not break out by increasing

The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh



Source: http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/DetailansichtPubDB_EN?rec_id=2478

Source: "Атанесян: Армения и Азербайджан в карабахском вопросе договорились о перемирии на время Олимпиады в Сочи" (Atanesian: Armenia and Azerbaijan have agreed on a truce in Karabakh conflict during the Olympic Games in Sochi)," Kavkazskiy Uzel" (Caucasian Knot), 9 February 2014. <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/237906/>

...However, according to [political scientist] Vahram Atanesyan, it is necessary to be realistic and remember that the Olympic Games will end.

"The Olympic Games start, end, and life goes on – there were always wars, and there always will be, and as for our region – what we now have is an ongoing veiled war. But for the foreseeable future I do not see large-scale hostilities between the forces of Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. Though what will happen in reality, no one can predict," Atanesian told the Caucasian Knot correspondent...

According to the analyst, "the outlook on the situation should not be one-sided." "It is possible that global players are tired of the games of small states and constant changes of the situation in the South Caucasus and, following the canons of good old and not quite forgotten realpolitik, trying to protect their interests in the region using more effective methods - with larger and more active presence," believes Karabekyan.

(continued)

Continued: How Stable Are the South Caucasus? New Hostilities over Nagorno Karabakh?

their presence in the region. While he does not think hostilities are likely to break out soon, he adds that it is important to remember that the Olympics will end.

The second excerpt is from Erkramas, a newspaper for Armenians in Russia. Published since 1996, Erkramas won several prizes for journalism in Russia. It reprinted an abbreviated version of an article by analyst Aleksandr Khramchikhin, who believes a new war over Nagorno Karabakh is practically guaranteed. He believes Russia is ensuring that Azerbaijan gains the necessary offensive and defensive weapons to start hostilities.

While Russia, indeed, began to sell weapons to Azerbaijan in late January, it also pulled Armenia even closer into its sphere of influence by pressuring it to join the Russian-led Customs Union. Armenia is Russia's closest ally in the South Caucasus, and an agreement was reached for Russia to extend its military presence in Armenia until 2044.

*The South Caucasus remains a strategically important region. It is important to monitor the development of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, especially after the Olympics. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***

Source: Aleksandr Khramchikhin, "Новая война за Нагорный Карабах практически гарантирована (New War Over Nagorno Karabakh Practically Guaranteed)," Erkramas, 18 January 2014. <http://www.yErkramas.org/2014/01/18/novaya-vojna-za-nagornyj-karabax-praktichieski-garantirovana/>

A new war over Nagorno-Karabakh is almost guaranteed, since neither Yerevan nor Baku will give up this territory and a compromise is not possible.....

War over Nagorno-Karabakh is not renewed only because Azerbaijan does not have the sufficient military capacity to achieve a decisive victory over the well-entrenched, well-trained and highly motivated Armenian forces. But thanks to significant oil revenues, Baku is rapidly increasing this potential, both through imports and domestic production. At the moment, in the post Soviets space, Azerbaijan takes a second place after Russia in terms of updating its armed forces....

And it is precisely Russia that in recent years has been making a decisive contribution to strengthening Azerbaijan's military potential. Baku purchases offensive weapons from Russia in very significant quantities... supplemented by very useful defensive ones...

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



Russian-Egyptian Military Cooperation Highlights Russia's Influence in the Middle East

OE Watch Commentary: *Russian-Egyptian military cooperation was in the Russian press in February. The accompanying excerpt from Newsru.com reports that the two countries signed over \$3 billion worth of arms contracts—arms that the U.S. had refused to sell Egypt in October 2013 following the ouster of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood-led government and its president, Mohammad Morsi. December Russian press reports, written before the contract was officially signed, had quoted a lower figure of \$2 billion, yet experts even described this lower amount as the largest military agreement for Russia and Egypt since the 1970s. More importantly, this is the largest Russian arms deal in decades.*

This growing bilateral military cooperation highlights Russia's overall growing influence in the Middle East/ North Africa as the U.S. interest in this region declines. The accompanying excerpts from Russia's Voice of America quote Russian experts who confirm this view. They point to a number of factors, including:

- Arab nations are seeking to balance relations with a number of countries
- Russia has lost many relationships in the Middle East over the last several decades, and the waning U.S. interest in the region provides Russia with an opportunity to restore some of the old ties by filling a vacuum wherever the U.S. withdraws
- Russia is not guided by ideology or an overarching regional strategy (unlike the U.S.), the basis of which might lay restrictions on or even hamper such cooperation.

As Russia and Egypt strengthen bilateral ties, the larger context of Russia's interests in the Middle East and Russia's zero-sum approach to pursuing them are also important. Russia is indeed not the Soviet Union. Yet the zero-sum strategy of filling in power vacuums whenever the U.S. withdraws is one Soviet element that remains in place. Russia's influence currently keeps growing, and certainly should not be underestimated. End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)

Source: “Египет купит у России оружие на 3 млрд долларов (Egypt will buy \$3 Billion Worth of Weapons from Russia),” Newsru.com, 14 February 2014. <http://www.newsru.com/finance/14feb2014/egipt.html> Russia and Egypt have signed contracts for the supply of arms to Cairo totaling more than \$ 3 billion, according RIA Novosti ...

[Egyptian] [p]ublication [Al-Ahram] notes that Cairo considers Moscow as a potential ally that could replace the U.S. in providing military assistance. The purchases should strengthen defense and widen Egypt's possibilities for protection from an external attack...

Source: ““Россия и Египет: что сулит новое сближение?” (Russia and Egypt: What Does the New Rapprochement Promise?),” Golos Ameriki (Voice of America), 14 February 2014. <http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/content/russia-egypt-future/1851713.html>

... [Russian expert from Carnegie Center] Alexei Malashenko notes in Arab countries a desire to find a balance in relations with different countries. And Russia may find their place ... [H]e adds: “ Russia is not comparable with the Soviet Union , it has no ideological ambitions of playing ‘friendship of peoples’ games and so on.”

On the other hand, due to partial weakening of the U.S. interest in the Middle East and the emerged regional multi-polarity, Russia has a chance to restore at least partially the lost ground in the region, says Alexei Malashenko ...

Senior lecturer at St. Petersburg State University... Vladislav Sobolev believes that Russia currently has no clearly defined Middle East policy. Behind the increased activity of Russian diplomacy, according to Sobolev, there is no ideological component, “That is, it is not entirely clear what Russia wants the Middle East... At the same time, the U.S. has strategy - others may not think it is not always correct, but it does exist. There are values which the United States will never cede. While it is not entirely clear what values drive Russia in the Middle East. Similarly, it is unclear what resources will Russia use to fulfill the obligation it takes upon itself, particularly in the Syrian conflict? “ notes Vladislav Sobolev...

According to the writer [David Markish], Russia recently seems to fill the niches that the United States frees up. This is confirmed by the planned deepening of military cooperation with Egypt, which began after last July, after the overthrow of Mohammed Mursi defense minister when commander of the Egyptian army, Abdul-Fattah al-Sisi threw rebuke to the American administration, “You left Egypt for no good reason. You turned away from the Egyptian people, and they will not forget it.”...



Abdul-Fattah al-Sisi Source: www.sailanmuslim.com

OE Watch Commentary: Russian defense officials continue to wrestle with manpower issues. Plans to field a million-man military have been thwarted by poor demographics (many conscription-age males were conceived –or not- during the unstable 1990s, when poor economic conditions made starting a family a challenge) and a continued reluctance among many young Russian males to fulfill their obligatory military duty.

Over the past few years defense officials have adopted a series of measures designed to make conscript service more attractive. Besides reducing the conscription term to one year, they have mandated reforms to make this obligation more “soldier-friendly” (e.g., better living conditions), as well as linking future education and employment opportunities to completion of military service. As this brief excerpt indicates, in addition to offering more incentives to complete conscript duty, legislation has been introduced to strengthen the penalties for draft evasion. Avoiding conscription will now be more difficult.

Currently, before a young Russian male can be conscripted into military service, a military official must physically issue him with his draft notice. As long as the potential conscript can avoid this summons, he is under no obligation to report for military duty. Given that local draft boards are often poorly staffed, and that young men have the opportunity to change addresses to avoid detection, draft evasion is a common phenomenon. According to some published sources, there are over 200,000 young Russian men who now fall into this category.

Under the proposed new legislation, instead of obligating draft officials to hunt down prospective conscripts, Russian youth will be required to report to their local draft board to receive their notice. Failing to report would presumably automatically result in draft evasion, allowing military officials to begin legal prosecution. The excerpt

“And if a draftee has not signed the summons, under the law he bears no accountability for evading service....”

Source: Vladimir Mukhin, “День “X” для призывников наступит в апреле,” [D-Day for draftees will come in April] Nezavisimaya Gazeta Online, 23 January 2014.

Russian Paper Previews Anti-draft Dodging Bill

The parliamentarians, or rather the United Russia majority, are becoming actively involved in the battle against those who evade service in the Army and Navy. A draft law obliging a draftee to present himself personally at the military commissariat to collect his summons will be examined by the State Duma Council in the near future....

...Under the said article, either the imposition of a fine or up to two years’ imprisonment is envisaged for such action....

...However, it has emerged that these initiatives were not finally buried. Now a draft law radically changing the procedure for the draft campaign has unexpectedly begun to be supported not only by Army and Navy lobbyists but by all the deputies from the party of power. Nezavisimaya Gazeta’s source in the Duma Committee on Defense attributes this

to a recent Kremlin decision on setting up a new system of military training of students in the country, whereby after they graduate from a higher educational establishment, service in the Army under the draft will not be compulsory for them. That is to say, the Russian elite, whose children have no problem obtaining a higher education, can sleep peacefully. In the next few years on so-called D-Day it will be mainly non-student worker and peasant youths who will go to the military commissariats to collect their summonses for military service. But of course there are refuseniks even in this milieu. This fact, along with the demographic gap, significantly reduces the country’s draft potential.

Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu stated the other day that the level of manning of the Army and Navy is currently just over 82 per cent, that is, one in every five posts is vacant. But as early as 2014, according to the military department’s plans, it is planned to bring the figure up to 95-100 per cent. At the same time the proportion of contract personnel, judging from recent statements by Chief of General Staff Gen Valeriy Gerasimov, will not increase by much - from the present 225,000 to 241,000. This means that the main burden for resolving the problem of manning the troops rests with the draftees. This is most likely why the State Duma is initiating new rules for the draft, whereby a young person must present himself at the military commissariat to collect his summons. There is a strong probability that these rules will start operating as early as 2014 spring draft campaign.



Valery Vasilevich Gerasimov
Source: <http://www.topnews.in>



Sergey Kuzhugetovich Shoygu
Source: www.armyrecognition.com

(continued)

Continued: Russian Draftees: Report for Duty

points out that although this legislation has been pending for the past five years, it will likely only now be implemented. The author suggests that this delay was predicated upon developing mechanisms whereby privileged Russian youth could fulfill their military obligation while attending university. Should this bill become law, those who are unable to attend college upon graduation from high school will now find conscript military service an offer they can't refuse. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

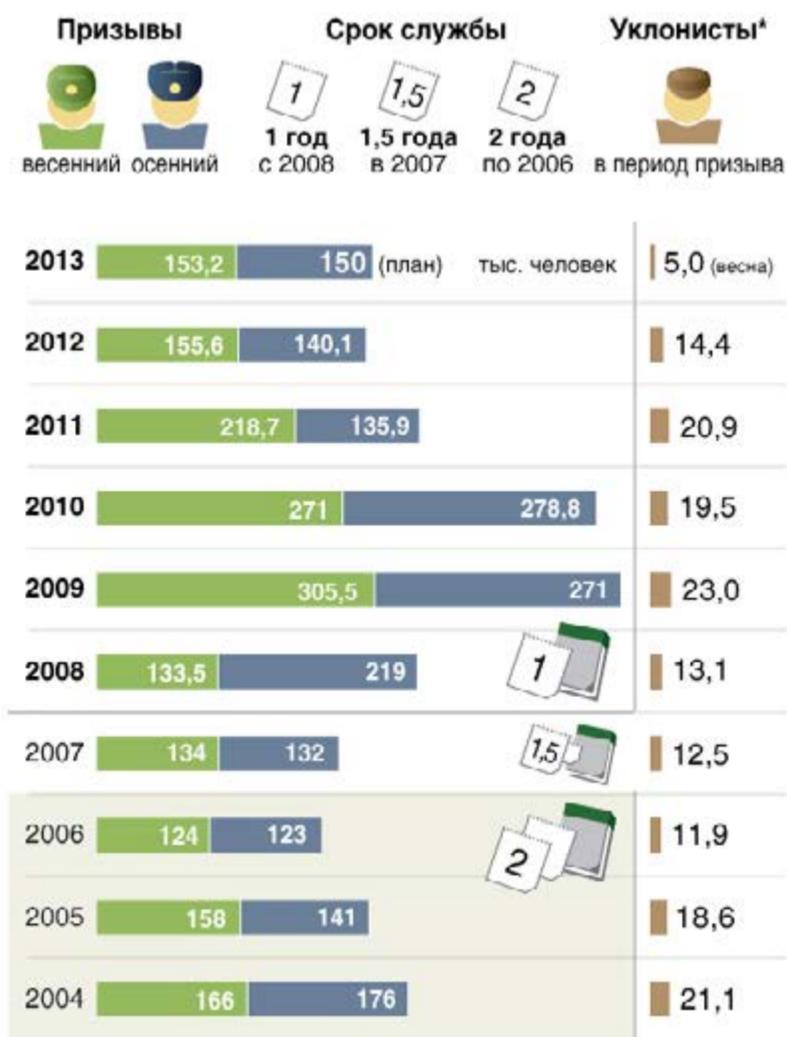
Col Anatoliy Mosolov, who for a long time headed one of the military commissariats in the Moscow region, believes that the State Duma's initiatives on increasing the effectiveness of the draft system are very timely and will be supported by the local authorities and military commissariats: "This is an extremely correct decision. Today the military commissariats are not living through the best of times. Following the reforms carried out by former Defense Minister Anatoliy Serdyukov, they are left with no officers on their staff and there are problems with funding and transport and a high cadre turnover. In these conditions, opportunities to present summonses to draftees are growing fewer and fewer. And if a draftee has not signed the summons, under the law he bears no accountability for evading service...."



Осенний призыв в армию

В ходе осеннего призыва, который продлится с 1 октября по 31 декабря 2013 г., в ряды Вооруженных сил РФ планируется призвать 150 тыс. человек

ЧИСЛО ПРИЗЫВНИКОВ И УКЛОНИСТОВ



Всего в России **235,8 тыс. молодых людей в возрасте от 18 до 27 лет уклоняются от вручения им повесток** (по данным на 2012 г.)

Fall draft into the Army

In the course of the draft, which will run from 1 October until 31 December 2013, it is planned to draft 150,000 conscripts into the Russian armed forces.

Number of draftees and evaders

Until 2006 - 2 year draft term
2007 - dropped to 1.5 year draft term
Since 2008 - 1 year draft term

Green - Spring draftees

Blue - Fall draftees

Brown - Evaders

Altogether in Russia, 235,800 young men from 18-27 have avoided the draft (according to data as of 2012).

Chart showing total draft figures through 2013.
Source: ITAR-TASS.ru

*Суммарно по весеннему и осеннему призывам
Источник: Минобороны РФ, фото: tassphoto.com

More Russian Military Police

27 January 2014

OE Watch Commentary: Plans to introduce military police (MP) into the Russian Armed Forces have been debated on and off for the past decade. The discussions would become especially strident after some horrible incident of *dedovshchina* (hazing in the ranks) or a major crime involving military violence or corruption. After such offenses it became apparent that the commander alone was unable to maintain good order and discipline over all soldiers within his command. Discipline problems were exacerbated by the lack of a non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps, who could help maintain order when officers were absent.

The situation appears to be improving. A Russian NCO corps is slowly being formed, and in 2012 a relatively small (6500 personnel) military police force was established, primarily designed to combat crime in the barracks. This contingent will now be expanded into a fully manned military police force. As the brief excerpt points out, legislation has been introduced granting “military police broad powers in combating crime and ensuring law and order in military units.” Where in the past the unit commander was responsible for maintaining all aspects of law and order, now he will be assisted by military police forces.

Despite the passage of this legislation, questions remain over the size of this force and its specific mandate. It is not altogether clear where the extra personnel will be drawn from to enlarge this force to over 50,000 and how they will be trained. More importantly are questions of command and control over these forces, and how unit commanders will react when MPs encroach upon areas which previously fell under their purview. During a recent interview Igor Sidorkevich, the head of the new MP force, suggested that clear lines of jurisdiction have not been fully established. (See: <http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/voensovet/1244496-echo/#video>). Such ambiguity could lead to conflict within the ranks.

Finally, naming Sidorkevich to lead this force has raised some concern. While he does have some military and law enforcement experience, he is best known for his martial arts expertise and his close association with the Russian president. One interpretation of his selection and the creation of this force is that it ensures that the military police remain fully committed to not only improving discipline, but also defending their commander in chief. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“The military police is to become the only body in the Armed Forces vested with law-enforcement functions.”



Russian Military Police.
Image Sources: i-korotchenko.livejournal.com
<http://www.discussionworldforum.com/forum/showthread.php?t=4674>

Source: Yuriy Gavrilov, “Полицейским дали по ‘губе’” [Jailhouse Handed Over to Police] Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online, 27 January 2014.

Military police vested with law-enforcement functions

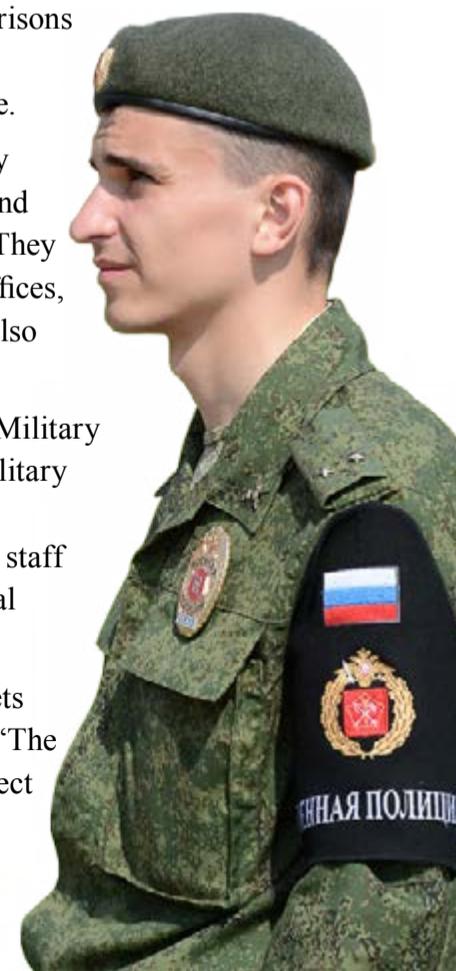
The military police is to become the only body in the Armed Forces vested with law-enforcement functions. This was announced today on the Ekho Moskvy radio station by Igor Sidorkevich, head of a Ministry of Defense specialized main directorate.

According to him, the relevant law adopted by State Duma deputies on 24 January gives the military police broad powers in combating crime and ensuring law and order in military units. In particular, they have the right to detain, search, and employ physical force using combat techniques, firearms, and special equipment. In addition, by order of the minister of defense the military police may already carry out unannounced checks in garrisons - they may go to military units at all times and do everything necessary to ensure law and order there.

Sidorkevich said that the structure of the military police will include the Moscow main directorate and the regional directorates of each military district. They will be in charge of 140 military commandant’s offices, 39 guard-rooms, two disciplinary battalions, and also units of the military vehicle inspectorate.

The future military police will be trained at the Military Police Faculty specially created at the Moscow Military University. In the future a separate Military Police Institution could be established. For the present its staff consists mainly of reserve officers with higher legal education...

...Igor Sidorkevich recalled how the law interprets the main functionality of a subordinate structure: “The military police is a body which is designed to protect the lives, rights, and freedoms of servicemen and civilian personnel, and also citizens called up for military training, as well as respect for law and order, and road traffic safety.”



OE Watch Commentary: For a Russian military officer the chief retirement benefit has been receiving adequate housing, normally a separate apartment. Unfortunately, due to overall housing shortages and an ever growing number of retirees, the waiting list for available housing has remained long. Over the past decade Kremlin and defense officials have repeatedly promised to resolve the military housing shortage, but the challenges are significant. Indeed, until quite recently some veterans of the Great Patriotic War (WW II) were still on the waiting list. According to recent estimates, nearly 70,000 retired officers are still waiting to receive their housing benefit.

There are many factors which have made solving the housing problem so daunting. Ever since the Soviet period overall available apartments have been in short supply. Even as new apartments become available, more military officers join the retired ranks, and the waiting list continues to grow. Defense officials have often built housing in remote areas, where, given the lack of amenities and employment opportunities, few retirees are willing to accept these apartments. Skyrocketing housing costs and corruption, both within the construction industry and the Ministry of Defense, have further complicated this issue.

Shortly after assuming the role of defense minister in November 2012, Sergey Shoygu announced that resolving the retiree housing problem was one of his top priorities. Since then, various additional proposals to solve this problem have been put forward. The two excerpted recent Interfax reports describe two of the most promising plans.

The mortgage option is designed for those officers still on active duty. By contributing to a housing savings account on a regular basis, officers will become owners of property upon retirement. A second option would substitute a cash payment in lieu of an apartment. To clear out the current backlog of waiting officers, this proposal will give the retired officer a ruble-equivalent to purchase an apartment in the open market.



New military housing complex in Novosibirsk.
Source: news.ngs.ru

Source: “Через десятилетие военнослужащих будут обеспечивать жильем исключительно через ипотеку” [In 10 Years’ Time Service Members Will Be Provided with Housing Exclusively Through Mortgages]; “Выдача жилищных субсидий военнослужащим начнется в марте – Минобороны,” [Issuing of Housing Subsidies to Service Members Will Begin in March -- Defense Ministry] Interfax-AVN Online, 23 January 2014.

Defense Ministry’s Housing Chief Sets Tasks for 2014, Sees Mortgage System on Rise

The Russian Federation Defense Ministry is planning to make military mortgages the only way of resolving the housing issue for service members by 2023, Sergey Pirogov, chief of the Russian military department’s Department of Housing Support, stated on Wednesday.

“Our intention is that as from 2023 this (the military mortgage -- Interfax) will be the sole form of housing provision for service members,” S. Pirogov said at a seminar to sum up the results of work by Defense Ministry housing support bodies in 2013 and set tasks for 2014.

According to the department chief, in a year the number of participants in the mortgage savings system rose from 107,000 to 128,000. “There are more than 70 billion rubles in their individual savings accounts,” S. Pirogov added....

Issuing of Housing Subsidies to Service Members Will Begin in March -- Defense Ministry

Support for service members in the form of housing subsidies should begin to operate from March 2014, Sergey Pirogov, chief of the Russian Federation Defense Ministry Department of Housing Support, stated on Thursday.

(continued)

Continued: New Housing Options

While the excerpt suggests that both of these proposals are already being implemented, a number of thorny questions remain unresolved. Housing costs continue to escalate, and there will be painful implications for those officers whose mortgage bank account fails to cover the full cost of a new apartment. Similarly, as in other countries, housing costs vary widely in Russia. A two-bedroom apartment in Moscow can cost five times as much as one in a smaller provincial city. This buy-out option could induce officers to demand housing costs in the most expensive cities. And again, both proposals appear to be rich targets for corrupt practices.

In the past few years Russia has announced ambitious plans to rebuild its Armed Forces and raise the prestige of military service. An important component of these plans revolves around fulfilling the promises made to those who are making (or who have made) military service a career. While there are potential problems with these new proposals, reducing the number of officers waiting for housing will go a long way toward rebuilding trust in the military. End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

It is planned that in 2014 10,700 people will benefit from the housing subsidy to acquire housing.

“We plan to begin using the housing subsidy in March this year,” S. Pirogov said at a seminar to sum up the results of work by Defense Ministry housing support bodies in 2013 and set tasks for 2014.

Previously Russian Federation Deputy Defense Minister Ruslan Tsalikov had stated that the first Russian service members will be able to receive a one-time monetary payment for the acquisition of permanent housing not later than February 2014....

Sergey Shoygu: Russia’s Emergency Defense Minister A Bio-Sketch

By Ray Finch, FMSO

This paper briefly examines the background of Russia’s Minister of Defense, Sergey Shoygu, the speculation behind his sudden appointment in November 2012, the challenges he faces, his efforts thus far within the Defense Ministry, and possible future implications -both military and political – surrounding his selection as Russia’s chief military representative. This paper posits that should the stars align correctly, as a close friend of President Vladimir Putin, Shoygu could become the next leader of Russia.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Finch-Shoygu.pdf>



Russia Continues to Strengthen Arctic Presence

17 February 2014

OE Watch Commentary: Russia is making strides to reassert itself in the Arctic. In October 2013 it reopened the Temp Airbase on Kotely Island and has been conducting naval, air and ground exercises in the region. The only aircraft carrier in the Russian Navy is assigned to the Northern Fleet (currently enroute to the Mediterranean).

As the first excerpt points out, the Russians have added a new command and control structure to this strategic region. The new command, Northern Fleet-United Strategic Command (SF-OSK), will have the status of a military district, i.e., it will be a four-star command, presumably based in Murmansk. There are four military districts (East, Central, South and West), all of which carry the designation of an operational-strategic command (OSK). Although the new command will not be called a military district, it is an OSK, emphasizing the preeminence of the Arctic in current Russian thinking.

Another indication of the importance of the Arctic for Russia is that the Russian Navy is upgrading its nuclear submarine delivery system. As the second excerpt indicates, the first two Borey-class ballistic missile submarines have been assigned to the Northern Fleet following the announcement of the formation of the new command. The first of the new Russian attack class submarines has also been introduced as part of the Northern Fleet. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gru)**

Source: Trude Pettersen, Barents Observer, <http://barentsobserver.com>, February 17, 2014. BarentsObserver.com is an internet news service, which offers daily news from and about the Barents Region and the Arctic. The site is run by the Norwegian Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes, Norway.

Russia to reorganize military forces in the Arctic

Russia's Northern Fleet will be the base of a new strategic formation – the Northern Fleet-United Strategic Command - that will have as its main objective to defend Russia's interests in the Arctic. The new command will include forces on the border with Norway and in the high Arctic.

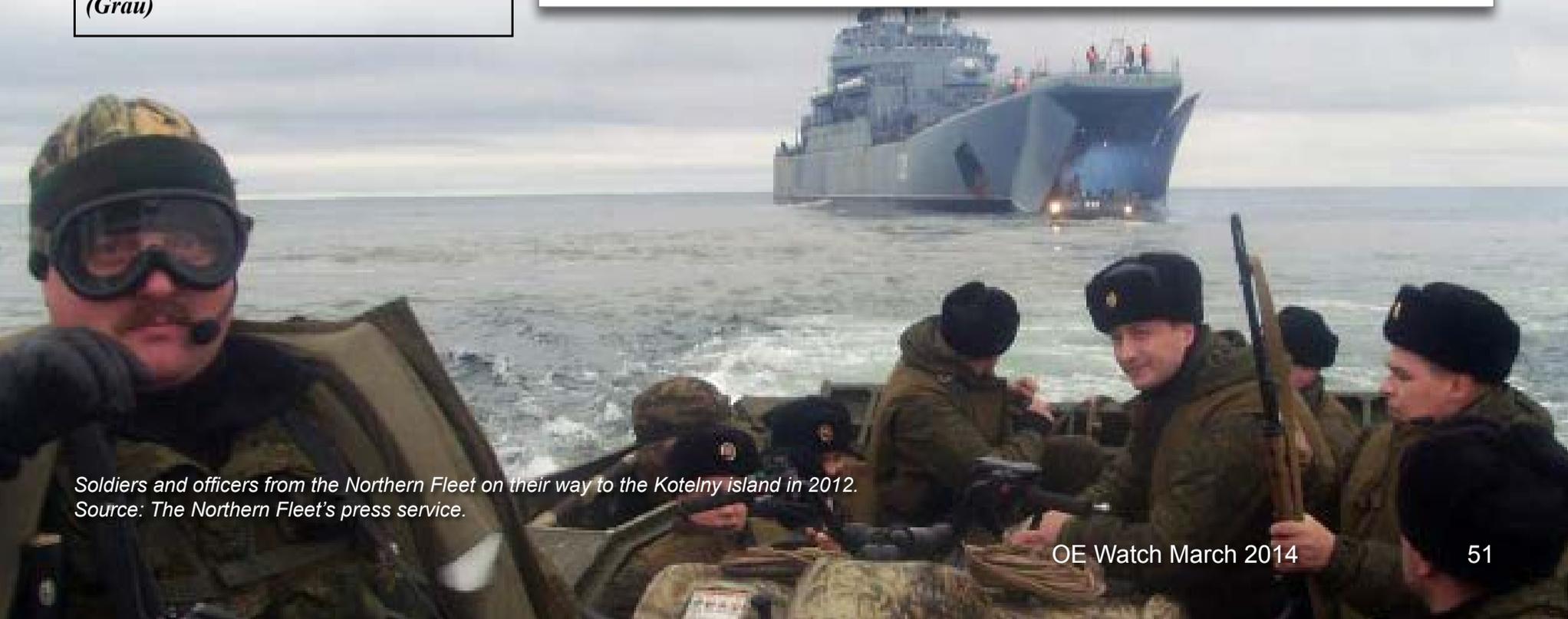
SF-OSK will consist of the Northern Fleet and units of ground and air forces located in the northern parts of the country. This will probably include the 200th motorized infantry brigade based in Pechenga close to the border to Norway. This unit became part of the Northern Fleet in December 2012. Other newly-formed ground units on Novaya Zemlya, the New Siberian Islands and Franz Josef Land will also be part of the new command.

Two new nuclear-powered submarines to Northern Fleet

On December 23 the second of Russia's new Borey-class ballistic missile submarines "Aleksander Nevsky" entered service. The flag hoisting ceremony at the Sevmash shipyard in Severodvinsk was attended by Minister of Defense Sergey Shoygu. The first submarine of the class, the "Yury Dolgoruky", was commissioned into the Northern Fleet in January 2013 and arrived at the fleet's main nuclear submarine base in Gadzhiyev. The "Aleksander Nevsky" arrived at the same base on December 30. The Borey is Russia's first post-Soviet ballistic missile submarine class and will form the mainstay of the strategic submarine fleet, replacing aging Typhoon, Delta-3 and Delta-4 class boats. Russia plans to have eight Borey-class submarines in service by 2020.

The Borey-class submarines are 170 meters long and 13.5 meters wide and have a submerged displacement of 24,000 tons. They can dive to 400 meters and go 29 knots under water. It has a crew of 107 including 55 officers. Borey-class submarines can carry sixteen Bulava missiles, each fitted with up to ten independently-targetable nuclear warheads. The Bulava missile, however, is not yet fully operational, following a series of problem with test-firing.

On December 30, the "Severodvinsk", the first of a total of eight Yasen-class (NATO name Graney) attack submarines was delivered by the Sevmash shipyard. The boat has been under construction since 1993 and will soon enter service in the Northern Fleet. "Severodvinsk" has a submerged displacement of 13,800 tons, length of 119 meters, speed of 31 knots, and can dive to 600 meters. It has a crew of 90 including 32 officers. Its main armament consists of 24 Oniks (SS-N-26) and Kalibr (SS-N-27) cruise missiles, self-guided torpedoes and mines.



Soldiers and officers from the Northern Fleet on their way to the Kotelny island in 2012. Source: The Northern Fleet's press service.

Northern Fleet- Joint Strategic Command

17 February 2014

OE Watch Commentary: On 17 February a senior representative of Russia's General Staff reported to RIA Novosti that by the end of 2014 Russia plans to create a new military structure designed to protect Russia's interests in the Arctic region. The Northern Fleet-Joint Strategic Command would consist of the Northern Fleet, Arctic brigades, air force and air defense units. Russia is not creating new military district - there are four in Russia - but rather expanding the current Northern Fleet by improving existing infrastructure and adding new elements as well. According to the Ministry of Defense, restoration of military infrastructure in the Arctic has already begun, and there are also plans for restoring northern airfields in Tiksi, Naryan-Mar, Alykel, Anderma, Anadyr, Rogachevo and Nagurskaya. Russia intends for this new initiative to be operational before the end of the year.

The push for creating the new command originates in Russia's national economic and security interests in the region. The legal ownership status of the Arctic is an international dispute among the United States, Canada, Russia, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark, mostly concerning the claims of the Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges, where an estimated 12% of the world's oil reserves are buried. Additionally, rising global temperatures intensify the territorial disputes as melting sea ice makes underwater Arctic resources more readily available. Previously, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitri Rogozin claimed that a battle was unfolding among the region's major players, and that NATO countries have been thinking about bolstering military activity since 2009. According to him, it is NATO's interest in the Arctic that prompted Russia's desire to begin this new project, as they cannot overlook activity by countries such as Canada and the United States. According to the accompanying article, Russia claims that the North American countries consider the Arctic zone vital to their interests, and are also relying on armed forces to gain access. Russia's plan, therefore, is a reaction to what it perceives as a threat to its vital interests.

An oft overlooked region of the world, the Arctic is a strategically important economic and national defense region. While Russia has only announced its plans to militarize in the north, the feasibility of this undertaking in a short time period should be considered. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kangas)**

Source: "Эксперты: создание новой военной структуры РФ в Арктике закономерно (Experts: creation of new Russian military structure in the Arctic)," RIA Novosti, February 17, 2014, http://ria.ru/defense_safety/20140217/995393548.html

On Monday, Russian senior representative Genshtaba told RIA Novosti that by the end of the year the country will have a new military structure, which will consist of the Northern Fleet, Arctic brigades, and Air Force and Air Defense units. According to him, it will be called the Northern Fleet- Joint Strategic Command, its main goal being to protect Russian interests in the Arctic.

Deputy Prime Minister Dmitri Rogozin previously said that in the Arctic a "battle" among "major players" was unfolding. Also, according to him, the countries of NATO have since 2009 thought about building up military activity in the Arctic.

The manifestation of such interests by NATO countries in the Arctic territory, rich in hydrocarbons, could not go unnoticed by Russia, given the demilitarization of the Russian North, experts say.

The head of the Academy of Geopolitical Problems, Leonid Ivashov, said that the formation of the Joint Strategic Command would be a wise decision. In his opinion, the Arctic shelves need to be defended through means of diplomacy and increasing military presence in the North.

"This is a wise and correct decision- it meets Russia's security challenges of today and tomorrow. Americans have announced the arctic zone to be one of vital interests and a priority in political and military strategy," said Ivashov.

The expert noted that Americans now have formed a bloc of several countries in order to divide the entire arctic zone among them. "Now there is an attempt to form a bloc, they already have a name for it- Arctic NATO, in which the US, Norway, Denmark, and Canada participate. Also England is actively interested..."

Source: "Для защиты интересов России в Арктике решили создать новую военную структуру (To protect Russian interests in the Arctic a new military structure will be created)," Vzlglyad, February 17, 2014, <http://www.vz.ru/news/2014/2/17/672914.html>.

A source in the Armed Forces General Staff said on Monday that in 2013 Russia will create a new military structure, the Northern Fleet- Joint Strategic Command, whose main objective will be the protection of national interests in the Arctic.

"The number of military districts will not change, there still will be four, but they added a powerful new military structure created from the foundation of the Northern Fleet," reported ITAR-TASS.

RIA Novosti reported that the structure will include the Northern Fleet, an Arctic brigade, and Air Force and Air Defense units. "This is the Northern Sea Route that will protect fish resources, hydrocarbon deposits and, most importantly, provide security in the north." According to a General Staff representative, there is a push to make the new structure operation before the end of the year.

According to the Defense Ministry, restoration of military infrastructure has begun. There is a plan for future work to restore the "Tiksi," "Naryan-Mar," "Alykel," "Anderma," "Anadyr," "Rogachevo" and "Nagurskaya" airfields in the north.

The international legal status of the Arctic is the subject of dispute, mainly among the United States, Canada, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland. Primarily the issues is the ownership of the underwater Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges, which, according to recent studies, may contain about 12% of the world's oil reserves.

Iraq has Received a Consignment of Mi-35Ms

OE Watch Commentary: *The Mi-35M is the exported night attack version of the venerable HIND attack helicopter. It is equipped with an upgraded avionics and sensor package, including GPS/GLONASS navigation and night vision capability. The Mi-28NAe is also a night-ops, all-weather-capable attack helicopter, but with no troop cabin, as it was designed for antiarmor missions. That Iraq is purchasing these helicopters and associated maintenance training from Russia is not hard to fathom, as the Iraqi military was both flying HINDs and enjoying the benefits of Soviet/Russian technical assistance for years under Saddam Hussein.*

*The crews and mechanics associated with the reported arrangement will therefore cope with a manageable learning curve, as Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki himself copes with a degenerating security situation in the wake of recent U.S. withdrawal. While Russia has made such announcements in glossy magazines like Vzlyot (at least since the Yeltsin years, and via Interfax for even longer), it is interesting that the Iraqi administration is doing so via the President's Facebook page. As the General Director of the Rostech, Sergei Chemezov points out, Russia has a long history supporting Middle Eastern countries with arms and equipment. The fact that he also uses the term "sovereignty" is also not surprising, as Russian open-source reports have used the word quite often in the last decade to signal displeasure with possible foreign intervention in "partnering" regimes. **End OE Watch Commentary (McIntosh)***



Mi-35M
Source: red-stars.org

Source: Vzlyot, [Takeoff] National Aerospace Magazine, December 2013.

Russian Helicopter Sale to Iraq

As reported on Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's Facebook page, the first consignment of four new Mi-35M military helicopters arrived in Baghdad from Russia, which Iraqi authorities plan to use for guarding borders and fighting terrorists. This first dispatch of Russian helicopter equipment to Iraq is in the framework of a package of military-technical cooperation contracts between the two countries valued at a total of 4.2 billion dollars. It was concluded in October 2012 during the Prime Minister's visit to Russia and, according to media reports, made provision for the delivery to his country of, in part, a large consignment of 36 newer military Mi-28NAe military helicopters.

On 16 April 2013 a Russian delegation, headed by the General Director of the Rostech state corporation Sergei Chemezov and Rosneft president Igor Sechin, visited Iraq. The main theme of this event was to discuss the question of interstate cooperation, to include the possible realization of joint projects in the sphere of military-technical cooperation, energy, and machinery construction. "Russia has sufficiently broad experience partnering with nations in the Middle East region, and Iraq is one of our main clients," announced the Rostech chief. "We are interested in our defense production adapting solely for the defense of this country's citizenry and serving to strengthen the business of the sovereign Iraqi republic."



Mil Mi-28 Havoc
Source: red-stars.org

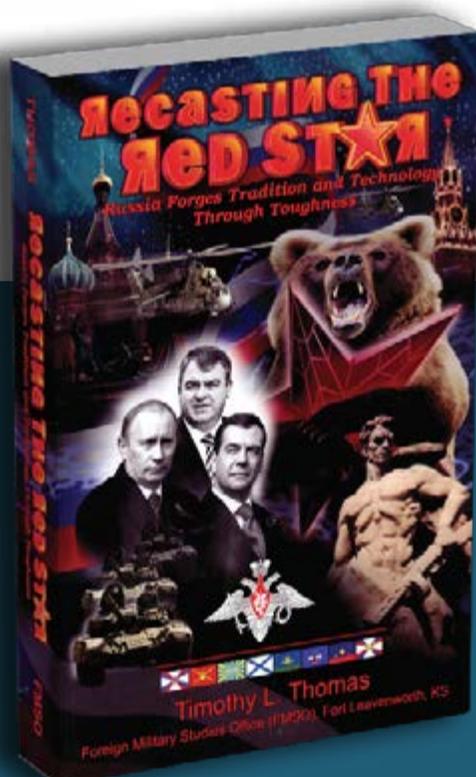
Continued: Iraq has Received a Consignment of Mi-35Ms

“In the sphere of Iraqi military-technical cooperation with Russia at the current time contracts are already realized to the total volume of 4.2 billion dollars, a basic part of which is occupied by the deliveries of Russian helicopter equipment,” officially reported Rostech after the visit. According to Reuters, during Chemezov’s April visit to Iraq, a contract was added to the existing package for the delivery of an additional six Mi-35M helicopters. This data was also reported on the official Rostech site.

As reported to Interfax this past September at Russia Arms Expo 2013 in Nizhni Tagil by a director of the Russia Helicopters holding Aleksandr Chernyaev, the company has already begun to fulfill a contract for delivering Mi-35M and Mi-28NAe helicopters to Iraq. In his words, the total number of helicopters planned for delivery “is in the region of 40 machines.” Chernyaev elaborated further to Interfax: “The first group of Iraqi specialists undergoing familiarization with the Mi-35 finished their training at the Russian Air Force Center for Military Application of Army Aviation in Torzhok.”

Series production of both the Mi-35M and Mi-28NAe occurs at the Russia Helicopters holding via the Rostov public joint-stock company Rostvertol. The dispatch of the first four Mi-35Ms to Iraq originated at Rostov-on-Don airport on 7 November 2013 onboard an An-124-100 “Ruslan” heavy transport jet produced by the Volga-Dnepr aircraft company. At the beginning of December the machines had already begun flying in Iraq, according to reports and photographs displayed on Nuri-al-Maliki’s Facebook page and the Iraqi media.

Iraq has already become the fourth nation—after Venezuela, Brazil, and Azerbaijan, which has received the Mi-35M. In parallel with the fulfillment of its export orders, this year Rostvertol also will continue deliveries of the Mi-35M to Russia.



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

Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolay Patrushev on Security Threats

OE Watch Commentary: *At the end of 2013 several Russian security figures discussed continuous and emerging threats to the nation. One of the more extensive interviews on the topic was with Nikolay Patrushev, the Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation. The council is the coordinator of interagency efforts to handle the main tasks in the nation's domestic and foreign policy. The Council shapes state policy in national security and is responsible for analyzing and assessing national security threats and the measures to neutralize them.*

In response to a question about strategic risks and new challenges to strengthen security in Russia, Patrushev noted that international terrorism, ethnic and religiously motivated extremism, illegal migration, cyber terrorism, and piracy all worry him. Increasing strategic risks include energy and food security, environmental security, shadowy international financial structures, and the emerging situation in the Arctic. He noted that Russia's main goal is to create favorable external conditions for achieving its objectives, including maintaining territorial integrity and sovereignty and sustaining the country's development.

In response to a question on the Security Council's role in military planning, Patrushev referred to the 2010 Regulations on Military Planning in the Russian Federation, which define the essence, purpose, and organization of Russia's strategic military planning. Coordination in military planning occurs among federal government bodies (in which category the Security Council falls), bodies in Russia's constituent parts, and bodies of local self-government.

Patrushev ended his interview noting that the Security Council both pursues strategic national priorities identified by the country's National Security Strategy up to 2020 and continues to assess strategic risks to the country's development and threats to national security. The excerpts from his discussion below focus on information issues, since Patrushev spent more time on this issue than any other.
End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)

“Strategic forecasting and planning, the monitoring of threats, and the strategic assessment of the state of the Russian Federation's national security are becoming increasingly important. The role of information and analysis support for the Security Council's activities to counter threats and challenges is growing.”

Source: Ivan Yegorov, Interview with Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolay Patrushev, “Challenge Accepted,” Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online, 26 December 2013.

[Yegorov] Among the threats to Russia's national security you named cyber terrorism. Is the current level of our information security sufficient? Has the number of hacker attacks on government websites decreased?

[Patrushev] It certainly has not decreased. According to FSB [Federal Security Service] data, tens of thousands of computer attacks are carried out daily on the information infrastructure facilities of the Russian Federation president, the government, the State Duma, and the Federation Council. Such use of information technology can destabilize the economy, undermine sovereignty and the foundations of the state system, and disrupt the operation of vital services. This is a direct threat to national security. We can see these threats and are implementing measures to counter them. This is being done mainly through the development of strategic planning documents, in particular the Fundamental Guidelines of State Policy in the Field of Provision of Security for Automated Systems of Control over Industrial and Technological Processes at Russia's Critically Important Infrastructure Facilities.

Furthermore, the head of state has made a decision on the establishment of a state system for detecting, preventing, and eliminating the consequences of computer attacks on Russian Federation information resources. The FSB has been designated as the federal body entrusted with powers to create such a system. This will make it possible to ensure the collaboration of all interested structures, including our foreign partners, in tackling tasks relating to the detection, prevention, and elimination of the consequences of computer attacks.

[Yegorov] The modern-day information space has no borders. In this connection, a question arises: Is any country, however developed economically, capable of dealing with information security threats on its own? What is Russia's position on this issue? What is our country's role and place in providing strategic stability in the global information space and in forming an international information security system?

[Patrushev] The possibility of wider use of information and communications technologies for illegal, and sometimes even hostile, purposes, the anonymity of their trans-border use, and their significant negative consequences make humankind look for new ways of countering such threats. This should be done jointly because any country, even one with the highest level of technical and scientific as well as economic

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Continued: Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolay Patrushev on Security Threats

development, would be unable to ensure the effective protection of infrastructure against destructive information impacts on its own. That is why it is no accident that issues relating to the provision of international information security increasingly often become a subject for discussion not just in expert circles, but also at the highest political level.

On Russia's initiative, a Group of Governmental Experts on international information security has been established within the UN. In June this year, the third Group of Governmental Experts, which consisted of 15 representatives of leading countries, completed its work. It prepared and approved a draft report by the UN secretary general on information security threats and possible joint measures to eliminate them. Consistent with this report, a Russian-sponsored resolution, *Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security*, was adopted by consensus during a session of the First Committee of the UN General Assembly in November this year.

A fundamentally new element in the Russian resolution was the expansion of the group's research mandate to cover a number of specific aspects in the field of international information security, including issues relating to the use of information and communications technologies in conflicts and the way international law is applied to countries' actions in the information space.

With the active participation of the Russian Federation, a regional system of information security is being formed as part of the SCO [Shanghai Cooperation Organization]. It is based on the agreement between the governments of SCO member states on cooperation in the field of provision of international information security, which was signed in June 2009 in Yekaterinburg. The format of this agreement is unique because, despite its regional nature, it is open to accession by other countries.

Along with measures taken at regional level, Russia is drawing up mechanisms of practical bilateral interstate cooperation. Meetings have already been held with our partners from the United States, China, India, Israel, Kazakhstan, Brazil, Uzbekistan, Belarus, France, Germany, South Korea, and some other countries.

In June this year the Russian and US presidents issued a joint statement on a new area of cooperation in confidence building. Accords have been reached with our American colleagues on the formation of a bilateral working group whose tasks will include organizing the exchange of information on computer incidents.

The accords became an important practical contribution to building an international information security system. Yet, we realize that a long period of painstaking work is ahead of us. The guidelines for this work were laid down in the *Principles of State Policy in the Field of International Information Security for the period up to 2020*, approved by the Russian Federation president on 24 July 2013. Russia has proclaimed a transparent course by the state to create conditions for the establishment of an international legal regime of non-proliferation of so-called information [cyber] weapons and the formation of a secure information environment, with an unconditionally dominant role being played in the field of information by the sovereign rights of the individual, the public, and the state.

The objectives of Russian Federation state policy laid out in the principles are consonant with the aspirations of many countries to counter threats in the field of information by strengthening international cooperation. We have received feedback on our document from more than 70 countries and international organizations, which made a positive assessment of the constructive position of Russia and its efforts to bring about international information security. This gives us hope that the international community will tackle problems in this strategically important field in a consolidated manner.

Turkey's Political and Legal Crisis: The Fallout from the Corruption Scandal

On 17 December 2013 a year-long investigation by an Istanbul district prosecutor culminated in the detainment of 52 individuals, including businessmen with close links to the government and sons of cabinet ministers of the interior, economy, and housing. The investigation involved the construction business, public financing of real estate projects, and a money-laundering scheme through the state-owned public bank, Halkbank. The raids in the suspects' homes revealed stacks of \$4.5 million in cash stuffed in shoeboxes, safes and money counters. The investigation focused on collaboration between Reza Zarrab, a businessman of Iranian descent, the sons of three above-mentioned ministers, the minister of European Union affairs, and a Halkbank executive. Zarrab was charged with laundering \$120 billion from Iran through various firms in Turkey between 2009-2012, helping Iran circumvent sanctions in a complex scheme which entailed trading gold for oil with Iran.¹ Twenty-six individuals were arrested, including Zarrab and the sons of the interior and economy ministers.

Prime Minister Erdoğan and his cabinet claimed that this was a conspiracy directed at the government and quickly moved to control the situation, removing or transferring thousands of police officers and assigning two additional prosecutors to the investigation. The government also took steps to alter the rules for judicial investigations and banned media from law enforcement/police buildings.

Resignations, Cabinet Reshuffling, and a Second Wave of Corruption Investigations

On 25 December 2013 the three cabinet ministers whose sons were implicated in the probe resigned. One of them called on the prime minister to resign, saying, "I believe Prime Minister Erdoğan should resign, too, for he is the one who ordered a large part of the construction projects that are questioned by the probe."² Ten cabinet ministers were replaced in a major cabinet reshuffle.

On the same day a second wave of corruption investigations, involving bribery and illegal commissions, was revealed. This time the list of suspects included businessmen close to the prime minister and Yasin al-Qadi, a controversial Saudi Arabian businessman who is suspected of having financial ties to al-Qaeda and whom the U.S. Department of Treasury lists as a "specially designated global terrorist."³ In addition, the prime minister's son was summoned to testify. However, the suspects were not detained, and Muammer Aktaş, the prosecutor who had been leading this investigation, was prevented from entering the district police office.



Istanbul prosecutor Muammer Aktaş was removed after he revealed an investigation on December 25. Source: <http://haber.stargazete.com/guncel/savci-muammer-akkas-hakkinda-sok-iddia/haber-822025>

In protest, Aktaş stood in front of the courthouse, and disseminated a brief that claimed that the Istanbul Police and Security Directorate had refused to work on a corruption investigation that he had been leading. As a result, he was dismissed from the case, and there were no detentions. On 30 December he made a statement saying, "The court's decisions to search and apprehend [certain individuals], which were based on evidence in the file, have still not been carried out. As such, it is possible that some evidence has been tampered with, and some suspects could have escaped. I offer this for the unmistakable consciousness of our nation, on behalf of whom we carry out the duty of justice."⁴

Conspiracy Theories, Narratives of "Parallel-State" and Coup

The prime minister and his supporters have pointed to "dark centers," a "parallel state within state institutions," and international forces behind the corruption scandal, and called members of the police and judiciary involved in the investigation agents of these forces. On 31 December, in a televised speech, Erdoğan claimed that the situation was an assassination attempt hidden in a veil of corruption, saying: "An organization settled in the state institutions, particularly judiciary and police, has been attempting an assassination attack on Turkey's stability and security atmosphere with the instructions it is taking from the outside...Some circles organized inside the judiciary are working to take the sovereignty from the people and give it to the judiciary and acted irresponsibly and militantly as if they were doing a judiciary coup."⁵

Yalçın Akdoğan, Erdoğan's chief advisor, published a piece in the pro-government newspaper Star, in which he blamed foreign powers and their domestic conspirators, who allegedly want to depose Erdoğan:

The international status quo, which has mobilized itself under the code name 'getting rid of Erdoğan,' is undertaking new initiatives with the participation of domestic conspirators... The domestic conspirators, who are carrying out the global forces' directives to 'end this business', have started a dirty war... This process has not taken anything away from the government,

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but it has revealed the true face of the initiators. In the latest events, the government's legitimacy and trustworthiness have not been tarnished; to the contrary, the trustworthiness of those who conspired against the government has eroded... Since the day it was founded, the AK Party has faced such conspiracies and attacks. Conspirators who tried to hurt the AK Party during critical times have always lost credibility and respect in the eyes of the public.⁶

Erdoğan and his supporters were referring to Islamic cleric Fethullah Gülen and his civil society movement as the main culprits in a long list of conspirators. They claimed that sympathizers of this movement have become embedded in the security services, government ministries and the judiciary, constituting "a parallel state" and acting in unison for political purposes. Pro-government media also pointed the finger at U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Francis Ricciardone. Other conspiracy theories floated included a "Gülen-Israel axis," the CIA, the Jews and Israel, similar to those "international powers" that the government had claimed were behind the widespread protests that erupted in late May 2013.⁷ (See *Special Essay*, "Turkey's Protests: Local Perspectives on their Causes and Implications," in the August 2013 issue of *OEW*.)

Who is Fethullah Gülen? What is the Gülen Movement?

Born in Turkey in 1941, Fethullah Gülen is a Muslim cleric who started preaching at the age of 14. The author of over 60 books, he is considered to have extensive knowledge of Islam. He is the leader of the Gülen Movement, also known as the "Hizmet" (service) movement or the "Cemaat" (community), a religiously conservative civil society organization which commands a global network of schools, charities and media outlets. Gülen now lives in the U.S., where he heads the movement. He is thought to have three to six million global followers and offices in various international locations, including the U.S.

After the 1971 military coup in Turkey, Gülen's strong opposition to the Turkish secular government landed him in military jail for six months on charges of conspiracy to overthrow the Turkish government. In 1998 an arrest warrant was issued against him on charges of organizing a terrorist organization to challenge the secular Turkish government. However, before the charges were filed Gülen left Turkey for the U.S., where he has been residing ever since.



Fethullah Gülen.
Source: fethullah-gulen.org

The AKP and Hizmet movement are both Sunni Muslim religious groups, but come from different roots. As journalist Mustafa Akyol explains in *Al-Monitor*:

The core of the AKP comes from the "National View" tradition, which can be best defined as Turkey's version of political Islam with anti-Western and pan-Islamic tones. Although the AKP explicitly abandoned this ideology during its founding more than a decade ago, most observers think Erdoğan is gradually reverting back to the 'National View' in the past few years. The Gülen movement, however, comes from the tradition of Islamic scholar Said Nursi (1878-1960), who focused on faith and morality rather than politics, and whose followers generally shied away from political Islam... Some scholars have thus defined the Gülen movement as 'cultural Islam' as opposed to political Islam.⁸

Despite having different roots, however, the fact that both groups had been the target of the Turkish military brought them closer. As Svante Cornell writes in the *Turkey Analyst*,

The abortive attempt by the Turkish military to prevent the AKP from securing the presidency in 2007, and the subsequent attempt by the judiciary to close down the party led to a deepening of the alliance. Both 'National View' and Hizmet had been the targets of the military-led purges of the late 1990s. The support of the Hizmet movement was crucial: aside from electoral support, it had a strong presence in the police and the judiciary system, providing Erdoğan with the muscle to go after the military through the Ergenekon and Sledgehammer investigations.⁹

However, once the military guard was decisively defeated, relations between the AKP and the Gülen movement started deteriorating, and disagreements emerged on various domestic and foreign policy issues. According to experts, what we are seeing now is this deterioration

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coming to light and turning into a power struggle. Kadri Gürsel, a respected journalist, calls it the “ugly divorce” in his daily column in *Milliyet*:

This is an ugly and bloody divorce process. Due to the complexity and inequality of the power relations between them, the two sides would never have been able to achieve a ‘civil separation’. Gülenists and Erdoğan supporters displayed a common struggle (which had a conspiratorial nature to it as well) against their opponents between 2008-2011; they became allies and shared secrets. But meanwhile, they probably learned of each others’ vulnerabilities. If we look at the ‘ammunition’ that is being used in their current fight, it looks like some of them also conducted intelligence on their partner; collecting information and documents in case they would be needed in the future.¹⁰

Gülen’s organization denied Erdoğan’s claims of a parallel state and other conspiracies. His organization’s mouthpiece, the Istanbul-based Journalists and Writers Foundation, issued a statement saying, “Claims that our honorary president, Fethullah Gülen, and the Hizmet movement are linked to prosecutors conducting the graft probe or that they made the prosecutors launch the investigations because they are the cat’s paws of external powers are hideous slander.”¹¹

Legal Crisis Sparks Debate about the End of Turkish Democracy

In the aftermath of the scandal the government introduced, among others, two significant pieces of legislation, which are seen as fatal blows to Turkey’s already-problematic democracy. The first one, called the “Internet Law” will allow the government to control, restrict and monitor what the public can view on the Internet. The second one gives control of the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors to the government and effectively ending judicial independence. The reactions to these two bills have been overwhelming, with many pointing to the end of Turkey’s rule of law, separation of powers, and its democracy. Human rights lawyer Orhan Kemal Cengiz wrote in his column in *Today’s Zaman*:

The government is actively preventing the progress of the corruption investigation and their tolerance for protests or objections over their behavior is dropping. There are quite serious allegations about corruption, bribery, money laundering and so on. There are very serious and well-founded concerns about the government’s attempts to obstruct the progress of justice. ... We are sailing towards very dangerous waters currently. Serious corruption allegations are increasing, justice is seemingly being obstructed and freedom of expression is limited. A deadly combination for democracy. Very deadly indeed...¹²

Is the “Old-Guard” Coming Back?

On 24 December 2013 the story took an important turn, with potentially important consequences for the military: in an attempt to explain the events as a plot by secretive forces that had infiltrated the judiciary with goals of overthrowing the government, Akdoğan claimed that those forces had also framed the military, alluding to the controversial coup plot cases (called Balyoz and Ergenekon) that put hundreds of military officers in jail. Following this, on 27 December 2013 the chief of the general staff asked for legal action against those who have been “targeting the Turkish Armed Forces and its personnel,” directly quoting remarks from Akdoğan’s December 24 article. The military also issued a series of press releases.

These developments prompted a debate in Turkey about whether the corruption scandal will lead to the retrial of military officers imprisoned in previous coup cases, something that Erdoğan has hinted might be possible, and whether this might return the military to politics. As columnist Hasan Albayrak writes in his column in the daily, *Star*:

The chief of staff, after a long respite, is again making statements. They sound harmless but are nevertheless disturbing. For the military to once again resume the habit of issuing statements will cast the shadow of old Turkey on our new Turkey. As the atmosphere changes, the nature



Yalçın Akdoğan. Source: <http://www.duzceyerelhaber.com/resim/upload/35234.jpg>

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of these statements can also change and we can find ourselves once again debating memorandums. The military's appeal to the public must be categorically rejected. If there is going to be a statement about the military, it should be made by the prime minister or minister of defense.¹³

Thus, many are worried about the General Staff's return to issuing statements and wonder whether this is a harbinger of the old guard coming back. While this would have been seen as far-fetched just three months ago, it is not the case anymore.

Most Recent Developments and Implications

On February 25, the scandal took another significant turn, when an 11-minute audiotape was posted on-line, of a phone conversation alleged to be between Erdoğan and his son from December 17, in which Erdoğan allegedly warns his son to hide large sums of money before the investigation reached them. Erdoğan claimed that it was a montage, while the opposition and public protestors called on him to resign. The corruption scandal has resulted in instability and a loss of trust in legal processes; with domestic, economic, and international implications for Turkey. It has also affected the Gülen movement's image.

Domestically, the government's narratives, which include allegations of a coup, and a parallel state, and its rhetoric, which frames the situation as a power struggle between the government and an internal "network," are viewed as a tactic to distract focus from the actual corruption charges by shifting the national conversation on the issue. In addition, all of the legal rearrangements made after the scandal broke out, such as the Internet restrictions and government control of the judiciary, are viewed as ways to cover up the allegations. As journalist Cengiz Çandar writes in the mass daily *Radikal*, "Narratives such as 'coup,' 'parallel state,' etc. are not enough to cover up the corruption. [Thus] they have no choice but to cover up freedoms."¹⁴

Following last summer's mass protests and this scandal, Erdoğan's hold on power is much weaker than it was a year ago. He has become more authoritarian, alienating members of his own base and raising questions about the success of the AKP in the coming local elections in March, presidential elections in August, and parliamentary elections in mid-2015.

Economically, such instability is unsettling for local and foreign investors. As such, Erdoğan's grand projects will fall into question without a robust legal system and economic stability. His ambition to make Istanbul a financial hub that can compete with Dubai will become very difficult. In addition, his \$30 billion project to build a third airport for Istanbul and a \$10 billion project to build a canal to relieve the congested Bosphorus are also vulnerable. The international financing required for these projects will become much harder to come by due to investors' worries about stability.¹⁵

The situation also has implications for Turkey's international standing. The idea of Turkey and the AKP as a model for the Middle East has been irreparably tarnished. As columnist Cengiz Çandar writes in his column in *Al Monitor*: "...Many are talking of an 'end of the Erdoğan era,' even a 'demise of moderate Islam in the region.' That analysis is based on the high probability that Erdoğan's name has been crossed out by the Western world, led by President Barack Obama."¹⁶

Similar analyses are being made in Washington. Ian Lesser, the Executive Director of the Transatlantic Center (the Brussels office of the German Marshall Fund of the U.S.), writes, "...repeated references by Prime Minister Erdoğan and others in his government to international conspiracies, hidden hands, interest rate lobbies, and other murky forces allegedly stoking Turkey's internal and external travails, has produced dismay on both sides of the Atlantic. As a result, Turkey is being taken less seriously as a partner, at the precise moment when closer cooperation is an imperative for all sides."¹⁷

At the same time, the Gülen movement's image as an apolitical civil society organization has suffered. Following these recent events it will no longer be possible to make this claim. It appears that both sides have been hurt by the scandal, with no resolution in sight.



Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.
Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/>

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