

Foreign Military Studies Office

OEWATCH

FOREIGN NEWS & PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

LAND POWER



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Landpower in foreign open sources is often not portrayed in the conveniently revealing forms of strategic debate, white paper pronouncement, or catalog of predictions. Most countries don't even use the term 'landpower', indicating emphases unique to their various experiences, expectations, and capacities. Instead, the broad scope of information regarding the kinds and functions of ground-based forces reveals something more oblique, though no less poignant. This issue of OE Watch demonstrates a range of actors and actions that are considering and testing new roles of landpower in a variety of regions---from conventional forces to irregular militia, from evolutionary thinking in the application of ground forces to more immediate schemes for upgrading military hardware. There is not a single cohesive narrative on landpower from the foreign perspective, except, perhaps, that armed forces on the ground are considered primary, decisive forces, and are expanding in more manifestations across the spectrum of the Operational Environment.



LAND POWER



A Glimpse of the Russian Rapid Reaction Force in the Crimea? March 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *Since the collapse of the Soviet Union the Russian military has struggled to match its forces against likely threats, and has been slow in transitioning from a large conscript army focused on large-scale, high intensity warfare with NATO, to one focused more on immediate threats, namely small scale regional conflicts, terrorism, proliferation, and insurgency. As reported in a November 2013 interview with Colonel General Shamanov, Russian Airborne Forces Commander, the Russian Armed Forces are currently experimenting with the establishment of the Rapid Reaction Forces (RRF). Although the many details are yet to be determined, Russian commentary indicates that the Russian RRF will likely be a 70,000-80,000 member force, primarily built around the Russian Airborne Forces (VDV), with air-land-sea capability, and suited to peace support operations, in addition to responding to threats.*

The land component of the RRF is based upon three motorized rifle brigades (MRBs) and select SPETSNAZ and special operations forces. Relative to their strategic importance, the MRBs are located in or near internal hot spots, such as the volatile North Caucasus region, and external hotspots, such as Georgia and Armenia, where direct action or peacekeeping assets could be required on short order.

The sea component of the RRF will likely consist of the approximately 9000-strong Naval Infantry and be based around each of the four fleets and one flotilla. The Naval Infantry makes a good fit in the RRF due to close historical ties with the VDV, and that fact that naval infantrymen routinely train at the VDV training center in Ryazan. Moreover, Major General Alexander Kolpachenko, the current Commander of the Coastal Defense Forces, is a VDV officer. As for other naval assets, there has been some mention of including large amphibious landing craft.

In order to quickly deploy and support forces, Russian media report that the RRF will have an air capability for direct air support (helicopter, light reconnaissance, and tactical strike). It will also have limited assets for long-distance transport and jump

Source: Ivan Petrov and Ivan Stolnikov, "Among the Military in Crimea They Managed to See a Chechen Battalion and Airborne Troops from Ulyanovsk," Moscow RBK Daily Online, 6 March 2014, <<http://top.rbc.ru/politics/06/03/2014/909718.shtml>> , accessed 17 March 2014.

Russian Airborne, Naval Infantry, and SPETSNAZ in the Crimea

At the same time that Russian officials of every stripe continue to assert, that troops were not introduced into Crimea, on the peninsula itself this has long been an open secret.

RBK found evidence that the "polite riflemen" may be Russian airborne troops. The question is how many of them are on the peninsula. The military themselves are talking about 1000 men, Kiev asserts, that there are several times more.

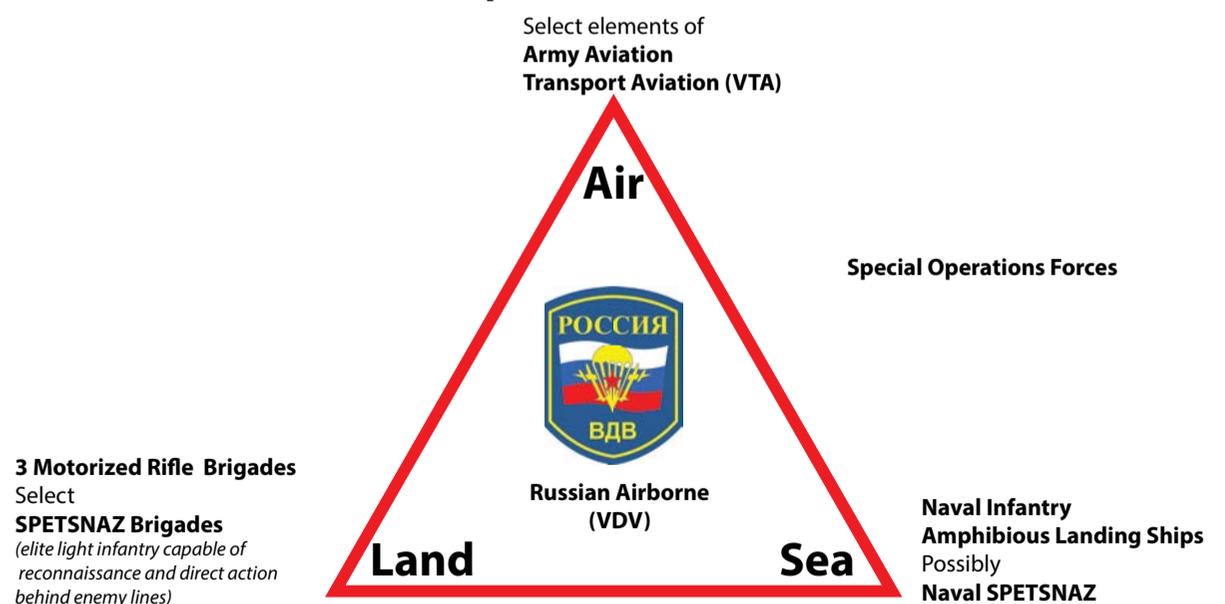
Recognition Indicators

The well armed and trained military, who appeared in Crimea a week ago and after two days cordoned off all the military units of Ukraine's Defense Ministry on the peninsula, and posed before the camera with satisfaction, during the first three days refused to say who they were and where they were from. An RBK correspondent succeeded in talking with one of them on Monday, 3 March, only after it was discovered that both of them served in one training unit. The soldier turned out to be a contract enlisted naval infantryman from Novorossiysk...

An RBK source in the grouping of Russian line-units in the Black Sea Fleet said that, according to his information, at the end of February servicemen, serving in the Chechnya, the 31st Separate Guards Air Assault Brigade from Ulyanovsk, the 22nd Separate Spetsnaz Brigade of the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) of the RF General Staff, and were stationed in the village of Krasnaya Polyana not far from Sochi, were transferred into Crimea at the end of February.

(continued)

Russian Rapid Reaction Forces



Continued: A Glimpse of the Russian Rapid Reaction Force in the Crimea?

operations.

The core of the RRF is built around the VDV, with approximately 35,000 paratroopers. The Russian VDV is significantly different than its Western counterparts: structurally the VDV is a mechanized force, and is divided between parachute and air assault units. In terms of function, the Russian VDV fulfills many of the same roles as those in the West, but also fills another niche, not typically associated with Western airborne forces, i.e., that of a reliable enforcer for politically sensitive operations.

Despite a November announcement from Colonel General Shamanov that the RRF would be operational this year, there has been no reporting on the establishment of the RRF in 2014. Yet, as the accompanying article explains, the core components of the proposed RRF (VDV, Naval Infantry, SPETSNAZ) were thought to be operating in the Crimea, raising the possibility that they have already been activated and the Crimea may have been their first campaign. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

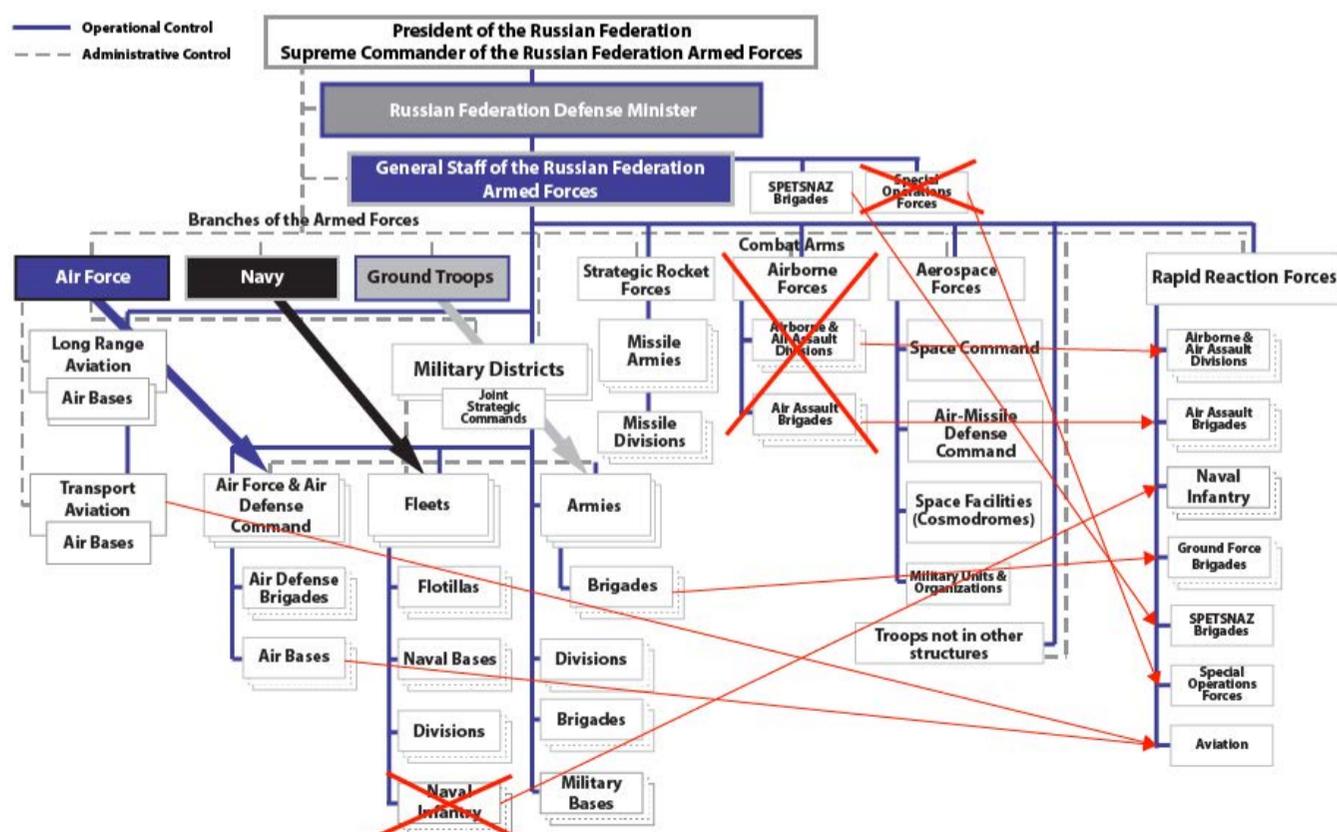
Moreover Airborne troops from Pskov were landed in Crimea. On 3 March they blockaded the position of the 10th Saks Naval Aviation Brigade of Ukraine's Navy. One more Pskov brigade was positioned near the Russian-Ukrainian border around Kharkovsk oblast. Earlier one of the officers, with a Russian name, in Simferopol told RBK daily that naval infantryman from Novorossiysk and Airborne Troops from Tol'yatti were also inserted into the Crimea...Ukrainian bloggers write, that they saw tattoos on the riflemen of "for the VDV" and the "GRU."

How Many Are Necessary for Victory?

The total numerical strength of Russian airborne and naval infantry personnel in Crimea a source in the Black Sea Fleet estimated at roughly 1000 "bayonets." Almost all of them previously participated in the five day war with Georgia, and many in addition participated in battles with Chechen fighters. It was hard for the center to estimate the amount of equipment transferred. In his words, aside from army trucks the military brought in armored transporters and "Tiger" and Rys' airborne vehicles.

... On Tuesday President Vladimir Putin stated, that there are no Russian servicemen (with the exception of the Black Sea Fleet contingent in Sevastopol) in Crimea, and the following day Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu, responding to a question about how modern armored vehicles appeared among the Crimean self-defense detachments, he said, that "he had no idea," where they had been gotten... "Theoretically self-defense soldiers can have such arms and uniforms. After the looting by fighters of Armed Forces and MVD storage dumps in Western Ukraine, the seizure of arsenals, these weapons slipped away," – Doctor of Military Sciences and First Vice-President of the Academy of Geopolitical Problems Konstantin Sivkov says ...However Russian traces may be found in those "Tiger" vehicles. "This is a sufficiently rare thing, Ukraine does not have them, – leader of the Analytical Institute of Political and Military Analysis Aleksandr Khramchikhin confirms.

Proposed Elements of the Russian Rapid Reaction Force



Russian Military in Crimea: Convoys from the North Caucasus and Land Mines

OE Watch Commentary: *In context of the late February protests in Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that Russia would continue to increase its land power. Following this and the military engagements weeks later in Crimea, local observers noted the Russian military forces entering Crimea, despite Russian assertions that only Crimean local militias were involved.*

The first is from Kavkazskiy Uzel (Caucasian Knot), on 8 March 2014. It describes in detail the Russian military equipment “pouring” into Crimea, notably from the North Caucasus. The second, from opposition-leaning Dozhd (Rain) also on 8 March 2014, describes a large military convoy entering Crimea, and quotes photojournalist Eugene Feldman of Novaya Gazeta (New Newspaper), who provides evidence of minefields set up on the Crimean-Russian checkpoint in the area of Chongar.

Among Russia’s chief concerns are secessionist movements, so Kavkazskiy Uzel’s assertion that the military equipment is coming from the North Caucasus—a hotbed of instability in Russia for many reasons—sounds plausible. Following this line of thinking, Russia would want to keep its best equipment there.

Source: “В Крым стягиваются военные подразделения с Северного Кавказа, сообщают эксперты и украинские военные” (Military units pouring into Crimea from the North Caucasus according to experts and Ukrainian military), Kavkazskiy Uzel (Caucasian Knot), 8 March 2014. <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/239182/>

Military equipment from the North Caucasus is pouring into Crimea, says announcements of the group “Informational resistance,” and also blogger Irek Murtazin. The first motorized infantry battalion “Vostok” has settled in Dzhankoye, said Ukraine’s General Staff...

A convoy of 200 military vehicles in the evening on March 7 has been observed in the Russian Taman (Krasnodar region) with the numbers of 95th region (Chechnya). The convoy moved towards the ferry port in Crimea (Kerch Peninsula), said a message posted on the Facebook page of the head of the Ukrainian Center for Military - Political Studies Dmitry Tymchuk included in the analytical group “Information resistance.”

Meanwhile, there is evidence that the machinery of the Southern Military District is already present on the territory of Crimea. On March 6, Novaya Gazeta published a photo of an armored vehicle “Tiger”, taken on March 4 by photojournalist Eugene Feldman in Crimea near the Ukraine Air Force Base. Clearly visible on the photo are the numbers of the car – 7842 KT 21. Next to it, there is a photo of the “Tiger” taken on 19 March 2012, during a rehearsal for the Victory Day parade on Alabino range. The photo also clearly displays the number—7849 KT 21...

Note that the number 21 was set as a number for the transport of the North Caucasus Military District, changed in 2010 into the Southern Military District. That is, in the photo frame in Belbek the photojournalist captured the “Tiger” fourth company of the “unknown” units of the North Caucasus Military District, concludes Murtazin ...

(continued)

A Russian military convoy heads in the direction of Simferopol, the regional capital of Ukraine’s Crimea, March 8 (Sergey Ponomarev)
Source: <http://atlanticsentinel.com/2014/03/russia-expands-crimea-occupation-ukrainian-forces-mobilize/>

Continued: Russian Military in Crimea: Convoys from the North Caucasus and Land Mines

Putin had embarked on military reform following his invasion of Georgia in 2008, which exposed many problems within the Russian military forces, including corruption, low morale, and outdated equipment. Despite increased spending and a restructuring program, the problems still remain, although the program is only in its early stages and not expected to be completed until 2020.

*For all its problems, however, the Russian military force remains the largest in the region, and Russia's neighbors therefore have reason to be concerned. It may not be the force it used to be in the Soviet era, but from the perspective of Ukrainians and Russia's other neighbors, it is still a force to be reckoned with. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***

Source: “Ситуация в Крыму обострилась: военные колонны на дорогах, окопы на границах и отряды самообороны в татарских селах” (Situation worsened in Crimea: military convoys are on the roads, trenches are on the borders, and self-defense detachments are in Tatar villages),” Dozd (Rain), 8 March 2014. http://tvrain.ru/articles/situatsija_v_krymu_obostrilas_voennye_kolonny_na_dorogah_okopy_na_granitsah_i_otrjady_samooborony_v_tatarskih_selah-364640/

...Meanwhile, postings are appearing in social networks describing that a column of military trucks is moving from Kerch to Simferopol. Details, however, remain unknown. Journalist of Novaya Gazeta Eugene Feldman writes that on the boundary of the Crimea - Russian checkpoint in the area of Chongar there appeared suspicious pits, resembling a minefield.

Eugene Feldman, a journalist of Novaya Gazeta: Chongaro residents wrote that they were frightened by what is happening there. Journalists went there, I saw photos of this field, it was written that the hoes were dug up for the installation of pillars denoting the border. I got there, went to the checkpoint. Since I'm from Russia, let me in there with no problems. The man who drove me was in blue OMON camouflage and had weapons. In response to the question about what are these pits, said it is a minefield. Aside from his words, there are also signs there, “Caution, mines!” ...

The Militarization of **GAZPROM**

By Cindy Hurst, FMSO

In July 2007, Russia's Duma passed a bill that would allow energy companies Gazprom (Russia's state-owned natural gas monopoly) and Transneft (which controls Russia's oil pipeline infrastructure) the right to create private, internal armies. The new bill raised concern internationally and within the Kremlin that such a move would give these companies too much power. This paper analyzes what was occurring in Russia and discusses potential ramifications of the country's actions.

<http://fms0.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Militarization-of-Gazprom.pdf>

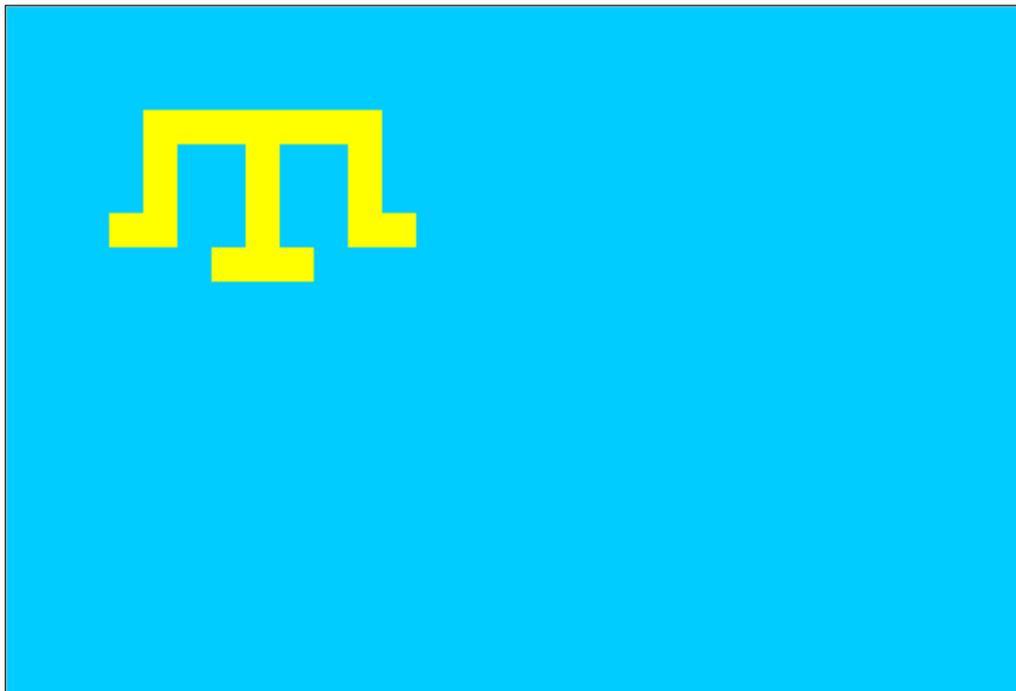


Ukraine Crisis Reverberates in Russia: the Caucasus Connection

15 March 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *As the events in Ukraine continue to unfold throughout the month, the Caucasus region has been observing closely. The first accompanying excerpt, from Nezavisimaya Gazeta (Independent Newspaper) on 16 March, describes a landing of a 350-strong battalion and military equipment on the island of Kotelny, located on the Siberian islands archipelago. According to the article, this is the first such landing in Russia's history. The report notes a connection with the Caucasus: the military reportedly began to pull together artillery units simultaneously from 10 training ranges, located on the territories of the North Caucasus and Southern federal districts, as well as on military bases, so that these units would receive military training.*

The two additional accompanying excerpts, from Kavkazskiy Uzel (Caucasian Knot), also draw on the Caucasus and the military connection from different angles. One reports on disagreements among the expert community about the legitimacy of evidence printed in the press in March about Russian military equipment in Crimea. The second highlights the anti-war protests in Russia and concerns that with the annexation of Crimea to Russia, the North Caucasian republics and Krasnodar region will suffer, at least economically. The cost of integration will be "at least \$30 billion for 10 years... given the Russian practice of kickbacks and corruption [the figure] of course, will grow," according to political analyst Andrei Serenko, quoted in the article. These costs, according to him, will have to come from the Caucasus, among others. Russians will also stop visiting Sochi—a traditional vacation spot—in favor of Crimea, which boasts a similar climate. Serenko also notes a concern about extremist organizations. Among these, he notes three thousand Muslims Salafists in Crimea with connections to the armed underground in the North Caucasus.



Flag of Crimean Tatars
Source: <http://www.islamicpluralism.org/>

Source: Vladimir Gundarov, "В армии. Молниеносный бросок десанта на 12 тысяч километров (In the army. Lightning shot landing for 12,000 kilometers)," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta (Independent Newspaper)*, 16 March, 2014. http://www.ng.ru/week/2014-03-16/8_army.html

For the first time in Russia's history, a battalion of 350 men of the 98th Ivanovo Airborne Division made a landing Friday on the island Kotelny of the Siberian Islands archipelago. Fifteen minutes before the drop of the main group, materiel and equipment landed on parachute platforms...

Simultaneously at 10 training grounds, located on the territories of the North Caucasus and Southern federal districts, as well as on military bases abroad, there began a collection of artillery units and formations of the Southern Military District for boot camp training, reported the press service of the Southern Military District on Thursday ...

Source: "Военные эксперты разошлись в оценках доказательств присутствия в Крыму военной техники с юга России (Military experts disagreed in their assessments of evidence of military equipment in the Crimea from southern Russia)," *Kavkazskiy Uzel (Caucasian Knot)* 14 March 2014 <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/239497/>

Experts and political sciences interviewed by the Caucasian Knot differed in their assessments of evidence published in social networks of military equipment in the Crimea. Military expert Alexander Goltz is confident that the armored vehicles "Tiger" are Russian. Pictures where license plates of the Defense Ministry can be fabricated, believes the expert of the Association of Military Political analyst Alexander Perendzhiev...

(continued)

Continued: Ukraine Crisis Reverberates in Russia: the Caucasus Connection

15 March 2014

Ukraine, including Crimea, is far from being a hotbed of radical Islam. To the contrary, Crimea has been peaceful; the Tatar minority in Crimea has painful memories of horrific deportations ordered by Stalin in the 1930s, which is why they fear Crimea joining Russia.

*Very little research has been conducted about Wahhabism and other extremist elements in Crimea, perhaps because they have accomplished so little in reality. The Crimean Hizb al-Tahrir, for instance, claims ties to the global Tahrir network, but it remains unclear whether it is truly connected to the large London- and Jordan-based Hizb. It is possible that some individuals may have connections to the North Caucasus and elsewhere. If so, it is important to recall that, by many accounts, Russia's own policies in the Caucasus have bred extremism in this region where it did not exist before. At the moment, nonetheless, it is the economic and military concerns that appear to have more immediate and real impact, both on the Caucasus, and other regions in and around Russia. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***

Source: “События в Крыму развиваются по абхазскому и юго-осетинскому сценарию, заявили участники антивоенной акции в Москве (Crimean events are developing like the Abkhazian and South Ossetian scenario, said antiwar protestors in Moscow),” Kavkazskiy Uzel (Caucasian Knot)
<http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/239538/> 15 March 2014

In the center of Moscow, a demonstration took place, in accordance with the mayor's office held against the Russian military hostilities in the Crimea. The demonstration, according to the Caucasian Knot, was attended by approximately 60,000 people. With the annexation of Crimea to Russia, the North Caucasian republics and Krasnodar region will suffer, said political analyst Andrei Serenko...

According to expert, to integrate the peninsula “at least \$30 billion for 10 years” are necessary, and “given the Russian practice of kickbacks and corruption,” the figure “of course, will grow.”

“If you give somewhere, you have to take it from somewhere. The preferred recipient of grants from the Russian government will become the Crimea, and not the North Caucasian republics, which will have to tighten their belts,” Serenko told the Caucasian Knot.

There is also problem with the organizations considered extremist, the expert said. In the Crimea are three thousand Muslims Salafists some of whom one way or the other support the armed underground in the North Caucasus. Also, recognized on the Russian territory extremist organization “Hizb ut-Tahrir” in Ukraine and in Crimea, in particular, acted openly. “How these people will behave is unknown,” said Serenko.

Another important factor is the leakage of finances after the integration of the Crimea from the Krasnodar region as “Russian resorts.” A Russian will prefer Crimea to Sochi and Mineral waters, finished Serenko.

Russian Airborne Troops Descend

11 March 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *As the crisis in Ukraine continues to unfold, Russia's airborne troops (VDV) begin the largest military training exercise in the history of Russian troops, according to Russia's Defense Ministry. Over 4000 troops will be involved in the exercise, with roughly 3500 soldiers parachuting ("descending," as many Russian papers describe it) from 11-14 March 2014. The VDV are the best the Russian military has to offer when it comes to rapid assault.*

The accompanying excerpts describe the exercise in further detail. The second accompanying excerpt, from Moskovskiy Komsomolets, recalls that in August 2008 VDV troops were involved in Georgia, in the "operation to force Georgia to peace," as the paper describes Russia's invasion of this country. Five years later, in March 2013, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu ordered use of airborne forces as a rapid reaction force "in case of expediting tasks to curb crises." VDV Commander Vladimir Shamanov said at the time that airborne troops, if necessary, may be directed to carry out combat missions as a rapid reaction force beyond the Russian Federation, particularly in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and CSTO countries. Soon afterwards, in July 2013, Shamanov announced that the Airborne Troops would become the core of Russia's rapid reaction forces.

*There are many parallels between Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008 and current events in Ukraine. In April 2008 Russia increased the number of what it called peacekeeping troops in Abkhazia, claiming these were for protection of ethnic Russians. Now, in Crimea, the Russian government claims protection of ethnic Russians, is amassing troops, and is holding military exercises. As events in Ukraine continue to play out, the VDV's "descent" is certainly worth paying attention to. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***



Vladimir Shamanov (2010)
Source: <http://en.ria.ru/>

Source: "ВДВ впервые в истории РФ десантируют около 3,5 тысяч военнослужащих" (Airborne troops for the first time in Russia's history are landing about 3500 troops), Argumenty i fakty (Arguments and Facts), 11 March 2014. <http://www.aif.ru/society/army/1121700>

Large-scale exercises of Russia's Airborne Troops (VDV) with landing of about 3,500 soldiers will last from Tuesday until March 14, RIA Novosti reported.

According to the Defense Ministry, such a number of soldiers will parachute for the first time in the history of Russian troops. Altogether, over four thousand people will be involved, 36 aircraft military transport and army aviation and other equipment. . . .



Paratroopers from the CSTO's Collective Rapid Reaction Force (Russia's 98th Guards Airborne Division and the 31st Detached Guards Air Assault Brigade) met by Comm. Shamanov and PM Dmitry Medvedev.
Source: <http://theriseofrussia.blogspot.com>

(continued)

Continued: Russian Airborne Troops Descend

Source: “‘Десантура’ готовится к вооруженному конфликту (‘The descenders’ are preparing for armed conflict),” Moskovsky Komsomolets, 11 March, 2014. <http://www.mk.ru/politics/russia/article/2014/03/11/996737-quotdesanturaquot-gotovitsya-k-vooruzhennomu-konfliktu.html>

...In particular, writes news agency REGNUM, in large-scale exercises of the Airborne Troops (VDV) in Ivanovo and Kostroma regions the newest automated control system “Andromeda-D” will be involved....

...Recall that in August 2008, the VDV troops participated in an operation to force Georgia to peace, acting in the Ossetian and Abkhazian directions. In particular, the two VDV divisions- 98th Ivanovo Guards Airborne Division, which in May of the same year was named the best in the winter training period, and the 31-th separate Ulyanovsk Guards Air Assault Brigade, which is part of the collective forces of operative response of the Collective Security Treaty (CSTO CFOR), were brought to the operation on the border with Georgia.

In March 2013 at the enlarged meeting of the board Russian Defense Ministry, Defense Minister General Sergei Shoigu ordered to provide the use of airborne forces as a rapid reaction force “in case of expediting tasks to curb crises.” VDV commander, Hero of the Russian Airborne Troops Commander Colonel General Vladimir Shamanov said that Airborne troops, if necessary, may be directed to carry out combat missions as a rapid reaction force beyond the Russian Federation, particularly in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and CSTO countries.

Russia's Strategic Mobility

Supporting 'Hard Power' to 2020?

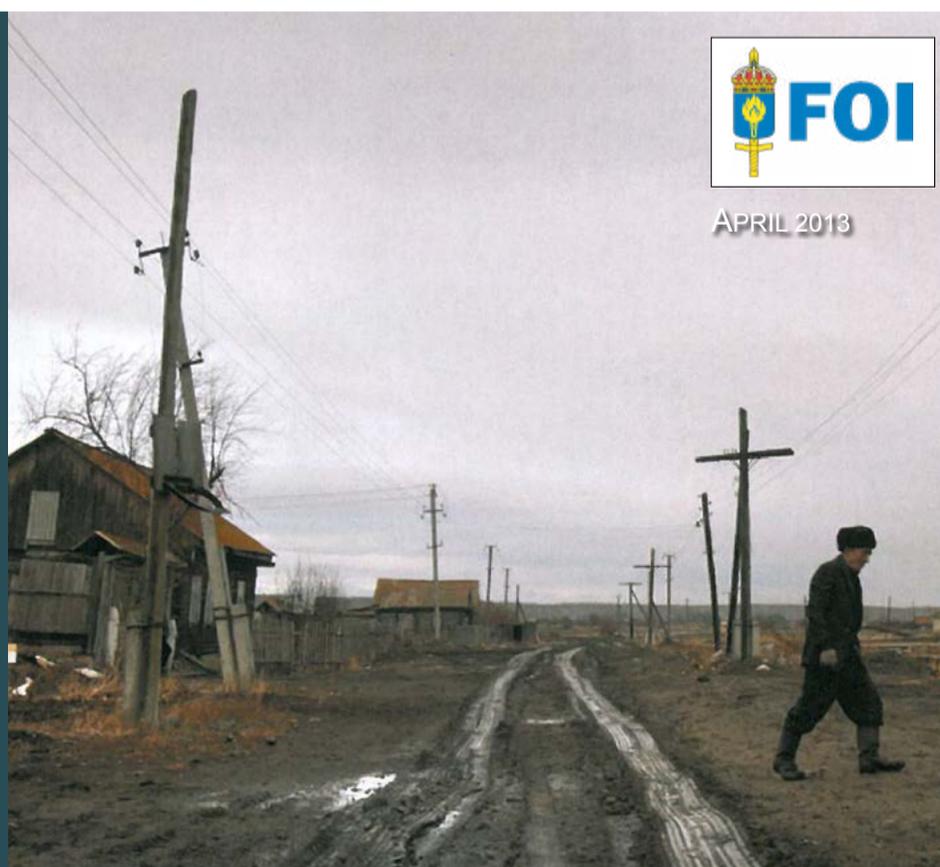
By Roger N. McDermott

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



OE Watch Commentary: *Russia's recent attempts to redraw the borders of Ukraine have elicited grave concern among many in Europe, but none more so than in the Baltic countries. Although it has been more than 70 years ago, memories of their painful incorporation into the USSR remain fresh. While communist ideology no longer fits into the equation, their experience in 1940 and the resemblance to the Crimean operation today are striking. The relatively large ethnic Russian population in each of these countries has also been a cause for apprehension (Latvia-26%, Estonia-25%, and Lithuania-6%). As in Ukraine, there are fears that these Russians could appeal for support from Moscow, and, under the pretext of protecting their compatriots, the Kremlin leadership could be tempted to intervene.*

As these countries remain heavily reliant upon Russia for their energy needs, they must balance security concerns with economic demands. Besides maintaining their own national armed forces, the Baltic's primary line of defense has centered upon the security guarantees as a member (since 2004) of the NATO alliance. As the four brief excerpts indicate, while NATO membership has helped to allay fears of possible aggression, the recent Russian moves against Ukraine have encouraged Baltic leaders to consider additional options to enhance their defense.

The first two excerpts from the Latvian press discuss not only how to enhance the country's defense with a possible inclusion of a NATO base in the Baltics, but also how to fortify the most critical six inches of strategic land-power, that is, the country's information space. As the Russian national media has become ever more centralized under Kremlin control, it has been increasingly transformed into a powerful propaganda tool. To counter this Kremlin-friendly message, the author of the second excerpt argues that Latvian media must provide alternatives to influential Russian television.

Source: Voldemars Krustins and Egils Licitis, "Interview with MP and Retired Brigadier General Karlis Kreslins: We Must Be Prepared To Defend Ourselves," *Latvijas Avize*, 11 March 2014.

... [Licitis] I noticed that the National Alliance is proposing that NATO establish military bases in Latvia. Where and how would that happen? Do you think that NATO bases would consolidate society if the situation here were more secure?

[Kreslins] I support the proposal. The base does not necessarily have to be in Latvia, but there must be one in the Baltic region. That would enhance security. Right now there are three NATO excellence centers in the Baltic States, and we were the last ones to open a strategic communications center.

[Licitis] Those are little offices, but if we need air defense, then why not install NATO artillery and missiles here?

[Kreslins] Why not, indeed. The promise has already been made to increase the number of airplanes which monitor Baltic airspace. I hope that the destroyers will someday be based at the airfield in Lielvarde....

Source: Aivars Ozolins, "Ukrainian Measuring Stick," *Ir*, 6 March 2014.

...Wishful thinking and "Realpolitik must be replaced by realism in the realm of politics. Latvia's reaction toward events in Ukraine has been respectable so far, thanks first and foremost to the main "face" of this policy -- Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics. At the same time, however, the government must be able to fundamentally revise its political priorities and act accordingly. An example here is Lattelecom, which has decided to include BBC, CNN and several Russian channels that are not controlled by Putin in its basic package of cable television services -- one that is absurdly dominated at this time by the Kremlin's propaganda. Another priority for the government must be the security of the Latvian state and its inhabitants....

(continued)



Continued: Baltic View of Crimea

The third excerpt from the Lithuanian press addresses another element in Russia's soft power arsenal: Rossotrudnichestvo (The Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation). The charter of this well funded organization is to maintain Russia's influence in the former countries of the USSR and to advance Russia's political and economic interests. The article suggests that it might be prudent for Lithuania to examine how and where this organization spends its money.

The final excerpt from the Estonian press argues specifically of the value in maintaining robust strategic land-power forces. The author posits that Russian involvement in Ukraine should provide the necessary incentive for Estonian legislators to increase military spending, particularly on those weapons systems (e.g., tanks, artillery, APVs) to defend the country's borders.

The Baltic concerns are not without merit. On 4 March President Putin gave a press conference where he explained Russia's position with regard to Ukraine and Crimea. During the Q&A, he remarked that some of the Ukrainian protestors in Kiev were trained at special bases in neighboring states: in Lithuania, Poland and in Ukraine itself. This remark, combined with previous statements from other nationalist Russian politicians about the need to protect Russian citizens wherever they live, provides sufficient grounds for increased defense awareness in the Baltic region.
End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

Source: Nemira Pumprickaite, "Interview with Jukneviene: Russian Offensive Weapons Can Access Entire Lithuanian Territory," Savaite program, LRT 10 March 2014.

...**[Pumprickaite]** Do you think that Russia is reacting to the Lithuanian stance?

[Jukneviene] I think that Russia always reacts to Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia as temporary states, as Russian politics views them. And this always has mostly to do with the fact that Vladimir Putin has set himself the task to restore the Soviet Union. And now, during the Crimean conflict, it is important for Russia to secure some support here...

[Pumprickaite] And how advanced is the Kremlin's "soft power" in Lithuania?

[Jukneviene] It is very advanced, but it is a pity that no one wants to talk about that. The most prominent attempts to influence the country is through energy. This influence has been in Lithuania for many years...

Last year's Rossotrudnichestvo budget had \$500 million. On what does it spend the money? On the media, to buy politicians, to create various propaganda campaigns, and to influence people's minds. Look at how intense the work in Facebook or in some internet portals is to influence people's minds...

Source: Mikk Salu, "Estonian Battle Equipment Buy Endangered," Postimees.ee, 6 March 2014.

...We need tanks

It's another matter how development of national defense is going to be impacted by Russian aggression in Ukraine. On the one hand, it should make Estonia try harder.

"Actually, we ought to increase defense budget and set as our new goal to have a complete mechanized brigade ready by 2018," said the IRL chairman Mr Reinsalu.

This means that, in addition to combat vehicles and self-propelled howitzers, Estonia should buy tanks. For the latter, however, the current budget limits for near-future will definitely hold no money.

Recalling the Russian-Georgian war -- back then, also, big words were uttered about this being Estonia's lesson and that Estonia need quickly and principally ratchet up its defense development. Even so, after a few months, the same old same old set in again. Possibly, that's what will happen again, in wake of the Ukrainian crisis...

Polite Green Men in Crimea-Origins

4 March 2014

OE Watch Commentary: Removing all identifying markers from equipment and uniforms does not necessarily reduce the combat effectiveness of a strategic land-power, but it certainly adds to the fog of war. In early March 2014 Russian forces sealed off the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine. As the first excerpt indicates, even though the Russian president denied that these forces belonged to the Russian military, their movement to seize and blockade key Ukrainian military sites in Crimea was effective and certainly supported Russia's strategic objectives.

While Russia's traditional media faithfully followed the Kremlin's script as to the origin and command of these forces, the commentary and analysis were more varied in the realm of Russian social media. As the second excerpt points out, one Russian blogger suggested that these forces were actually private military companies hired by the pro-Russian Crimean authorities to prevent political and social instability. Other bloggers pointed to the striking similarities in uniforms and equipment to Russian military units and proposed that they belonged either to the Russian military units stationed in Crimea or elite airborne units from Russia.

On 4 March 2014 Ilya Varlamov, one of Russia's most influential bloggers (<http://zyalt.livejournal.com/>), traveled to Crimea, and provided an in-depth report on the situation. From his reporting there is little doubt that these "polite green men" (the nickname given to these forces by local reporters) were members of the Russian military, dispatched either from their bases in Crimea or from Russia to secure the peninsula. Varlamov's written commentary that accompanies the blog entry is quite balanced, where he tries to portray the situation from the local perspective without all of the typical media propaganda. Some of the reader comments to this blog entry are equally sensible, but many others are volatile and reflect the hot passions surrounding this issue.

Varlamov's blog, like many others which covered this incident, provides substantial evidence that President Putin may have distorted the truth regarding the role that additional Russian military units played in the seizure of the Crimean peninsula in early March. Given that the Russian leader has shown a growing dislike of being contradicted, there is a strong possibility that the Kremlin will continue to consolidate and control information within Russian social media, particularly among those bloggers who track the development and deployment of the country's strategic land power. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

Source: "President Putin Holds Press Conference on Ukraine Situation," 4 March 2014. <http://eng.kremlin.ru/>

...**QUESTION:** Mr. President, a clarification if I may. The people who were blocking the Ukrainian Army units in Crimea were wearing uniforms that strongly resembled the Russian Army uniform. Were those Russian soldiers, Russian military?

VLADIMIR PUTIN: Why don't you take a look at the post-Soviet states. There are many uniforms there that are similar. You can go to a store and buy any kind of uniform

QUESTION: But were they Russian soldiers or not?

VLADIMIR PUTIN: Those were local self-defense units....

...**QUESTION:** In that case, can I specify: did we take part in training Crimean self-defense forces?

VLADIMIR PUTIN: No, we did not.

Source: <http://zyalt.livejournal.com/1017094.html>

"I expect that a contract will be revealed to the world soon signed between the government of Crimea and a private military company (PMC) on services connected with the defense and protection of the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea."

Source: <http://voronkov-kirill.livejournal.com/26373.html>

"The vehicle identifying numbers have been removed, and by their appearance, just recently. Officially these are not our Tigers, but Tigers belonging to the local Crimean defense units. Where did these self-defense forces find modern Russian military equipment, nobody explains. Again, officially, the Russian military units are not blockading anyone. But everyone understands that this is Russian equipment and these are Russian soldiers. Such weapons and uniforms among the locals have never been seen and they couldn't possibly possess."



Russian Tiger in Crimea, 4 March 2014.
Source: <http://zyalt.livejournal.com/1017094.html>

Russia's Use of Strategic Landpower during the Crimean Crisis: the Media

“Videos are making the rounds of the Internet in which army columns of the Ukrainian Army are moving from their permanent bases. Where are all these vehicles heading? South, to the border with the Crimea? ...in [Acting Ukrainian Defense Minister Ihor] Tenyukh’s words, the Ukrainian Army is conducting exercises.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Russian military has continued to use its landpower assets both in Crimea and on Ukraine’s borders. It uses landpower exercises, as it did during the Russian intervention into Georgia nearly six years ago, to intimidate and threaten. There are also unconfirmed reports of Russian soldiers entering Moldova, whose mission is to secure the Moldovan-Ukrainian border area. Thus this is a full-fledged use of strategic landpower whose overall mission appears to be to put a strategic squeeze on Ukraine to enable the annexation of Ukrainian territory using military pressure.*

These landpower adjustments are reinforced with a massive domestic media campaign. This landpower-media link is of critical importance for Russia’s domestic support of its operations. For example, Interfax-AVN Online in English has noted that Ukrainian military exercises in eastern and southern Ukraine threaten to “further destabilize the political situation in Ukraine.” Therefore, what is required, by implication, is a buildup of Russian troops on Ukraine’s border. Omitted from the reporting is that Russian forces have moved first. Further, there are seldom any shots on Russian TV of Russian forces in Crimea. Another report, offered by popular Russian military observer Viktor Baranets, stated that Ukraine is preparing to storm Crimea and purge the southeast part of the country. He states that US army signal officers are in Kiev in Ukrainian uniforms, and US information warfare advisers have started work. Further, Baranets states that decisions have been made

Source: Viktor Baranets, “Ukrainian Army Preparing to Storm the Crimea and Purge Southeast of the Country,” Komsomolskaya Pravda Online, 11 March 2014.

Komsomolskaya Pravda’s military observer Viktor Baranets answers five naive questions about whether a real war could erupt in Ukraine

1. WHERE ARE THE TANKS GOING?

Videos are doing the rounds of the Internet in which army columns of the Ukrainian Army are moving from their permanent bases. Where are all these vehicles heading? South, to the border with the Crimea? If you believe the statement of Acting Ukrainian Defense Minister Ihor Tenyukh, “no sorties by the Armed Forces in the direction of the Crimea are envisaged.” In Tenyukh’s words, the Ukrainian Army is conducting exercises: “In connection with this, some military units could leave their permanent bases in order to move to the training grounds.” But these statements could well be only camouflage for the Ukrainian leadership’s real plans. Especially seeing that, just before this, at a conference in the Defense Ministry, Tenyukh had demanded that “these bitches be kicked out of the Crimea” (direct quotation).

It is curious that the Ukrainian troops are mainly moving toward southern training grounds -- as close as possible to the Crimea. And that Ukraine’s borders have been left without protection.

2. WHAT ARE U.S. INSTRUCTORS DOING THERE?

What are American military instructors and officers of the U.S. special services, a preponderance of whom are now being observed in Ukraine, up to?

American equipment has been delivered to the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv and a full-fledged combat command and control center has been launched. U.S. Army signals officers (in Ukrainian uniform) are present in the Ukrainian Defense Ministry and the Ukrainian General Staff and in the battle lines of Ukrainian troops. At the same time, a group of American information warfare advisers have actively started work: A cover operation has been launched in the Ukrainian mass media -- a canard about an airborne assault operation allegedly being prepared by the Russian Army in the vicinity of Kherson is being vigorously disseminated.

3. COULD KYIV TAKE THE CRIMEA?

One likely scenario is a Ukrainian airdrop in the rear of the Crimean self-defense forces on the isthmus. At the same time, artillery and air strikes could be inflicted on the positions of self-defense fighters. The aim would be to ensure the crossing of motorized rifle, tank, and other units of the Ukrainian Army into the Crimea. The probability that Ukrainian Spetsnaz will be transferred to the Crimea with the aim of shutting down the command and control centers of the Russian Black Sea Fleet is also high. Judging by the fact that the Crimean special services and the Crimean police have begun to detain scouts from Ukraine more and more often, active reconnaissance of the situation on the peninsula is already under way. The Russian General Staff, the Black Sea Fleet Staff, and military reconnaissance are preparing for various potential courses of events.

(continued)

Continued: Russia's Use of Strategic Landpower during the Crimean Crisis: the Media

to vest the army with police functions and send the armed forces against its own people in the eastern and southern sections of Ukraine. Such deceptive and manipulative reporting enhances the Russian population's demand for the use of its landpower assets to protect Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine.
End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)

4. ARE THE UKRAINIANS COMBAT CAPABLE?

There is a widespread gung-ho opinion that “strictly speaking, there is no Ukrainian Army anyway.” This is a delusion. The Ukrainian Army has quite a few combat capable units. Yes, their combat equipment is largely obsolete (Soviet), but they also have quite a lot of new equipment -- for example, Ukrainian Oplot tanks are quoted on the world market. It is dangerous to underestimate all this. That the morale of the Ukrainian troops is not high is another matter. Few of them want to go to war with Crimean Russians. Only the unbridled ultra-nationalists (mainly from Western Ukraine). In order to resolve this problem, the Ukrainian Army leadership has decided to reinforce the command personnel of southern and eastern units with officers from Western Ukraine.

There is also other information: Tenyukh has instructed the General Staff to elaborate a plan for the pacification of Ukraine's southern and eastern oblasts that do not accept Kyiv's policies. Thus they want to vest the Army with police functions and send it against their own people.

5. ARE THE RUSSIAN MILITARY READY FOR A BLOW?

This is how one Ukrainian military expert answered this question: “Even the weapons that the Russian Army has received in the past five years are sufficient to blow away that equipment of the Ukrainian Army that still retains at least relative combat capability almost without any losses to itself.”

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://fms.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Finch-Shoygu.pdf>



Russian Military Mulls Further Organizational Reforms

Originally published in
OE Watch March 2013

OE Watch Commentary: The ouster of Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov in November 2012 has led to speculation that the new leadership would roll back some of the massive reforms of the unpopular defense minister. Serdyukov made large personnel cuts, eliminated partially manned division/regimental units in favor of fully ready brigades, and cut the General Staff, shifting some of its responsibilities to the Ministry of Defense.

Among his most controversial reforms was the restructuring of the organizational and administrative control of the Armed Forces. The Russian Federation had been divided into six military districts, but the commanders of these military districts did not operationally control the vast majority of units on their territory. The operational control of military units had typically resided with the service commander (Ground Forces, Navy, etc.). Serdyukov merged the six military districts into four, which would also function as "Joint Strategic Commands," by giving operational control of most units to the military district commander. Pundits pointed out that this reform, like several others, was designed to make the Russian Armed Forces look more like the Armed Forces of the United States, where operational control resides with the regional combatant commander, while administrative control resides with the branch of service commander.

Three months into the appointment of Serdyukov's successor, Sergei Shoigu, it appears that there is little chance that this particular reform will be rolled back. The excerpt from the following article discusses the authors' proposal for further expanding upon the concept of splitting operational and administrative control functions, an interesting proposition considering the high value that the Russian military has traditionally held for the unity of command principle.
End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)

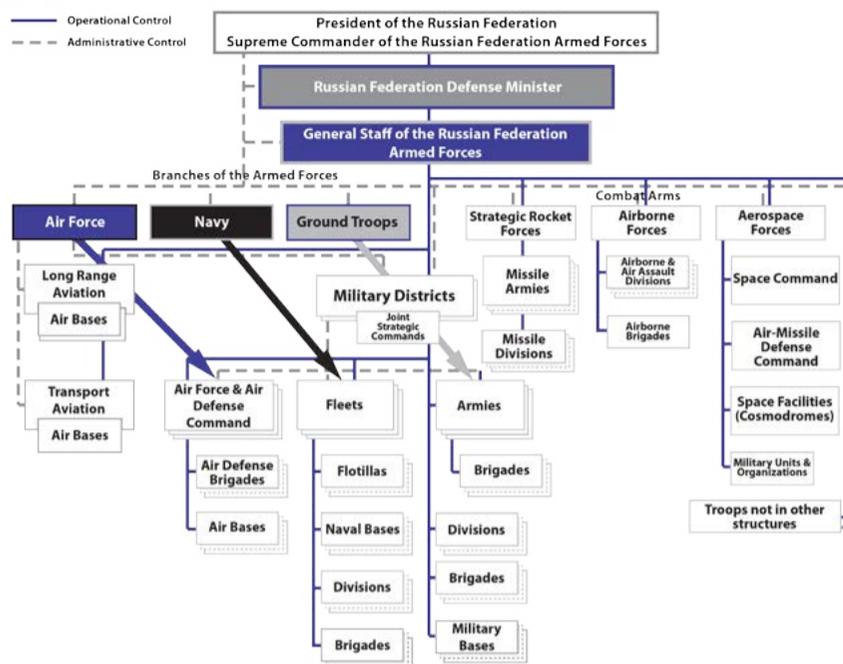


Fig. 1. Structure of the Russian Federation Armed Forces and variant of delimiting command and control functions as of 2012

Source: Vladimir Ostankov and Petr Lapunov, "Zigzags of Organizational Development: Armed Forces Structure Should Be Optimized Based on Functional Specialization," *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer Online*, 13 February 2013, <http://www.vpk-news.ru/articles/14430>, accessed 13 February 2013.

Armed Forces Structure Should Be Optimized Based on Functional Specialization

...RF Armed Forces branches and combat arms are headed by commanders-in-chief (commanders), whose status predetermines centralization of command and control based on the principle of one-man command. The corresponding CINC has the necessary powers for organizing combat employment of all his subordinate forces and assets. At the same time, main commands also are responsible for development and comprehensive support of their troops, and these are administrative functions. Thus, until recently both operational as well as administrative functions rested simultaneously with commanders-in-chief (commanders) of RF Armed Forces branches and arms.

Current Version

The principle of delimiting rights and responsibility among military command and control entities into operational and administrative functions at a strategic level has been implemented since 2010 (Fig. 1). Interbranch groupings of troops (forces) and the entities for operational control of them were established -- four combined strategic commands (OSK's). Combined formations [obyedineniye], formations [soyedineniye], and units of Ground Troops, Air Force, and Navy were directly subordinated to them.

It follows from the above RF Armed Forces organizational structure that the process of delimiting functions has not been completed. Commanders of combat arms still retain operational and administrative control functions.

In addition, the presence of the Air Force in this structure as well as of a separate combat arm, the Air Defense Troops, which certain experts propose to elevate to the rank of a branch of the Armed Forces, indicates a violation of the

(continued)

Continued: Russian Military Mulls Further Organizational Reforms

principle of unity of responsibility for development of forces and assets intended for waging armed warfare in the aerospace sphere. This inevitably will entail a duplication of missions, diffusion of resources, and blurring of responsibility in a sphere whose importance is disputed by no one. Unceasing discussions about the place, missions, and order of battle of this new combat arm are confirmation of this...

Rational Approach

But how to avoid the crude mistakes and senseless waste of resources and arrive at an optimal Armed Forces structure?

It is generally known that the principle of coordinated employment of troops and forces belonging to different branches (arms) is the basis of modern armed warfare. In this case the advantages of troop groupings inherent to combat systems are noted to the greatest extent. This is not just the sum of qualities of branches and combat arms. Such a system manifests emergence, i.e., properties appear which are not had by any one of its component elements taken individually. In other words, the value of interbranch groupings of troops (forces) increases in modern armed warfare, especially if we are talking about the strategic scale.

The substantiated nature of this conclusion conforms with the position of Academy of Military Sciences President General of the Army Makhmut Gareyev. In particular, he notes that active, coordinated actions of all branches of the Armed Forces assume decisive importance in the overall system of armed warfare. In his opinion, this circumstance must be reflected in the new Armed Forces organizational structure.

Indeed, considering the present-day nature of armed warfare, armed forces of the majority of foreign states have established entities for operational control of them already in peacetime. And as a rule, operational and administrative functions are not combined. That principle is realized in organizational development of armed forces of the United States and NATO countries. It should be emphasized that dividing operational and administrative functions also is an effective mechanism allowing assurance of one-man command of interbranch groupings of troops (forces)...

Division of Functions

In our opinion, in addition to the commands already established -- four OSK's and the VKO -- it is advisable to create a number of new ones in the RF Armed Forces structure: Strategic Offensive Forces (Deterrence Forces), Special Operations Forces, a Cyber Command, and certain others. Naturally, there must be corresponding combat systems under each of them.

A variant of the proposed RF Armed Forces organizational structure is depicted in Fig. 2. It is based primarily on logic and on principles of organizational development and military art. They should be viewed as a series of ideas which require further systems study involving Defense Ministry scientific research organizations. Nevertheless, this organizational structure permits overcoming the long-standing contradiction between the interbranch nature of employment of troops (forces) and assets and their branch subordination. This provision is confirmed by the experience of previously including the VKS and RKO Troops in the RVSN, which led to the appearance of an intermediate control

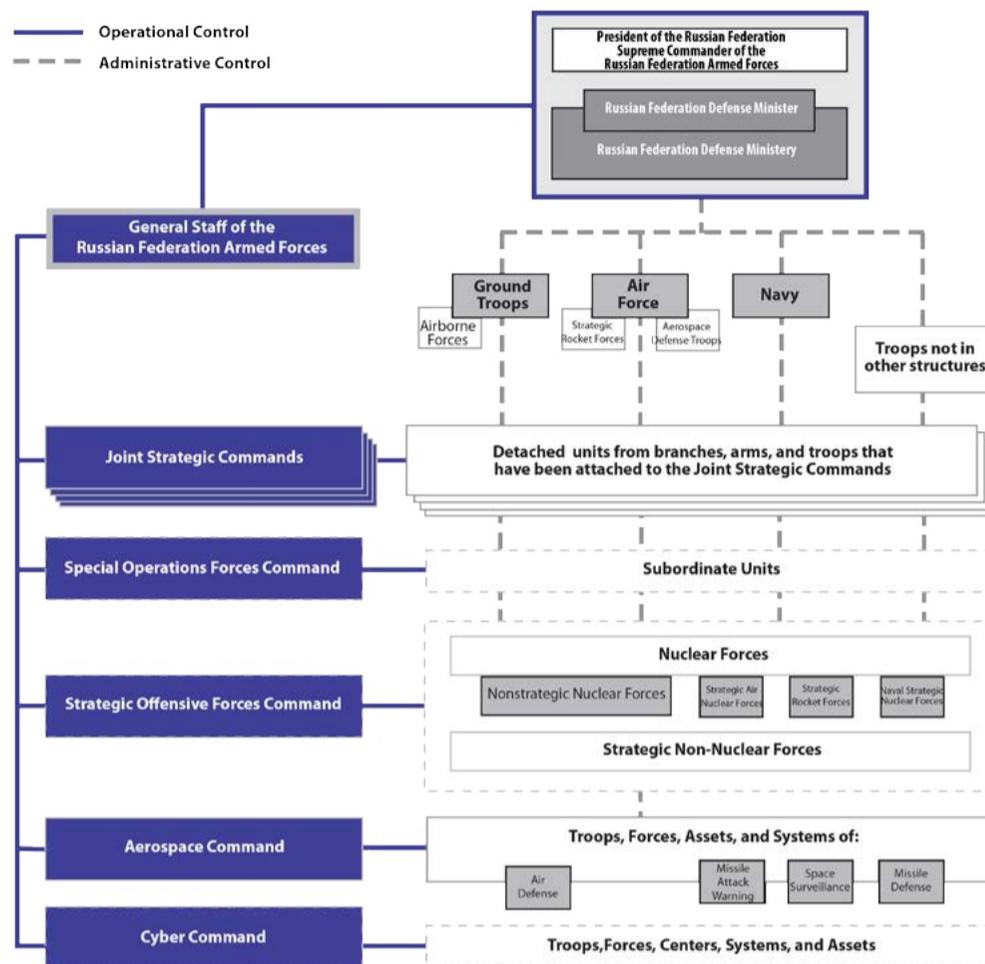


Fig. 2. Variant of the organizational structure of the Russian Federation Armed Forces

(continued)

Continued: Russian Military Mulls Further Organizational Reforms

echelon -- the branch Main Command -- and reduced promptness in making decisions and communicating missions.

The advisability of creating a system of operational and administrative control entities is motivated by one other circumstance. It precludes the possibility of combat arms being reoriented to execute missions in support of one branch of the Armed Forces to the detriment of others, which took place in the recent past. It will permit relieving the RF Armed Forces General Staff of tasks of day-to-day direction of troops not inherent to it by transferring the tasks to administrative control entities. In addition, real conditions will be created for transition to a three-branch structure, which the majority of experts do not dispute.

The first condition is to include the RVSN and VKO Troops as combat arms in the Air Force (Aerospace Troops). That said, only those departments and services of the RVSN Command and VKO Troops Command performing administrative functions should be included in its Main Command. Conditions thereby will be created for coordinated organization and development of troops and combat systems intended for actions in the aerospace sphere, as well as for the organization and accomplishment of special kinds of support.

The other departments and services of those combat arms together with operational personnel must be made part of Strategic Offensive Forces and VKO operational commands.

The second condition is inclusion of the VDV as a combat arm in the Ground Troops. That said, it is advisable to give the Ground Troops Main Command only those departments and services carrying out administrative functions as departments and services of the Airborne Troops.

Uncommitted departments, services, and operational personnel carrying out operational functions can be the basis of the Special Operations Forces Command...

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 2014, 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>

Growing Role of Russian Airborne Forces

Originally published in
OE Watch August 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *The Russian Airborne Forces have long enjoyed a prominent place in the Russian Armed Forces. Airborne Forces are considered an independent branch of the Russian Armed Forces (as the Strategic Rocket and Aerospace Forces). The main maneuver units of the Russian Airborne Forces branch consist of two airborne divisions, two air assault divisions, and one separate air assault brigade, as depicted in the attached graphic. (The Russian Federation also has four separate air assault brigades that belong to the appropriate military district/joint strategic command commander, a holdover from a similar command and control relationship in Soviet times).*

The radical defense reforms of the previous Defense Minister, Anatoli Serdyukov, had much less effect on the Airborne Forces compared to the Ground

Source: Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation in Russian, official website of the Russian Federation Ministry of Defense, <http://www.mil.ru>, accessed 16 July 2013.

Russian Airborne Forces Mission Statement

The Airborne Troops is a combat arm in the Armed Forces, subordinated to the Supreme Command. Their task is to envelop the enemy in the air and to conduct missions behind enemy lines aimed at disrupting command and control functions, seizing and destroying ground-based precision weapons, disrupting the advance and deployment of enemy reserves, and disrupting enemy logistics and communications, to provide cover for assigned areas and open flanks, to block and destroy landed airborne assault forces and enemy forces which have passed through friendly defense, and to perform other tasks. In peacetime, the Airborne Troops perform missions aimed at maintaining the combat and mobilization readiness at the level necessary for the successful fulfillment of their tasks.

Source: Andrey Bondarenko, "Peacekeepers in Blue Berets," Red Star, military affairs newspaper, 18 June 2013, <http://www.redstar.ru>, accessed 16 July 13.

Peacekeepers in Blue Berets

In addition to scheduled combat training, as of 1 June subunits of the Order of Kutuzov Guards 31st Separate Air Assault Brigade commanded by Hero of the Russian Federation [RF] Guards Colonel Gennadiy Anashkin began training activities under a program for training

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Russian Airborne troops in training.

Source via: <http://xn--80aeeijowaeiblaehk1r.xn--plai/?id=7>

Continued: Growing Role of Russian Airborne Forces

Forces branch. Although there was a reduction of the Airborne Forces, there was no change in the command and control of the branch, unlike the Ground Forces, which had the operational control removed from the Ground Forces Commander and placed with the military district/joint strategic command commander. Russian Airborne Forces units are considered elite units, and there are ongoing discussions in the Russian media about the possibility of establishing a Russian Special Operations Command, structured similarly to, or possibly subordinated to the Russian Airborne Forces.

The Russian Airborne Forces are commanded by Colonel General Vladimir Shamanov, a popular, but somewhat controversial general who gained a reputation for aggressive action while commanding various units in the Russian North Caucasus. General Shamanov has been championing the possibility of subordinating SPETSNAZ units to the branch, and was likely a strong proponent of the designation of his sole independent air assault brigade as a “peacekeeping” entity. In the Russian Armed Forces peacekeeping units are typically better trained, receiving more qualified troops, training, and pay.

*Some commentators have speculated that General Shamanov’s “airborne” approach is evident in the forceful way that he operates within the Russian Ministry of Defense. The designation of the 31st Separate Guards Air Assault Brigade as a peacekeeping unit, as the second excerpt discusses, illustrates how General Shamanov leverages resources for his beloved Airborne Forces. Should peacekeeping continue to be resource lucrative, such duties will likely become one of the Russian Airborne Forces core competencies. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

peacekeeping force elements...

By decision of the Armed Forces leadership, this VDV [Airborne] formation, which has the highest manning of contract personnel, must be in readiness to participate in peacekeeping operations under UN or Collective Security Treaty Organization [CSTO] aegis.

The VDV commander announced that the Ulyanovsk formation will be reinforced by introducing a regular reconnaissance battalion and electronic warfare company to its makeup in place of the reconnaissance company. He assigned the mission of fully manning the brigade with contract personnel by fall... Brigade Commander Guards Col Anashkin stated: “By decision of the Supreme Commander we now can be sent to any point in the world at any moment to perform a peacekeeping mission...”

The “Winged Guard” from Ulyanovsk already has participated in a peacekeeping operation. This was in the Balkans when, based on a UN Security Council resolution and Russian Government decree, Russia’s 554th Separate Battalion numbering 900 persons and activated on the basis of VDV units was sent to the former Yugoslavia in the spring of 1992. Officers and men from Budennovsk operated as peacekeepers in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo-Metohija from 1994 on.

The Krasnaya Zvezda correspondent was informed by Formation Deputy Commander Guards Lieutenant Colonel Oleg Mityayev that special curricula and plans for training personnel in peacekeeping matters had been drawn up for brigade subunits. They were coordinated with the General Staff and approved by the Armed Forces Main Combat Training Directorate, and were designed to train personnel in the course of 1.5 months and five months. Training sessions under the peacekeeping subunit training program now will be held for servicemen of 31st Guards Separate Air Assault Brigade under supervision of the VDV deputy commander for peacekeeping forces and for the CSTO Collective Rapid Reaction Force (KSOR).

Work is being done to create and upgrade the necessary training facility for peacekeeping matters. A training complex for rehearsing peacekeeping missions is being prepared at the brigade’s Polivno Range. For quality preparation to participate in peacekeeping operations, VDV Commander Col-Gen Shamanov has assigned the mission to make use not only of domestic, but also foreign experience of UN “Blue Helmet” training...

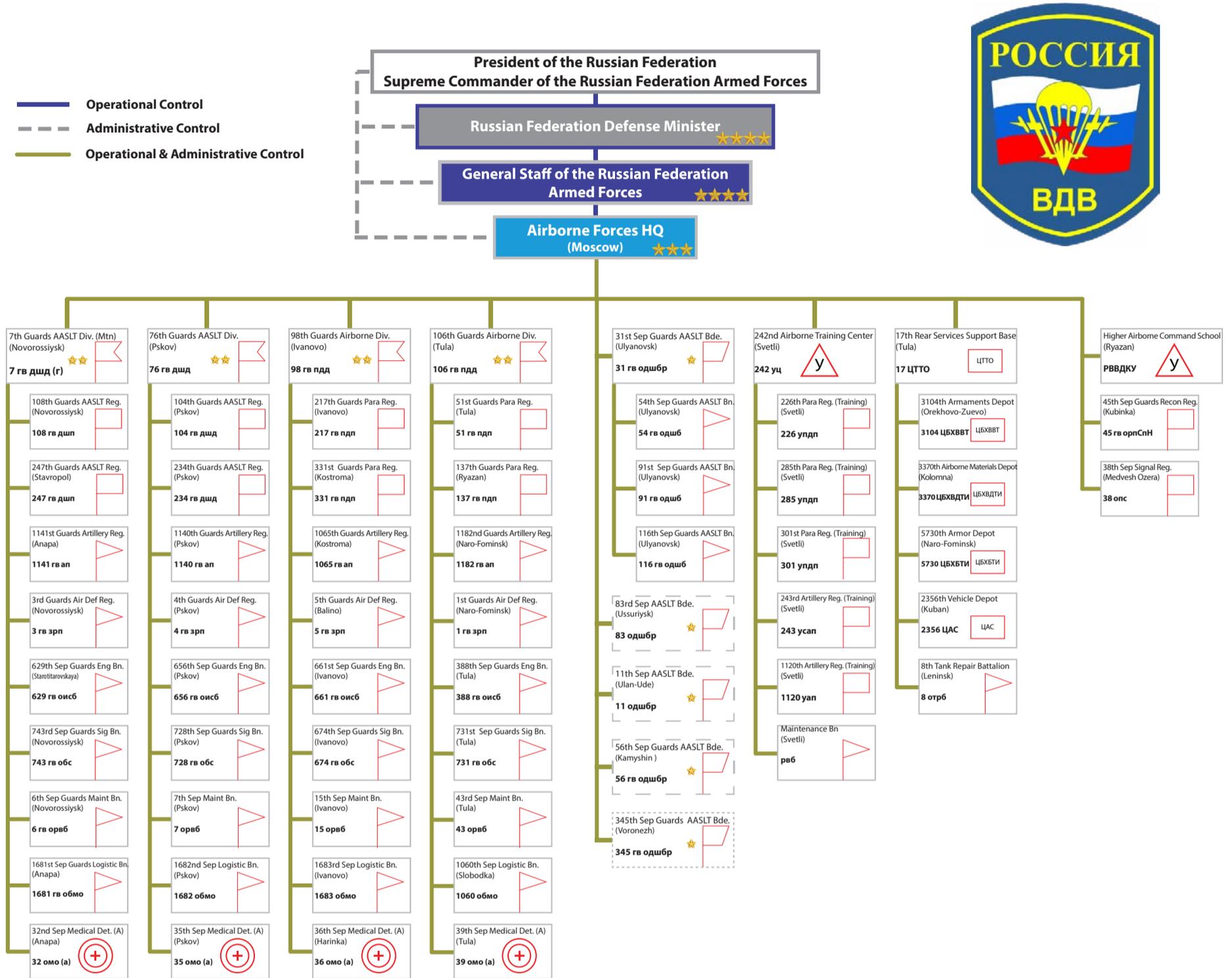


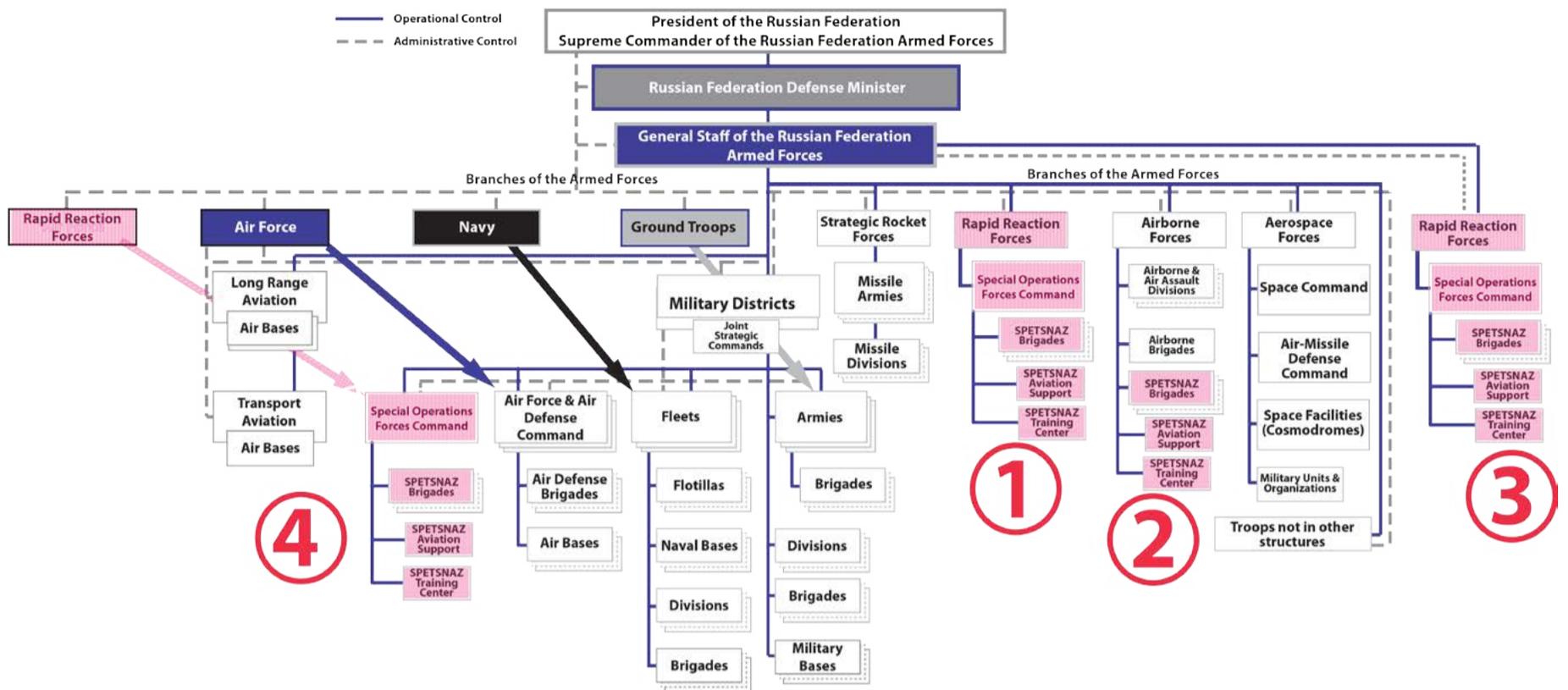
Colonel General Vladimir Shamanov.
Source via: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/86/Vladimir_Shamanov_Cabinet_photo.jpg

(continued)

Continued: Growing Role of Russian Airborne Forces

Organizational Structure of the Russian Airborne Forces





OE Watch Commentary: The Russian Federation has been toying with idea of establishing a Russian special operations command for several years. The accompanying article discusses Russia's recent decision to establish "Rapid Reaction Forces" and a likely subordinate "Special Operations Forces Command." What is definitely less certain is the Russian Federation's plan for command and control of these special operation forces. Russian media sources have been rife with reports of how command and control of a Russian Special Operations Forces Command could evolve, which have been approximated in the accompanying graphic.

1. An independent Rapid Reaction Forces branch could be established, with a Special Operations Forces Command falling beneath it. The Rapid Reaction Forces branch would be organized along the lines of the Airborne Forces, and would be considered an organizational equal with the other lesser branches of the Armed Forces (Strategic Rocket Forces, Airborne Forces, Aerospace Forces).

2. Special Operations Forces could fall under the Airborne Forces branch, with the Special Operations Forces Command being integrated into the Airborne Forces Command command structure. For obvious reasons, this is the command and control structure being proposed by Commander of Airborne Forces Colonel General Shamanov in the second excerpt.

Source: Vladimir Mukhin, "Vladimir Shamanov is Ready for Rapid Reactions: Yet Another Combat Arm will Become an Effective Reserve of the Supreme Commander in Chief." *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (online), 19-23 April 2013, < <http://www.ng.ru/> >, accessed 16 May 2013.

Vladimir Shamanov is Ready for Rapid Reactions

The further enhancement of the command and control system of the RF [Russian Federation] Armed Forces will be concentrated on the formation of a new combat arm, the Rapid Reaction Forces (SBR). The staffing of these forces will be based on the command and control structures of the Airborne Troops (VDV), and it is possible that the command staff of the Special Operations Forces (SSO) now being created will be subordinate to the SBR. The SBR will become a new effective reserve of the Supreme Commander in Chief. This was told to *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* by a source in the military establishment. Based on the summary collegium of the Ministry of Defense at the end of February 2013 on the tasks for the Armed Forces for 2013, military establishment head Sergey Shoygu placed special attention on the role of the VDV in providing for the effective defense of the country.

"Toward the goal of increasing operational effectiveness during the fulfillment of crisis control tasks, we envision the use of the airborne troops as Rapid Reaction Forces," said Sergey Shoygu. Meanwhile, the Minister had already set the task this year for "staffing all airborne assault and landing assault battalions of the VDV with contract servicemen." The first priority will be to staff "two detachments in each special forces brigade" with professionals.

Such a juxtaposition of the VDV and spetsnaz [special forces] tasks is no coincidence. A representative of the Ministry of Defense pointed out under the conditions of anonymity that the tasks and methods of combat operations of the VDV and the SSO were similar in many respects. They are distinguished by mobility, high combat skills, surprise, and the ability to flexibly react to situational changes and changes in the operational tactics of a probable enemy. Moreover, this does not just concern the "traditional" probable enemy, but it also relates to active extremist and religious groups, including partisan warfare conducted by illegal armed formations (NVF) in Russia and

(continued)

Continued: Much Ado about Russian SOCOM

3. *A Rapid Reaction Forces branch could be established, with a Special Operations Forces Command falling beneath it. The Rapid Reaction Forces branch would be subordinated to the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) of the General Staff. This structure would be the most familiar, based upon previous command and control relationships of SPETSNAZ units, as direct action and reconnaissance SPETSNAZ units have historically been under the command and control of the GRU.*

4. *An independent Rapid Reaction Forces branch could be established, with a Special Operations Forces Command falling beneath it; however, the operational control of the SPETSNAZ units and support units would reside with the geographically appropriate Joint Strategic Command Combatant Commander. This arrangement would be similar to the command and control structure of the major branches of the Armed Forces (Ground Forces, Navy, Air Force), where the branch chiefs have administrative control and serve as proponents, but not operational control of their forces.*

*The possibility of placing SPETSNAZ under the appropriate combatant commander was discussed under the previous Defense Minister, Anatoli Serdyukov, but since there has been no recent mention of developing this type of organizational structure, and recent comments in the media suggest Russian special operations forces are intended for "external use," this structure is probably least likely. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

in several other countries....

...As is well known, at the beginning of April joint tasks of the VDV, an SSO formation, and the naval infantry were exercised during surprise graded maneuvers conducted by order of the country's President, Vladimir Putin. It is noteworthy that these formations practiced tasks in coordination with Russian Navy large landing ships. It is no secret in the Ministry of Defense that these maneuvers were linked to issues relating to providing security for the forthcoming Winter Olympics in Sochi. And in the very near future the Rapid Reaction Forces will be concentrated near Kazan, where the World [Summer] Universiade games will be held.

It is assumed that the current commander of the VDV, Colonel-General Vladimir Shamanov, will be appointed as the commander of the SBR.

Source: Igor Andreyev, "Shamanov: Russia Needs a Fifth Military District, Mobile and Peacekeeping," RIA Novosti (Online), 24 April 2013, < <http://rian.ru/> >, accessed 16 May 2013.

Shamanov: Russia Needs a Fifth Military District, Mobile and Peacekeeping

Less than two months ago, the chief of the Russian General Staff announced the creation of Special Operations Forces in the RF based upon the example of the leading powers. Some experts have linked this step with the conclusions that were drawn by the military leadership from the so-called 2008 Five-Day War. Hero of Russia, Airborne Troops Commander Colonel-General Vladimir Shamanov told RIA Novosti Correspondent Igor Andreyev about what role the most fighting Russian Troops – the VDV - can play in the development of the new structure, with which weapons the Russian Airborne Troops and Spetsnaz personnel will fight, and where they will train the cadres for the Special Operations Forces....

[Andreyev] Will the VDV's separate units and formations be subordinate to the Special Operations Forces Command that was recently created in the RF? If yes, precisely which ones?

[Shamanov] This question is in under the jurisdiction of the General Staff. The Special Operations Forces are an adequately specific organism and we are coordinating with them. My firm conviction is that the VDV, the Special Operations Forces, the operationally subordinate Spetsnaz brigades, and naval infantry formations and units on the maritime axes must be merged within the new structure – let's call it, let's say, rapid reaction troops – under joint command under the leadership of the General Staff. Then, besides the four static operational-strategic commands, a fifth, mobile operational-strategic command will appear in the country, which has 550,000 kilometers of land border, which is washed from three sides by seas and oceans, which will permit it to react in an integrated manner to threats and challenges both within the country and also beyond its borders. First of all, I have in mind peacekeeping operations within the framework of our mutual relations with the UN and the CSTO. We have substantiated our position to the General Staff leadership and this issue is being worked through right now.

[Andreyev] Information has recently appeared in the mass media that the cadres for the Russian Special Operations Forces will train at Moscow's Kubinka based upon the inter-branch training center. Will VDV Spetsnaz train at that same location?

[Shamanov] Today this is an open question because the elements of these centers have been created not only at Kubinka. The creation of a first-class training facility is a priority task. The defense minister has decided to create a special and tactical reconnaissance department based at Ryazan VDV School for the needs of the VDV, the Spetsnaz brigades, the Special Operations Forces, and the Navy.

Significant financial resources, a total of over R10 billion, have been stipulated to accomplish this task. In 2-3 years, we will create a worthy training facility, which will train world-level specialists not only for Russia but also for our allies and partners along the international military cooperation line. Today more than 20 states train their national cadres in the walls of Ryazan VDV School.

OE Watch Commentary: *The Russian Federation has made several attempts over the last few years to utilize unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology in the Russian Armed Forces. The Russian Armed Forces appear to be interested in a variety of UAV technologies ranging from smaller models, similar to the US “Raven,” to larger models similar in size and purpose to the US “Predator.” One such “Predator”-like model was accidentally revealed in February 2013, when regional authorities from the Russian Republic of Tatarstan posted images of the “Altius” online.*

UAV development is being pursued by all of the main and lesser branches (including the Airborne Forces) of the Ministry of Defense. By no means have drones been limited to the Ministry of Defense--there have been several recent media reports of UAV tenders for the Federal Security Service (FSB) Border Troops and Ministry of Emergency Situations (EMERCOM).

The Ministry of Defense Ground Forces have been a relative latecomer to the UAV game. However, the establishment of a directorate in the General Staff to handle UAV doctrine and development issues in December 2012 may have been the first sign that UAVs were being seriously considered by the Ground Forces. The accompanying articles discuss the recent addition of two reconnaissance models, the “Orlan-10” and “Granat,” to the rolls and preliminary testing of a UAV, the Typhoon-5, to be used as a radio retransmission vehicle to extend the range of terrestrial line-of-site radios. The use of a UAV as a flying radio retransmission vehicle may seem strange, but Russia had considerable difficulty with radio communications in the 2008 Russian-Georgian War, and, judging by the comments about the recent training exercise in the mountains in the accompanying article, this issue continues to be a problem.

That Ground Forces officials have mentioned that the UAVs will be used for “communications, intelligence and electronic warfare tasks,” as well as the size of the UAVs that the Ground Forces are reviewing for tender, suggests that the immediate use of UAVs as weapon platforms by Russian Ground Forces is not likely. In terms of doctrinal usage, there has been little specific discussion



Source: “Ground Troops Will Receive New Unmanned Aerial Vehicles into the Inventory,” *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer Online*, 21 February 2013, <<http://www.vpk-news.ru>>, accessed 12 April 2013.

Ground Troops Will Receive New Unmanned Aerial Vehicles into Inventory

Unmanned aerial vehicles (BLA) of the “Orlan” and “Granat” types will begin to enter the inventory of the Ground Troops this year, the Commander in Chief of Ground Troops, Colonel-General Vladimir Chirkin, reported on Thursday during the 11th International Defense Expo “AYDEKS-2013.”

“The first UAV’s to arrive at the Ground Troops is expected this year. An amendment to the procurement plan has been made. This relates to UAV’s of the ‘Orlan’ and ‘Granat’ types that were designed based on the technical requirements of the Ministry of Defense,” said the Commander in Chief.

V. Chirkin noted that a strike UAV created by the United Arab Emirates was being demonstrated not far from the Russian exposition at the show. “A lot can be said about whether they made it themselves or they assembled it from imported components. But we do not have any kind of strike version yet. Our UAV’s presently perform communications, intelligence and electronic warfare tasks,” he stated.

“Regarding UAV’s it cannot be said that we are hopelessly behind, but we have been lagging very seriously. We have generally not been engaged in this for the last two decades. And, as of the summer of 2012, the Americans had over 36,000 UAV’s in their inventory, and they were of all kinds, intelligence, communications and strike versions,” reported the commander in chief.

Nevertheless, V. Chirkin noted: “We did get the ‘Orlan-10’ and it has passed the military exploitation phase.”

(continued)

Continued: Russian Federation Ground Forces and UAVs

about which Ground Forces units will receive the UAVs or at which echelon they will be assigned, but it is likely that reconnaissance UAVs will be considered a brigade-level asset and assigned to the brigade's reconnaissance company or intelligence support platoon.

Interestingly, military scholarship about the employment of these assets has been lacking in Russian professional military journals. (Most references to UAV technologies in military scholarship involve lamenting at how far Russian technology is behind the U.S. and other nations, as the Russian Federation has had to purchase Israeli technologies for the more advanced UAVs because the Russian defense industry was viewed as incapable of the task.) This is somewhat unusual, as Russian military thinkers often theorize about new technologies years and even decades before the new technologies actually enter the inventories. This lack of professional military scholarship may suggest that the Russian military still has not fully institutionalized how UAV technology has changed the shape of the battlefield. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

Source: "Typhoon-5 Lightweight UAV Being Tested as Repeater-Processor," Interfax-AVN Online, 27 March 2013, <http://www.militarynews.ru/>, accessed 12 April 2013.

Typhoon-5 Lightweight UAV Being Tested as Repeater-Processor

It is planned to start preliminary testing in 2013 of an eight-rotor vertical takeoff and landing unmanned aerial vehicle to be used as a repeater, Interstate Corporation Deputy General Director Yevgeniy Yanchuk has told Interfax-AVN.

"We plan to hold preliminary tests of the Typhoon-5 UAV for use as a repeater this year. The phase of state testing of the UAV as part of a system will begin next year," he said.

"Meanwhile the UAV itself and the vehicle have been upgraded. What we now have is a small mobile repeater system," the agency's interlocutor said.

He said that the "Tiger" armored car is being considered for use as a support vehicle.

"A repeater based on the Typhoon apparatus is capable of providing high-quality digital communications within the framework of the unified system of tactical link command and control being created in Russian Armed Forces," the agency's interlocutor stressed.

It was announced previously that the active DSAR+ signal repeater installed on a Tayfun-5-class apparatus is capable of providing a high-speed radio relay communications channel regardless of weather conditions at distances up to 100 km.

Unofficial reports suggests that the inability to secure a communications channel at long distances was one of the problem areas of the unified system of tactical link command and control system, when it was used experimentally by the 5th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (Alabino, Moscow Oblast). Current lines of site terrestrial repeaters with telescopic antennas in use today are only capable of providing signal coverage at distances of 20-30 km.



Orlan-10, via http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/76/UAV_Orlan-10.JPG?uselang=ru



Granat VA-100, Гранат ВА-1000, via <http://topwar.ru/21113-interpoliteh-2012-katera-bpla-optika-i-oruzhie-interpolitex-2012-boats-uavs-opticas-and-small-arms.html>

OE Watch Commentary: With a 400,000-man force, the Turkish Land Forces Command (TLFC) is the second largest in NATO and the fifth largest in the world. The October 2013 issue of the Turkish-language military journal, *Savunma ve Havacılık* (Defense and Aerospace), featured a 35-page article on the TLFC's modernization efforts. The section on Turkey in this issue of *OE Watch* will feature highlights and analyses from that article.

The accompanying logo of the TLFC features a picture of Turkey's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, under which the date of B.C. 209 is written. This date refers to the great Hun Emperor Mete Khan's ascent to power, which the TLFC considers as its founding date. As such, the TLFC considers itself to be 2223 years old. According to the article, the TLFC is considered the "iron fist" of the Turkish Armed Forces, which is deemed the ultimate expression of Turkish unity, strength, capabilities, and patriotism.

As the accompanying passage points out, the Turkish Land Forces are in the process of modernizing and restructuring themselves according to their "Force 2020" vision, which envisions a modern army that can respond to the 21st century's warfighter requirements by being more streamlined and flexible. As the piece points out, one of the central themes of the Force 2020 vision is the modernization and strengthening of the Malatya 2nd Army Command with new military systems (see accompanying chart of the TLFC's organization structure). It should be noted that the eastern province of Malatya is where the NATO missile defense shield radar is installed.

As the accompanying passages demonstrate, the article discusses new military equipment that has been included into the inventory of the Malatya 2nd Army, which includes five second-hand intelligence-class reconnaissance aircraft which have been rented from the U.S. for two years for \$70 million, based in Malatya; and four Chubby 2G Vehicle Mounted Mine Detectors (VMMD), which were delivered recently to the Malatya 2nd Army Command. Another new system for this command includes the R-Visor Talon remote-controlled landmine identification robot. The accompanying passage discuss these modernization efforts.

End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)



The Turkish Land Forces Command Organization Structure. At the top is the Headquarters in Ankara, followed by the Istanbul 1st Army Command, Malatya 2nd Army Command, Erzincan 3rd Army Command, Izmir Aegean Army Command, and the Ankara Training and Doctrine Command. The third level consists of the Ankara 4th Army Corps Command, Ankara Logistics Command, and the Northern Cyprus Turkish Peace Forces Command. Source: *Savunma ve Havacılık* (Defense and Aerospace), Vol. 27, No. 127, Fall 2013 issue, page 8.

Source: "KKK Modernizasyon Çalışmalarına Bir Bakış (A Look at the [Turkish] Land Forces Command's Modernization Efforts)," *Savunma ve Havacılık* (Defense and Aerospace), Vol. 27, No. 127, October 2013 issue, pages 8-42.

"The Turkish Land Forces, which is the second largest in NATO and the fifth largest in the world, continues its modernization and restructuring efforts within its 'Force 2020' vision, which envisions a force that can respond to the 21st century's warfighter requirements. This is a force that can carry out operations on a wide spectrum, and one which is smaller but is more nimble. In this article, we will introduce the Troops that make up the Turkish Land Forces Command as well as the most recent modernization efforts undertaken so that these Troops can carry out their missions in a more effective manner.



The logo of the Turkish Land Forces Command. Source: <http://www.kkk.tsk.tr>

In order to satisfy the Turkish Land Forces Command's need for manned reconnaissance aircraft, five second-hand ISR planes configured from the Beechcraft King Air 350 planes, have been rented from the U.S. for two years, at a cost of \$70 million. This cost includes a two-year logistical support package. The efforts to turn the second-hand King Air 350 planes into the ISR configuration was handled in the U.S. by the company L3."

Four Husky 2G Vehicle Mounted Mine Detectors [WMMD] and two R-Visor Talon type remote-controlled mine identification robots (which Turkey is the first in the world to use), has been purchased and delivered to the Malatya 2nd Army Command last August. This is to address the Turkish Land Forces' need for vehicle mounted mine identification systems and entails a deal with STM (Savunma Teknolojileri Muhendislik – Turkish for 'Defense Technologies and Engineering) and Critical Solutions International (CSI)."

OE Watch Commentary: *The October 2013 issue of Savunma ve Havacılık (Defense and Aerospace) also features a section on the maneuver units of the Turkish Land Forces Command (TLFC). Infantry (including mechanized infantry, commando and airborne troops) is one of the two "classes" (the other being tankers) that make up the maneuver units. As the accompanying passage states, infantry's mission is to "fight with the power of fire, operation and impact; cause casualties in the enemy and disrupt its ability to fight; [and] approach an enemy with fire and maneuver to neutralize it through close battle."*

The infantry has various organizational structures in accordance with different terrain conditions and different operation methods. As the main group that will engage in close combat, infantry units are organized as follows: infantry, mechanized infantry, motorized infantry, commando, border, bazooka, mortar and airborne troops. The accompanying passage discusses the equipment and weapons systems of the TLFC's maneuver units. End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)

Source: "KKK Modernizasyon Çalışmalarına Bir Bakış (A Look at the [Turkish] Land Forces Command's Modernization Efforts)," Savunma ve Havacılık (Defense and Aerospace), Vol. 27, No. 127, Fall 2013 issue, pages 8-42.

"The Infantry Class [including Mechanized Infantry, Commando and Airborne Troops] has a mission to fight with the power of fire, operation and impact; cause casualties in the enemy and disrupt its ability to fight; approach an enemy with fire and maneuver to neutralize it through close battle.

The Infantry Class's main equipment and weapons systems are as follows:

- **Close Combat Weapons:** Pistol, machine pistol, machine gun/rifle, infantryman rifle, hand grenades, grenade dispensers, sharpshooter rifles are the infantryman's main close combat weapons.
- **Anti-tank Weapons:** Light anti-tank guns [LAW and RPG series rocket propellers], medium anti-tank weapons, controlled anti-tank weapons [Eryx, Milan, TOW and Kornet-E] are present.
- **Mortars:** 60, 81, 106 and 120 mm mortars are present.
- **Target Identification and Control Systems:** Mortar fire control computer system, laser distance-measuring device, a target coordination identification systems are systems that enhance the target identification and control abilities.
- **Surveillance and Night Vision Capabilities:** Surveillance systems [extremely close binoculars, military land surveillance radar, thermal camera, thermal weapon binoculars, hand binoculars] and night vision devices are used.
- **Armored Vehicles:** Tracked battle vehicles [armored personnel carriers and armored battle vehicles, armored weapons-systems carrier vehicles] and wheeled battle vehicles [Cobra TTZA, Akrep and KIRPI MKKA], increase maneuvering abilities.



The cover of the issue which features the extended piece on the TLFC's modernization efforts.

Source: Hardcopy picked up in Turkey by analyst.

“[The Air Defense Units’] mission is to limit, delay, prevent or minimize the enemy’s air and missile offensives to ensure friendly units’ survival, improve their maneuver abilities and help carry out the land operation under more favorable circumstances.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Turkish Land Forces Command’s air defense and military aircraft units are considered part of its battle support units (other battle support units include artillery, engineers corps, CBRN [chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear], intelligence and communications). As the accompanying passages point out, the mission of air defense is to deter, limit, delay, prevent or minimize an enemy’s air and missile offensives. The accompanying passage also includes the air defense class’s main equipment and weapons systems.*

*The article also features a section discussing the purchase of three AH-1W SuperCobras from the U.S. Marine Corps, which were delivered to Turkey in September 2012. The U.S. had announced the transfer in September 2011, two weeks after Turkey’s Foreign Ministry announced that the NATO missile defense shield radar would be installed at a military base in the eastern province of Malatya. Turkish defense analysts had interpreted this as a “reward” from the U.S. to Turkey for this decision, though some also thought that this was insufficient, given the threats coming from Iran to Turkey regarding its decision to host the radar. Earlier Turkish requests to the U.S. to transfer AH-1W Super Cobras had been rejected, due to U.S. claims that all of its AH-1W Cobras were being used in Afghanistan. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)***



AH-1W Super Cobra attack helicopter.
Source: Anatolian News Agency

Source: “KKK Modernizasyon Çalışmalarına Bir Bakış (A Look at the [Turkish] Land Forces Command’s Modernization Efforts),” *Savunma ve Havacılık (Defense and Aerospace)*, Vol. 27, No. 127, Fall 2013 issue, pages 8-42.

“The air defense unit’s mission is to act as a deterrent force during peace and in times of crisis. During war, it should limit, delay, prevent or minimize the enemy’s air and missile offensives to ensure friendly units’ survival, improve their maneuver abilities and help carry out the land operation under more favorable circumstances. While it is carrying out its mission, it operates early warning and command-control systems, which are integrated with the Air Force Command.

The Air Defense Class’s main equipment and weapons systems are as follows:

- 20 mm Rheinmetall [RH-202] aerial defense artillery
- 20 mm Oerlikon aerial defense artillery
- 35 mm Oerlikon aerial defense artillery
- Pedestal Mounted Stinger
- Stinger

In addition to these weapons systems, with the use of Air Defense and Early Warning and Command Control Systems, all air defense units are commanded and controlled in integration with the Turkish Air Force Command.

.....

The Purchase of Second-Hand AH-1W SuperCobras

Since 1990, the Turkish Land Forces have successfully used AH-1W SuperCobra attack helicopters in its Homeland Security Operations against the terror organization PKK [The Kurdistan Workers’ Party] both within and beyond our borders. The number of these SuperCobras have decreased significantly over time and they have aged. As such, in order to support our fleet of SuperCobras, three AH-1W SuperCobra helicopters were purchased from the U.S. Marine Corps and they were brought to Turkey on September 27, 2012 via a C-5 Galaxy military cargo plane.... A payment of \$114 million was made to the U.S. as part of Foreign Military Sales. With the purchase of these three planes, the number of AH-1W’s in the TLFC’s inventory has gone back up to ten.”

Iran Unveils New Bullet Proof Vests

23 February 2014

“The ‘Dragon Skin’ vest is a revolutionary leap in protection for Iranian soldiers.”

OE Watch Commentary: *With Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei reaffirming the notion not only that export of revolution is a central pillar of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s ideology, but also that it should be undertaken militarily, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has increased in stature as a tool of Iranian foreign policy. While conscripts into the regular Iranian Army often complain of their conditions, Revolutionary Guardsmen enjoy a privileged position and first choice in equipment.*

Iranian authorities often brag about advancement in education and technology in the 35 years since the Islamic Revolution. Iranian engineers and research scientists—many educated abroad, including at American colleges and universities—have become a formidable presence. The state, however, directs much of its research toward military or nuclear applications. While Iran’s nuclear scientists might receive the international limelight, both because of their mission and, in recent years, the assassination campaigns waged against them, the topics of Iranian military research are far broader.

*If Iranian claims of developing a new, more effective bulletproof vest are accurate, then Revolutionary Guardsmen may soon upgrade their kit further. Iranian defense officials brag that the new bulletproof vests, inspired by fish scales, can protect against small-caliber bullets and shotgun pellets, as well as shrapnel from grenades. While Iranian officials might exaggerate the technological leap the new body armor reflects, such body armor certainly gives Iranian soldiers or their proxies in Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria a qualitative edge against irregular opponents, who often lack basic defenses. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***



3d Rendering of a Dragon Skin bullet proof vest.
Source: <http://www.turbosquid.com/3d-models/3d-dragonskin-vest/651018>

Source: “Sakht-e Moderntarin Jaligheh Zadgaluleh Danya Dar Iran” (“Making the World’s Most Modern Bulletproof Vests”), Farsnews.com, 23 February 2014. <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13921204000171>

Iran Making the World’s Most Modern Bulletproof Vests

For as long as there have been attacks and defense, protective coats have been proposed and employed, whether it was animal skins and leather as protection for human beings, or later metal, armor, and shields, they were trying to protect the body from harm.

The first types were simple pieces of armor and heavy metal which were responsible for protecting medieval soldiers. The armor was very heavy and exhausting ...

A variety of armor and many other initiatives were inspired by animals to make them more functional, one of which was the inspiration of fish scales. Historians date the first scales of armor to the ancient Chinese and Indians. The scaled armor had different pieces of metal that overlapped to make the whole armor...

In the last few years, there has been a revolution in bulletproof vests inspired by the old scaled armor. The new “dragon skin” bulletproof vest reflects this.

The dragon skin vest is based on rings made of silicon and ceramics, which form circular scales. These vests spread the energy from the collision and stop the bullet... The vest is a revolutionary leap in protection, and survival rates have increased for Iranian soldiers and protect them against many dangers in the battleground... Due to the technology used in the new bulletproof vest compared with the usual vests, the body’s vital organs are protected against the bullets fired from close range and different angles.

Iran Third Biggest Helicopter Power in World

18 February 2014

“Iran is the third-largest helicopter power in the world; of course we are far from the heights to which we should ascend.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The bulk of international attention toward the Islamic Republic’s military advances focuses on its dual-use nuclear work and its ballistic missile development. Its military industries, however, are more varied. While Iranian small boats have grown more aggressive in the Persian Gulf over the past few years, with large-scale public drilling of swarming attacks against large ships, and while Iranian unmanned aerial vehicles are an increasingly frequent presence in the Gulf, growing Iranian helicopter capabilities suggest that Iranian capabilities may soon improve in a number of fields.*

The Iranian military has long emphasized the importance of helicopters. The Shah purchased helicopters from both Bell and Grumman, and soon claimed the largest helicopter fleet in the Middle East. Bell Helicopter built a plant in Isfahan, employing several thousand Americans. The Americans may have left after the Islamic Revolution, but, as the article excerpted here shows, Iran’s post-revolutionary armed forces embraced the helicopter during the Iran-Iraq War.

Iran’s current claim to be mass producing helicopters is directly linked to its pre-revolutionary relationship with Bell. In 2006

Bell filed suit in the Washington, DC, Circuit Court because of the production of knock-offs of several of its helicopters in plants owned by Panha, whose chairman is quoted in the excerpted article. The court dismissed that suit in 2013, and Panha has only increased production since.

Iranian authorities believe they need a large helicopter fleet. Iran is a large country, equivalent in size to Alaska. Historically, its topography—high mountains, long deserts, malarial swamps, and only one navigable river—has been its best defense. Such features, however, can make Iran a logistical nightmare. The bulk of its population lives in cities on interior planes, and so most large airports are also in the interior of the country. Winter snows often make northern highways impassable. Revitalizing its helicopter capabilities should help Iran move men and supplies to areas along its 3380-mile-long borders, or its 1500-mile-long coastline when necessary for aid and assistance, or for furthering military activities.

The Iranian Navy has also equipped helicopters with sonar and antisubmarine weapons. While the Persian Gulf is shallow and difficult for submarine maneuver, such antisubmarine capability might help Iran defend its southern coast and might encourage it to increase its presence in the Sea of Oman outside the Strait of Hormuz. The Ministry of Defense separately announced plans to improve helicopter-borne rockets and missiles.

*Given Iran’s past proliferation activities, as well as its involvement in terrorism, the mass production of Iranian helicopters might also lead to their use further afield, should Iran be able to transport them to countries like North Korea or Lebanon, where they might fall into the hands of Hezbollah. While Iranian helicopters are as yet no match for their Western counterparts, Iranian engineers and those working for Iran’s military industries have demonstrated that no one should assume that Iran’s technology deficit is unable to narrow significantly the present gap. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***

Source: “Iran Savvamin Qadarat Balgardi dar Danyast” (“Iran Third Biggest Helicopter Power in World”), Fars News.com, 18 February 2014. <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13921129000126>

Iran Third Biggest Helicopter Power in World

According to the Fars News Agency defense correspondent, Amir Ahmadabadi, managing director of Panha [Iran’s helicopter manufacturer and service company], said during the first national helicopter conference on Tuesday morning, that the Islamic Republic of Iran is a country different from others, and that its helicopters were particularly important. He added that after the Islamic Revolution, the use of helicopters grew, and the [Iran-Iraq] war demonstrated the importance of the helicopter.

Ahmadabadi stated that two deciding factors in the war were the initial stopping of the Iraqi invasion, while the second was the use of helicopters for containment and control during Operation Mersad [a decisive Iranian victory in July 1988, shortly before a ceasefire was announced]. . .

He added, “Iran is the third-largest helicopter power in the world; of course we are far from the heights to which we should ascend.”

Iranian Toofan attack helicopters
Source: <http://www.moddb.com>



Ground Forces Commander: Iranian Deterrence Successful

“The West has never been able to implement the military option due to Iran’s deterrent power.”

OE Watch Commentary: While the United States and European Union officials now actively seek a negotiated end to disputes over Iran’s nuclear program, the White House and State Department have acknowledged that military force might be a last resort, should diplomacy not pan out. The idea that the threat of military force might augment willingness to negotiate has been a basis of strategy across administrations, even if often unstated so bluntly.

If an Iranian Ground Force commander is to be believed, however, Iranian authorities might not be willing to make the same assumptions with regard to American military power. In recent years, Iran has actively built both its defensive and offensive capabilities. Rather than acknowledge a conscious desire on the part of the United States and European Union to negotiate, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps personnel seem to conclude that Iran’s growing military capabilities have already deterred Western attacks on Iran.

If the Revolutionary Guards truly believe their bluster, then the Iranian government might not feel the same pressure to negotiate as sincerely as many Western officials hope. At the same time, Ground Force Commander Abdollah Araqi’s threat to act asymmetrically against the United States in the manner of the Iran-Iraq War experience suggests that the Islamic Republic still considers tanker warfare and suicide attacks fair game. Iranian politicians might project a new face, but for the Revolutionary Guards it is business as usual. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**



ISNA / PHOTO: RECEIVED

Brigadier General Abdollah Araqi

Source: <http://media.isna.ir/content/cf9cc6ad-5f7e-4623-9b5d-267cc4d52dee-13.jpg/6>

Source: “Qadarat-e Bazdarandagi Iran Mana’ Ajra-ye Gozineh Nizami Doshman Shadeh Ast” (“Iranian Deterrence Has Become a Barrier to the Military of Our Enemies”), Sepah News, 4 March 2014. <http://sepahnews.com/shownews.aspx?ID=02f546e7-15d5-40fa-a468-eb22db45ce8a>

Iranian Deterrence Has Become a Barrier to Our Enemies

According to a report from Sepah News [the news agency of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)], Brigadier General Abdollah Araqi [lieutenant commander of the IRGC Ground Forces], speaking at the Artillery and Air Defense Martyrs Memorial in Kermanshah this morning, said the deterrent power of Iran has kept the enemy from carrying out its military option. “Although the enemies of the Islamic Republic constantly proclaim that all options against Iran are on the table,” he said, “They have never been able to implement the military option due to the deterrent power which is the result of the martyrs’ blood and the resistance of the young sons of this territory...” He said that enemies know that the Iranian forces are capable of confronting them in any asymmetric war relying on the valuable experiences they gained during the 8-year Holy Defense [Iran-Iraq War].

Avoiding Civil War in Libya

17 March 2014

OE Watch Commentary: Shortly after the Friends of Libya Conference in Rome ended on 6 March, a leader from the federalist movement based in Libya's eastern region declared that his movement – the Cyrenaica Council – would begin selling oil independently of the central government. Through a militia led by Ibrahim Jadhran, the former head of the post-Qaddafi Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG), the council had been in control of (or at least prevented the government from controlling) three oil ports for several months. On 8 March a North Korean-flagged tanker, *Morning Glory*, docked in one of those ports (al-Sidra) and was loaded with around 300,000 barrels of oil (valued at approximately \$35 million). Libya's Tripoli-based government issued orders to prevent the ship from leaving. As explained in the first accompanying article, Libya's Air Force and Navy stood by, leaving the ultimately unsuccessful task of attempting to block the ship to members of the Libyan Shield Forces.

On the day that the *Morning Glory* docked in Libya, President of Libya's General National Congress and acting Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Nouri Abusahmain issued Decree Number 42, calling for the formation of a special military force to break the oil ports blockade. The government force was to consist of the Libyan Army, rebel brigades, and PFG. It would be under the command of the Libyan Armed Forces chief of staff. Military operations were to begin one week after the decree was issued.

The key member of this military coalition was the Libyan Shield Forces (Central), represented mostly by fighters and firepower from the central city of Misrata. The three occupied oil ports lie between Benghazi and Misrata, near what is generally considered the border between Libya's east and west. It is a strategically important area for the powerful Misrata brigades. Furthermore, as the second accompanying article notes, these brigades suspect that a counterrevolutionary current is gaining strength in Libya and attempting to overthrow genuine revolutionary groups such as themselves. All in all, the Misrata brigades are unlikely to take the rumblings from the east lightly.

On 11 March, the day the *Morning Glory* slipped away from the port of al-Sidra, clashes broke out in the city of Sirte (near the occupied oil ports) between Libyan Shield Forces that had mobilized under Decree 42 and fighters from Jadhran's Cyrenaica Military Council. As the third accompanying article explains, the Libya Shield Forces retook the Sirte Airport and adjacent airbase, after which a standoff was defused by intensified negotiations.

Recent events seem to provide further evidence for the notion that the Libya Shield Forces are the Libyan Army's backbone and the Misrata militias are the backbone of the Libya Shield Forces. If so, the outcome of the current tensions will depend largely on the actions taken by the Misrata brigades. At the time of writing they and their



(Upper Left) Ibrahim Jadhran
Source: <http://goo.gl/ghQsBp>

(Lower Left) Map showing the Cyrenaica autonomous region of Libya.
Source: www.bbc.co.uk



Source:

هروب زيدان وانتصار الإسلاميين

“Zeidan Flees, the Islamists Win,” 16 March 2014, al-Quds al-Arabi. <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=144273>

Article 1:

When Zeidan ordered that the ship be pursued and targeted, he found that his military arsenal was empty. The battleships and boats had been destroyed by the NATO attacks. Libya's pilots were in a state of insubordination due to changes in the leadership and thus no aircraft mobilized to stop the ship. When he asked the Libya Shield Forces, which are made up of various revolutionary factions, to mobilize, a group from Misrata did so. They used small boats and frigates to chase after the Korean ship. The images and conversations that took place between the ship's crew and the gunmen that pursued it show that the Misrata fighters indeed blockaded the ship. However, the ship was faster than the fighters' boats and when it came face to face with an American ship it meant that the Korean ship left Libyan territorial waters, giving Jadhran a victory in this round.

(continued)

Continued: Avoiding Civil War in Libya

allies in the Libyan government and Army are applying a carefully calibrated combination of force and negotiation. Alliances are currently in flux, thus the situation is precarious for all. The fourth accompanying article illustrates the fine line that Libya is currently treading between state building and civil war. The article emphasizes the role of the Zintan militia (in the mountains south of Tripoli) in serving as a balance to Misrata in this particular situation. End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)

Source:

جنور الأزمة الليبية

Hisahm al-Shalawi. "The Roots of the Libyan Crisis," 15 March 2014, al-Jazeera. <http://www.aljazeera.net/opinions/pages/2857f38d-4477-49b1-bbfd-496e71200c9e>

Article 2:

The National Forces Alliance in reality takes advantage of the gaps between the revolutionary groups, foremost among them the Justice and Building Party, to weaken political, economic and social stability. These gaps are the result of the inability by the groups born from the February Revolution of building alliances with a shared vision regarding the most important political and security issues. The youth of the February Revolution are unable to understand the truth and the nature of the domestic and foreign conspiracy in Libya and consider each revolutionary faction as capable of winning this battle with their own vision and which is most often premised on the use of force... The Libyan Shield forces which follow the chief of staff and have and continue to have a major role in defeating the counterrevolutionary forces, have been on the decline in Libya's east and especially Benghazi, where they fell into a trap set by intelligence services and which resulted in the killing of protesters in front of their headquarters last June. In November of the same year forces from Misrata stationed in the Gharghour area of Tripoli fell into the same trap. Both forces were forced to withdraw and their popularity suffered a major blow.

Source: "Misratans pull out of Sirte and oilfields ahead of possible Jadhran deal," 17 March 2014, Libya Herald. <http://www.libyaherald.com/2014/03/17/misratans-pull-back-out-of-sirte-and-oilfields-ahead-of-possible-jadhran-deal/>

Article 3:

The Misrata-based Central Libya Shield Brigade (also known as the Misrata Third Force) has withdrawn from Sirte Airbase and from the Zueitina, Al-Fida and Al-Ghani oilfields south east of Sirte in the area around Zillah... According to officials in Misrata last night, a deal had been brokered under which Misratan and Benghazi forces would pull out of Sirte and the oilfields, although units from while Tarhouna, Zawia, Beida and Marj would stay. In return, Jadhran would leave for Dubai, handing over the oil terminals to the PFG under the control of Idris Bukhamada... However, whether the deal becomes reality has yet to be seen. A similar agreement brokered by the Magharba last December came to nothing.

Source:

توازن الرعب يجبر أطراف "صراع الموانئ" على التوصل إلى اتفاق

"The Balance of Fear Forces the Parties in the 'Port Conflict' to Negotiate," 15 March 2014, Libya News Network. <http://goo.gl/XfAJjE>

Article 4:

The struggle over Sirte and the oil ports could have turned into a battle between east and west if not for Zintan's stance rejecting the use of force to free the oil ports. This stance was supported by Zintan's allies including Warfallah, Tarhouan, Warshefana, Gharyan and most areas in the Jabal al-Gharbi area. This eliminated the possibility of an east-west conflict and turned it instead into one between Misrata and the rest of Libya... Not all of Cyrenaica's tribes support Ibrahim Jadhran, especially after he sold oil illegally. The al-Zawiya tribe, which lives in Adjabiya alongside the al-Magharaba tribe, announced its rejection of attempts to sell oil in this way, especially after the al-Magharaba stood with the Tibu in their battle with the al-Zawiya in Kufra. The use of military force by Misrata to liberate the oil ports, though, has led Cyrenaica tribes to ally with Jadhran... It seems that resolving the oil ports conflict calls for going to the edge of the abyss and a show of force by both sides, while negotiations continue. Events confirm that Ibrahim Jadhran is alone unable to manage the crisis...

Coalitions Battle in Qalamoun

16 March 2014

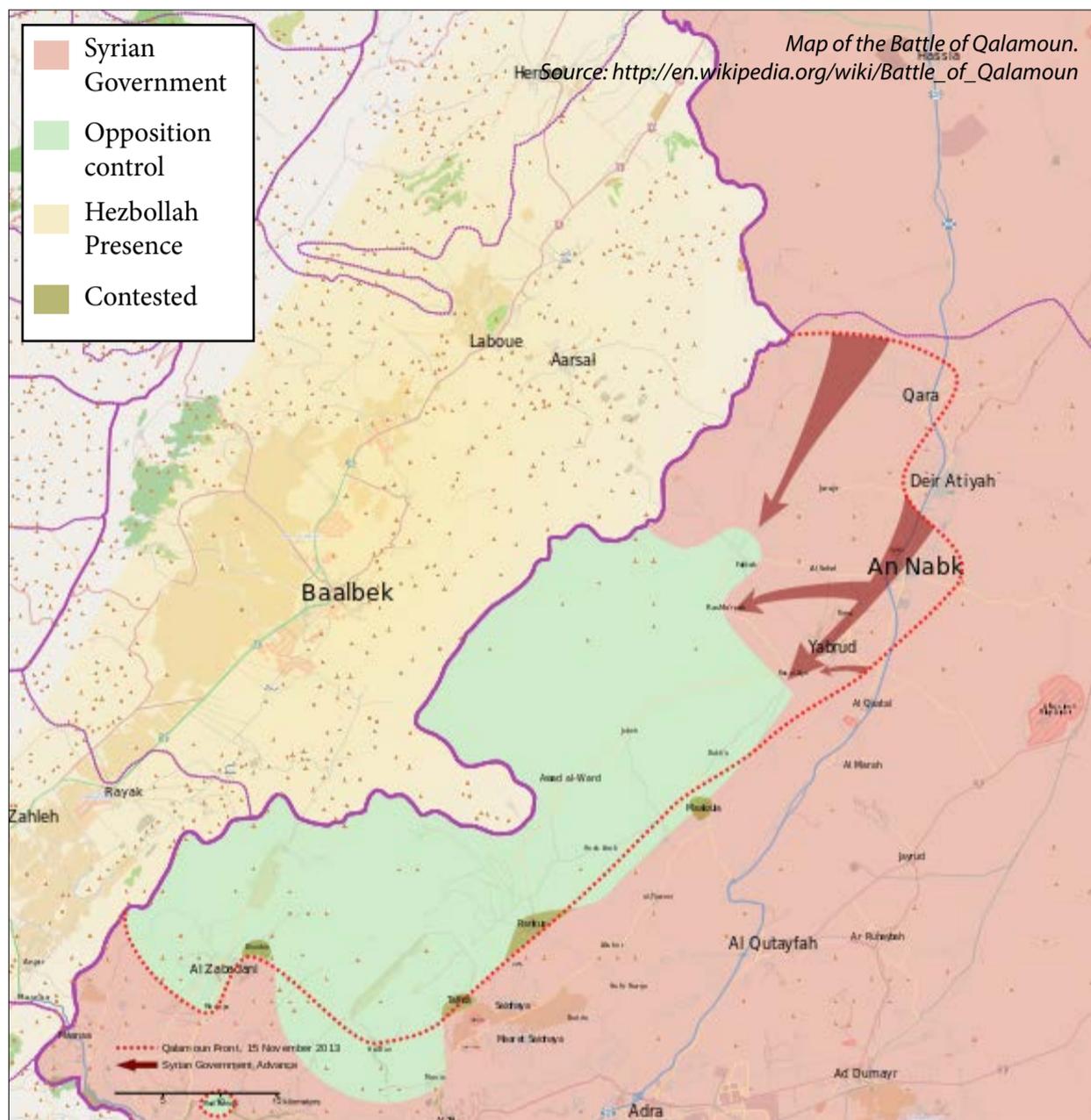
“Was Yabroud handed over for free? Or was it sold?”

OE Watch Commentary: Increasingly, the Syrian military works in tandem with foreign and domestic paramilitary groups when attacking rebel strongholds. The Syrian regime’s successful cobbling together of fighting coalitions is coinciding with growing disarray among rebel ranks. The Syrian regime has used this disarray as a means of prying rebel coalitions apart, in turn making it easier for its own coalitions to thrive on the battlefield.

The most recent example of this comes from the town of Yabroud, located northeast of Damascus in the Qalamoun Mountains, which divide the Damascus-Homs Highway from Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley. Although Yabroud fell out of government hands early in the Syrian conflict, it remained relatively calm until September 2013, when Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) fighters established a presence there. Over the next few months, the town became a production center for many of the car bombs that were detonated in the pro-Hizbullah southern suburbs of Beirut (Dahiyeh). In February 2014 the Syrian regime and Hizbullah teamed up to launch a major offensive to recapture Yabroud. The town was recaptured on 16 March.

According to open source materials, the offensive was led by a coalition that included elite forces from the Syrian Arab Army, paramilitary fighters affiliated with the Syrian National Defense Force (including Christians from the area, as noted in the first accompanying article), heavily armed and highly trained Hizbullah fighters, and Iraqi fighters, allegedly from the Badr Brigades. On the other side of the battlefield, defending its position in Yabroud, was a rebel coalition that included fighters from Homs Province affiliated with the Free Syrian Army (FSA) (including many who fled the June 2013 regime offensive in Qusayr), fighters from the powerful Islamic Front, an ensconced group of JN fighters, and local rebels from Yabroud, the broader Qalamoun area and other parts of Damascus Countryside Province.

As the Yabroud offensive began, media from both sides were quick to emphasize the frailty of the opponent’s coalition. As shown in the second accompanying article (an interview with a prominent rebel commander from



Source:

ثوار القلمون : النظام يضرب المسيحيين بالمسيحيين في يبرود
 “Qalamoun Rebels: The Regime is Striking Christians with Christians in Yabroud,” 12 March 2014, Aksaler.com. http://aksaler.com/?page=view_articles&id=93c31ba6873bfd157094ec168d71900f

Article 1:

On Wednesday, the Syrian Revolution General Commission said that the regime had called in loyal Christian militias from various parts of Damascus and its suburbs to support its troops and Lebanese Hizbullah in their fight in Yabroud, in the south of the country, against opposition forces that control the city... the Syrian regime had called in Christian fighters from Sidnaya in the Damascus countryside and the Christian neighborhoods of al-Qasaa and Bab Touma in the capital Damascus...

(continued)

Continued: Coalitions Battle in Qalamoun

the region), the opposition sought to drive a wedge between the foreign Shi'a fighters and Syrians. Opposition media also sought to exploit Hizbullah's casualty aversion by spreading rumors that the party's militia had withdrawn or that internal dissent was strong due to high fatalities in Syria. No evidence was provided to back these claims, and, regardless, they ended up being of little consequence on the battlefield.

In contrast, documented signs of fissures within the rebel ranks emerged even before the offensive began in earnest. As the third accompanying article notes, the problem stemmed from JN's refusal to put itself under a joint rebel command led by a FSA officer. The JN cell in Yabroud also garnered major media attention after striking a deal with the regime (through third parties) only days after the offensive began: in exchange for the release of families of JN fighters held in regime prisons, the fighters handed over a group of nuns who had been kidnapped from a historic convent in the nearby town of Maaloula several months before. According to some accounts, JN had requested safe passage for their fighters to the nearby town of Rankous as part of the negotiations, but was rebuffed.

After taking over the hills surrounding the city and pounding it from the air and the ground for several weeks, the regime coalition quickly moved into the center of Yabroud. Several local JN figures were killed. The next day JN's spokesman in the Qalamoun region issued a series of angry Tweets (excerpted as the fourth accompanying article), claiming that Yabroud had not fallen but had been handed, or perhaps even sold, to the regime. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

Source:

قيادي كبير في "الجيش الحر" له "السياسة": إذا حوصرنا في القلمون فسننتجه غرباً وننقل المعركة إلى عقر دار "حزب الله" داخل لبنان
 "Senior FSA leader: if we come under siege in Qalamoun we will move the battle west to Hizbullah's own home in Lebanon," 12 March 2014, al-Seyassah. <http://goo.gl/XQo8p7>

Article 2:

Captain Awada added: "Fighters in the Assad regime's army are merely chess pieces that are controlled by the Shi'a militias – Lebanese Hizbullah and the Iraqi Badr Brigades. They are also joined in battle by fighters from the regime's so-called National Defense Force (NDF), a new army that was formed by recruiting civilians on a sectarian basis. The regime faces a serious problem getting Syrian youths to do military service in the regular army, forcing it to recruit these civilians that are then used by Shi'a militias as human shields. They are also used on the frontlines and to secure roads." He also noted that the rebels can usually listen to communications between leaders in the NDF and Hizbullah, whom they recognize by their Lebanese dialect. The Hizbullah militants heap abuse on these other fighters when they refused to be on the frontlines or carry out risky and dangerous operations. He added that Hizbullah members treat them disdainfully and if one of them is injured or killed they leave him on the battlefield and do not try to rescue him...

Source:

هزة داخل «النصرة» تطيح بـ«أميرين»
 "Jolts within al-Nusra sweep away two leaders," 4 March 2014, al-Safir. <http://www.assafir.com/ArticleWindow.aspx?ChannelID=1&ArticleID=340418>

Article 3:

Jabhat al-Nusra in Qalamoun rejected joining the Qalamoun Unified Military Command and is sticking to the "Unified Operations Room" that it has led for months. The Unified Military Command was created in mid-February of this year and is led by defected Col. Abdullah al-Raf'ai. It includes the most prominent armed factions of the Qalamoun region... In a statement issued by its Qalamoun branch, al-Nusra confirmed that it is still fighting as part of the Unified Military Command's "Allah's Doors do not Close – 2" and that it is present on the Rima, al-Sahel, Falita, Maloula and Rankus fronts. It also alluded to coordination with all factions that are fighting in the name of Allah. This, however, does not negate the fact that the rug has been pulled from under its feet in Qalamoun, as the group is not in charge of the operations room that commands most of the military operations. Its commitment to the Unified Military Command does not hide the fact that it has become somewhat marginalized, especially since its most prominent ally (Ahrar al-Sham) has abandoned the Unified Operations Room and joined the new Qalamoun Unified Military Command.

Source: Series of Tweets from the account of Abdullah Azzam al-Shami (https://twitter.com/3zzam_alshamy) from 16 March 2014, compiled at: <http://justpaste.it/ereh>

Article 4:

We delegated one of the most important rebel groups in Yabroud to hold Mount Mar Maroun, which is well fortified and strategically important. We were surprised when the army took over the mountain without any notable fighting. Thus the army took control of an important area in Yabroud, but nonetheless this was a small part of the city. Last night the heads of the factions got together and decided to withdraw from Yabroud without fighting, that is to say they decided to hand it over to the army and to "Hizb Allat." Was Yabroud sold? Jabhat al-Nusra stayed in Yabroud along with one or two other groups until midday today, trying unsuccessfully to bring the fighters back... Was Yabroud handed over for free? Or was it sold?

“... an opportunity came when an officer from the Syrian Republican Guard began to call reconciliation committees ...”

OE Watch Commentary: Defections and fear of defections have withered the number of reliable troops in the Syrian Army to a sliver of the actual army size. This has forced the Syrian regime to rely on new tactics for dealing with the armed rebellion. Although much emphasis has been placed on its use of airpower, it is the strengthening of its advantages in land power that has allowed the Syrian military to gain an edge over the rebels during the past several months. The centerpiece of this strategy is the arming and training of vetted regime supporters within the framework of what has become the “National Defense Force” (NDF). Theoretically under Syrian military command and present throughout the country, the NDF is estimated to number over 100,000 armed (and often trained) pro-regime militants.

More recently the Syrian regime has embarked on a sustained push to broker more durable truces with rebels in besieged neighborhoods, particularly those in the Damascus Countryside Province surrounding Damascus. While informal truces have been in place throughout the conflict, recent truces in some of the capital’s more contested and strategically important suburbs are drawing attention. The targeted communities, mostly located in the Barada River Basin surrounding the city of Damascus (West and East Ghouta), have suffered from regime siege and bombardment; they are war-weary areas that may remain hostile to the regime but need a breather from the fighting. As part of the negotiations the regime agrees to allow vital goods to enter the area and refrain from shelling it; in exchange, it is allowed to fly the government flag in the town center and control access points through NDF-manned checkpoints at the main entryways to the area. Locals who took up arms in self-defense and considered themselves part of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) may, if all goes well for the regime, decide to switch armbands and join the NDF.

The first accompanying article, from a generally pro-regime Lebanese daily, describes how these truces have evolved as the

Source: “Syria: Local rebels willing to compromise but are ready for all scenarios,” 21 February 2014, al-Akhbar English (Lebanon). <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/syria-local-rebels-willing-compromise-are-ready-all-scenarios>

Article 1:

“The truth is, the agreements began in the Damascus countryside as traps that some security agencies set up for the rebel fighters. Many of the fighters whom we convinced to return to national ranks, were entrapped and arrested by some security agencies.” This affected the credibility of all the national reconciliation committees, whether those belonging to the National Reconciliation Ministry or the ones created through popular initiatives. “Many members of the national reconciliation committees were assassinated by fighters to avenge what happened.” However, an opportunity came when an officer from the Syrian Republican Guard began to call reconciliation committees under orders from the political leadership to discuss the possibility of making reconciliation efforts work. Then they began making compromises.

Source:

عضو في لجنة المصالحة يسرب خطة النظام لـ“هدنة” داريا
 “Reconciliation Committee Member Leaks Regime Plan for a “Truce” in Darayya,” 18 February 2014, Zaman al-Wasl. <https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/46718.html>

Article 2:

The regime is working to deal with the fact that many fighters reject a truce similar to the one in Muadamiya overseen by Gen. Ghassan Bilal. It is doing so by exploiting differences and built-up sensitivities between the armed groups and the local and military councils ... Other groups see in the Muadamiya truce a good opportunity to break the siege on Darayya. The regime hopes to co-opt and strengthen these groups and the ones wavering vis-à-vis those rejecting a compromise... The source that leaked this information to Zaman al-Wasl added that this plan had been drafted by a committee headed by Republican Guard Gen. Qusay Hammam, who recently took over the Darayya file. He is being assisted by officers in the Republican Guard and the 4th Division, as well as by Gen. Milad Shadid, the operations commander in Darayya.



NDF LOGO
 Source: <http://ar.wikipedia.org>

(continued)

Continued: Syria: Truces and Student-Soldiers

conflict grinds on. Earlier truce offers in contested areas, it notes, were often a ploy by Syrian security services to arrest armed rebels. More recently, though, the Syrian Army's Republican Guard has become directly involved as both facilitator and guarantor of truces. The second accompanying article, from a prominent pro-rebel Syrian news website, describes a leaked plan to negotiate a truce with rebels in the Damascus suburb of Darayya, one of the main bastions of resistance since early in the conflict. Darayya is located next to Muadamiya, where a truce reached a few months ago continues to hold. The article highlights a key element of the regime's strategy, namely to identify and work to strengthen groups that support a negotiated ceasefire. The article also confirms the growing involvement of Republican Guard officers in these negotiations.

The arming of regime supporters is an ongoing and constantly evolving process. One of the most recent innovations can be found in a group called the Baath Battalions. Originally created by Aleppo Baath Party Chief Hilal Hilal in the summer of 2012 in response to rebel incursion from the Aleppo countryside, the Baath Battalions have since expanded to various other parts of Syria, most notably Damascus. Members of the Baath Battalions receive a monthly salary from the government and are currently estimated to number 5,000-10,000 members.

The Baath Battalions have recently made news by embedding themselves in Syria's higher education system. The third accompanying article, from a pro-regime Syrian news website, describes the formation of the first group of "Student Baath Battalions" in a ceremony at Aleppo University. These new groups of student-soldiers – both male and female – are tasked with ensuring and establishing order at the universities, through both force and persuasive argumentation. The fourth accompanying article, taken from al-Jazeera's website, gives further details on these groups. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

Source:

إطلاق الدفعة الأولى من كتائب البعث في جامعة حلب
 "First Class of Baath Battalions Launched in Aleppo University," 20 February 2014, Dampress.net. http://www.dampress.net/mobile/?page=show_det&category_id=6&id=39768

Article 3:

During the meeting, Dr. Abdel Qader Hariri, the Baath Party Secretary for the University of Aleppo, emphasized the importance of forming the Baath Battalions in Aleppo University in light of the dirty attacks currently being waged against Syria. Hariri emphasized the importance of this step due to the high levels of conscience and education among university students, allowing them to deal with all ideological and social levels of Aleppo... [Aleppo Governor Mohammed Wahid Akkad] mentioned the need for members of the Baath Battalions to speak with their fellow students to educate them and help them continue uncovering the conspiracy targeting the country. All of this is to be done in a civilized and orderly manner that befits the University of Aleppo's distinguished reputation.

Source:

"كتائب البعث" .. جامعيون في خدمة النظام
 "Baath Battalions... University Students in the Service of the Regime," 13 March 2014, al-Jazeera. <http://www.aljazeera.net/mob/f6451603-4dff-4ca1-9c10-122741d17432/49105583-d9ee-42d7-8707-15b6c2c1ad0c>

Article 4:

Speaking to *aljazeera.net*, this student explained the emergence of university students wearing the Syrian Army's uniform but distinguished by an armband depicting the badge of the Baath Party. Some of them also openly bear arms inside the campus of Homs University... In provinces such as Damascus and Homs, members of the Baath Battalions are present at regime checkpoints. However their main task, according to Mohammed, is to detain anti-regime students and put down protests in the university.



Baath Battalions logo
 Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ba'ath_Brigades

U.S. Military Assistance Pays Off in Africa: Somali Army and AMISOM Liberate Strategic Town

“Somali Government forces aided by battalions from the neighboring country of Ethiopia have liberated Bakool regional capital of Hudur from Al Qaeda linked Al Shabaab fighters...”

OE Watch Commentary: Yet another Somali town that was in the hands of the al-Qaeda-linked terrorist group al-Shabaab has fallen to Somali National Forces working jointly with AMISOM (The African Union Mission in Somalia). As the accompanying article relates, Hudur, the regional capital of Bakool, had been al-Shabaab’s biggest stronghold, but not any longer.

Somali National Forces and AMISOM have clearly demonstrated some significant momentum in their recent military operations. The joint forces rolled up several al-Shabaab controlled towns before moving on Hudur, which had fallen to al-Shabaab when the Ethiopian military withdrew from the region in March, 2013. Interestingly, Ethiopian troops comprised the AMISOM contingent which retook Hudur, a fact not missed by al-Shabaab, whose leader is trying to rally Somalis against what have been their traditional enemies. Unfortunately for al-Shabaab, the mistreatment of people in towns under their rule appears to have left many Somalis willing to give the Ethiopians a try.

While much of the credit for the fall of Hudur and the other towns deservedly goes to the Somali National Forces and AMISOM, the training, equipment, and other support that made their victory possible was supplied by several nations. The U.S., in particular, has been a strong backer, providing \$512 million since 2007 to AMISOM and more than \$171 million to the Somali National Army, forces now capable of taking and holding strategic Somali towns from a determined enemy.

Some analysts predict the Somali government forces and AMISOM will capitalize on their recent gains and launch a major countrywide offensive. If so, the training, equipment, and other support America has provided and continues to provide will undoubtedly play a role in capturing other strategic locations. Through an intelligent allocation of military resources to a struggling Somalia and its African allies, America is thus playing a key role in eliminating al-Shabaab terrorists and helping to bring peace to a country that has not known it for decades. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**



Though well-armed and ideologically driven, al-Shabaab, shown in the photo, is being forced out of Somali towns by AMISOM and the Somali military. Source: <http://www.berberanews.com/2012/05/page/5/>

Source: “Somalia: Federal Government, Ethiopian forces liberate strategic town of Hudur,” Garowe Online (Somalia), 7 Mar 2014, http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia-Federal-Govt-Ethiopian-forces-liberate-strategic-town-of-Hudur.shtml

Before the allied forces began to thrust into the strategic town of Hudur, they Thursday afternoon clashed with Al Shabaab militants in Teed village which lies about 30 km from Hudur according to witnesses.

“Many suspects have been arrested during the joint security operation because we want to cleanse the town of Al Shabaab threats,” added [Hudur Mayor Mohamed Moallim] Ahmed

The militant group took over the control of the seized town in March 2013 after Ethiopians made a surprise pullout. Hudur, located in southwestern Somalia had since been Al Shabaab’s biggest stronghold.

Ethiopia troops intervened in southern Somalia in Dec. 2006 and withdrew by Jan. 2009, but returned to Gedo, Bay, Bakool, Hiran and Galgadud border regions in early 2012 in support of Somali government’s stabilization operations.

French Expeditionary Forces and African Armies Turning the Tide Against Extremists

OE Watch Commentary: How appropriate that déjà vu is a French term, for after fighting radical Islamists in northern Mali, French forces find themselves in a similar situation, doing battle in another of their former colonies, this time against rebels in the Central African Republic (CAR). Though there are similarities between these two fights, one significant difference, at least so far, has been the outcomes. France's expeditionary actions in Mali resulted in many of the radical Islamists being routed, bringing some stability and security to the beleaguered nation, though the Islamists still periodically carry out attacks when French forces are not around. As for the CAR, the build-up of forces, both French and those contributed by the African Union, have not yet been sufficient to completely deter the various militias from fighting each other. Numerous atrocities have been reported, including cannibalism, and there are fears the country could be on the brink of genocide. However, as more foreign forces pour into the CAR, it is hoped this can be averted, and perhaps the nation can begin to achieve some modicum of stability, allowing it to begin to move forward.



French troops patrolling a street in Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic. Additional troops both from the EU and AU will be needed to restore order in this war torn country. Source: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/12/24/341592/french-troops-killed-car-presidential-guards/>

Source: Paul-Simon Handy and Liesl Louw-Vaudran, "2013: The year military solutions trumped African mediators," Institute for Security Studies (South Africa), 19 Dec 2013, <http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/2013-the-year-military-solutions-trumped-african-mediators>

To be sure, as the accompanying article relates, there were other instances of force used in Africa last year with results more like Mali (rather successful) than the CAR (uncertain at best if the situation will improve, heading towards endless killing fields at its worst). Perhaps the greatest success has been with one of Africa's longest-lasting conflicts, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where, as previously reported in these pages, the M23 Rebel Group, confronted by a UN Special Intervention Brigade, eventually surrendered.

Somalia is another country where force has begun to turn the tide of the country. The African Union, Kenya, and Ethiopia have all played a role in narrowing the amount of land under control of al-Shabaab. Further progress against this al-Qaeda-linked group is expected to continue.

As the accompanying article clearly acknowledges, despite the success of military force in improving the stability and security in several African nations, it should not be the first response to a potential crisis. Unfortunately, trying to bargain with jihadists, rebels, and narcotraffickers is no easy task. Additionally, sometimes groups have no interest in peace, as conflict fuels their interests. In such instances, the conflict can only be solved by a substantial demonstration of lethal force.

Though force may have to step in where mediation has failed to deter a conflict, mediation must lay the groundwork after force has been applied to ensure a lasting peace. This does not necessarily mean immediate elections, as many of these countries in turmoil have a weak and/or fractured political system. Negotiations can be a long process with small steps. Meanwhile, for countries such as France, the UK and America, putting their efforts towards developing the African Union's military capabilities may help them avoid sending their own troops into the fray when an outside force is necessary to resolve a future conflict. End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)

An absolutely catastrophic situation. This is how Adrian Edwards, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesperson, described the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) earlier this month. The stories pouring out of the capital Bangui and the hinterland of the landlocked CAR sketch a landscape of fear and horror.

Conflict prevention in Africa must take into account the ever-changing nature of the problem. Conflicts have become more fluid with non-conventional actors alternating between insurgency and normal life, making it difficult to draw a clear line between warring parties. The brutality of the conflict in the CAR and the addition of an unexpected religious element are a testimony to this.

... the command structure of Boko Haram is so loose that, as in the case of Mali, it is extremely difficult to negotiate any kind of lasting settlement.

The liberal peacebuilding approach sees elections as the end stage of a process involving heavy military and civilian intervention. This generally only works after a long transition or a coup d'état that didn't alter the institutional fundamentals of political life.

In 2014, imaginative solutions will have to be found to ensure peace in countries where conflict has dragged on for too long. Even the most hardened generals know that no conflict can end without some kind of a political deal.

Nigerian Special Forces Strike Crucial Blow to Boko Haram Land Operation

12 March 2014

OE Watch Commentary: The recent revelation that Nigerian forces seized some 700 vehicles from Boko Haram insurgents in northern Nigeria was a resounding success for the Nigerian military: Nigerian media sources are calling it one of the biggest victories against the group to date. Though evidence is thus far unconfirmed, one suspects that the ground-breaking raid was likely carried out by a new special operations force.

Led by Nigerian special forces, which comprised both land-based soldiers and an Air Force component, the 11 March raid on the Boko Haram stronghold in the northeastern Borno state comes less than two months after Nigeria's announcement of its creation of a Nigerian Army Special Operations Command (NASOC). As described by its creators, NASOC intends to be a low density, high level strategic utility force capable of conducting direct action at low visibility operations. Though the exact parameters governing NASOC's new mandate remain somewhat ambiguous, it bears noting that the recent raids occurred in the sparsely populated, low density areas of Dikwa and Kukawa, even further east of Maiduguri and closer to the Chadian border. Further, lending credence to the possible involvement of NASOC was the covert nature of the raid itself, in addition to its high strategic importance. However, since details of which Nigerian units were actually responsible for the raid have not been released, NASOC's involvement cannot be confirmed definitively.

Also of note is that the U.S. has helped to stand up the NASOC force, which has received training and equipment from AFRICOM, the U.S. Special Operations Command Africa (SOCAFRICA), and the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria. As some analysts of Nigerian security have highlighted, the willingness of the country to accept new military assistance in the form of NASOC will open more channels of army-to-army contact. Given Nigeria's increasing importance, these new inroads for collaboration have the potential for numerous mutual benefits.

End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)



Source: <http://army.mil.ng>

Source: Fidelis Soriwei, "Soldiers attack B'Haram camp, seize 700 vehicles," The Punch (Nigeria), 12 March 2014: <http://www.punchng.com/news/soldiers-attack-bharam-camp-seize-700-vehicles/>.

Article:

The Special Forces involved in the ongoing campaign against the Boko Haram insurgents have recorded what security sources have described as one of the greatest breakthroughs in the campaign against terrorists in the North-East.

Investigations on Tuesday revealed that the Special Forces, comprising ground troops and the Air Force fighters, had demobilized one of the strongest fortresses of the Boko Haram sect.

It was learnt that the soldiers, who carried out the operation, were shocked by the volume of arms and ammunition and hundreds of operational vehicles that they captured at the camp.

A source put the number of vehicles captured from the insurgents at 700 while several members of the sect were arrested.

Maj.-Gen Chris Olukolade, who confirmed the capture of the Boko Haram camp, said that several terrorists who were wounded in the military raids were arrested and had made useful confessions.

The Director of Defence Information said in an electronic mail on Tuesday that some of the wounded terrorists who were captured near Lake Chad were pleading for mercy and were cooperating with interrogators from the Multi-National Joint Task Force.

Olukolade said that some of the insurgents were captured by troops around Dikwa, Cross Kauwa, Kukawa and Alargarmo.

"In their confessions, it was revealed that some of the camps have been disbanded following the directive of their clerics who declared that the operation of the sect had come to an end as the mission could no longer be sustained.

Olukolade said that the captured insurgents complained of starvation and the frequency of bombardments as some of the major problems which affected them.

It was learnt that the seized vehicles included those that the insurgents used for attacks and other vehicles they snatched from people.

Military sources said that the camp was well planned with boreholes, dispensary and other facilities to aid the operations of the insurgents.

OE Watch Commentary: *Perhaps the grass is always greener on the other side? As the accompanying op-ed details, while Nigeria's Joint Task Force (JTF), which was tasked with stopping the Boko Haram violence until it was replaced by an Army force in August 2013, was frequently derided as a failure on numerous fronts, in retrospect many now realize that improved alternatives might be hard to come by.*

In the fight against Boko Haram the JTF was originally constituted by personnel from numerous security forces, including the Nigerian Army, the Nigerian Air Force, the State Security Service, the Nigerian Police, and intelligence units, and was intended to apply a whole-of-government approach to security. Indeed, the ad-hoc JTF was not a new institution, but rather was the Nigerian government's replication of its strategy against MEND (Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta) militants. In that region raids by JTF were generally thought to have led to the mitigation of that conflict, though they were also criticized as somewhat reckless and fundamentally undermined citizens' human rights.

The disbanding of the JTF in favor of an Army-led force in the fight against Boko Haram has benefits and drawbacks. On the plus side, the dismantling of the JTF has served to streamline operations and command and control, which were previously parceled out to the various agencies mentioned above. Further, putting the Army in command of addressing Boko Haram was meant to address citizens' qualms that President Goodluck Jonathan was not taking Boko Haram seriously enough; the shift in control signals that the government is now approaching the group via a counterinsurgency strategy rather than treating it simply as a criminal organization. More broadly, its dissolution was also an effort to address international critiques of the very poor human rights record of the JTF, which, like its predecessor in the Niger Delta, was notorious for its draconian counterterrorism tactics.

*Yet, there are plenty of negatives. The main drawback with the shift to an Army-led force relates to the deteriorating relationship with the civilian population in the northeastern states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa. As the article details, one of the hallmarks of the JTF was a civilian component, the JTF-C, which allowed local populations to serve in various security capacities, including intelligence gathering and policing. The Army-led force has not been able to keep up this rapport with civilians, which is leading to decreased trust and information sharing, and ultimately may be partly responsible for the rise in attacks in recent months. Further, it is not clear that the Army will necessarily be more respectful of human rights than the JTF. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)***

Source: Victoria Ibezim-Ohari, "Nigeria: What Options for the Military?" Premium Times (Abuja, Nigeria), 10 March 2014: http://allafrica.com/stories/201403101138.html?aa_source=useful-column.

Article:

Disbanding the JTF is apparently one of the worst things that ever happened to the security crisis in the northeast. Ever since a military division was established to take over from JTF, the security infrastructure over there appears to be on the verge of total collapse, while most of the skilled military personnel may have been transferred out of the region. Comparatively speaking, the JTF did well!

Despite its very poor human rights record, one of JTF's high points was its struggle to win local support for military operations through strategic collaboration with the civilian-JTF, a group of local youth trained to initiate and undertake community self-help surveillance initiatives. The civilian JTF assisted law enforcement agencies to provide security to the troubled locations, and sometimes joined the military at the check points. This strategic collaboration helped the JTF to significantly overturn the deep-seated mistrust, suspicion, and fearing characterizing the relationship between the security operatives and the civilian populations. The result of that was somewhat improved intelligence gathering, leading to the effective identification and extirpation of the sect's members and violent activities.

Lately, reports of frequent altercations between the civilian-JTF and the security forces are rife. This suggests that the JTF-C.JTF alliance was not sustained after JTF was disbanded. This has also undermined effective policing of communities, breaking down rapid response mechanisms which the JTF had put in place.

As the security crisis in the northeast worsens, and schools forcefully closed to protect the children from continued butchering, Governor Shettima's recent outcry quickly comes to mind. There is no doubt that the governor's claims of low motivation and under-equipment of security forces is not too far away from the truth. To many citizens that are confusedly questioning - on offline and online spaces - why terrorists attacks have continued to escalate with impunity, at a time the Federal Government has budgeted Trillions of Naira for security and declared a state of emergency in Yobe and other states in North East Nigeria, Governor Shettima's statements certainly helps to fill the blank spaces.

Nigerians have seen you-tube videos of security operatives detonating improvised explosive devises (IEDs) with bare hands. There have been reports alleging that military forces flee when insurgents with more advanced armory unleash their onslaught on poor unprotected communities. Substantiated media reports of "low morale occasioned by lack of motivation and poor welfare package" abound. From the look of things, it is doubtful that the trillion Naira security budget is trickling down to the boys on the field.

Nigeria Ramps up Military Production Capabilities

Originally published in
OE Watch January 2014

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(continued)



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

Continued: Nigeria Ramps up Military Production Capabilities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

African Political Systems and Conflict

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

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

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

War Imagined between Colombia and Venezuela

13 March 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *The potential for a hot war between Colombia and Venezuela has fueled Colombian and Venezuelan classroom imaginations and Internet discussion threads for years. The two neighbors took distinctly different political/ideological pathways after Hugo Chavez gained the Venezuela presidency fifteen years ago. Bilateral relations deteriorated soon afterwards, as President Chavez sought alliances with the likes of Cuba, Iran, Nicaragua and North Korea. Cuba especially depends on the Venezuelan socialist government for critical economic sustenance. Colombia, meanwhile, maintained its traditionally close ties with the United States.*

*Recently the Russians have been flirting with military presence in the region. Although bilateral relations between Colombia and Venezuela per se have not deteriorated since Chavez' death one year ago, the security situation inside Venezuela has deteriorated precipitously. Now the regional web conversation is turning to imagining the shape of what some think is an unavoidable Venezuelan civil war, a condition that cannot help but rekindle talk of Colombian intervention. As the Venezuelan government blames outside forces for its woes, refugee flows increase, economic ties become strained, and Colombian citizens within Venezuela suffer the effects of increased Venezuelan government repression, the security challenges and decision mixes for Colombia's leaders will become more and more interesting. As it pertains to Colombia, United States policy forbade anything called counterinsurgency before 2002. In 2002 the U.S. policy was reversed and counterinsurgency became a byword of United States support. Regional and extra-regional actors are presented with a potential land war that would be only partially counterinsurgent, more insurgent, somewhat counternarcotic, a good part bi-national/conventional, compelling as to humanitarian elements and geostrategically consequential. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)***



Map of neighboring nations of Colombia and Venezuela.

Source: <http://www.economist.com/node/14848972>

Source: Mayerling Jimenez, Comité del Foro de Sao Paulo entregará a Maduro declaración de apoyo a Venezuela (Committee of the Forum of Sao Paulo will deliver a declaration of support to Venezuela), Radio Mundial, 14 March, 2014, <http://www.radiomundial.com.ve/article/comit%C3%A9-del-foro-de-sao-paulo-entregar%C3%A1-maduro-declaraci%C3%B3n-de-apoyo-venezuela-reporte>

Article 1:

“The deputy of the National Assembly of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), Rodrigo Cabezas, informed that Friday the executive committee of the Forum of Sao Paulo will deliver to the president of the Republic [of Venezuela] and to the vicepresident of the PSUV, Diosado Cabello, a document in which, firstly, solidarity with the government and democracy of Venezuela is declared. ... Cabezas indicated that in second place it rejects the violence to which Venezuela is being subjected by ultra-rightist sectors of the country and the oligarchic media in conjunction with the State Department of the United States. ... the document calls on the widest global solidarity with the people of Venezuela, that this April 13 actions be conducted in all the capitals of Latin America and the world in support of the nation on the occasion of the victory that was obtained against the oligarchic coupists of 2002 [an attempt to throw out deceased and former Venezuelan president, Hugo Chavez].”

Source: EFE. “Venezuela está a ‘las puertas de una guerra civil’, según exilio en Miami” (Venezuela is ‘at the doorway to a civil war’ according to an exile in Miami), Proceso Digital, 13 March, 2014, <http://www.proceso.hn/2014/03/13/Pol%C3%ADtica/Venezuela.est.C/83543.html>

Article 2:

“According to Colina, Venezuela is approaching the point of no return within a process of disintegration and of pointed crisis marked by short supply of basic goods, uncontrolled delinquency and galloping inflation.”

Continued: War Imagined between Colombia and Venezuela

Source: Partido Comunista Colombiano Clandestino (brazo político de las FARC-EP) (Clandestine Communist Party of Colombia [political arm of the FARC-EP]), “El escenario de guerra contra Venezuela comienza a concretarse” (The war scenarion against Venezuela Begins to Solidify), lahaine.org, March 19, 2013, <http://www.lahaine.org/index.php?p=69318>

Article 3:

“What is written above [a 4,700-word essay] is intended to offer elements of analysis about the hypothesis of intervention by the United States into Venezuela, using Colombian territory and the will of the oligarchy. It is not about being alarmists. They are just facts about a scenario that some see as “of little probablility.”

Source: Alfredo Coronil Hartmann, “Venezuela: ¿Se cocina una traición?” (Venezuela: Is a treason being cooked up?), Colombia News, 20 March, 2014, <http://www.periodicodebate.com/>

Article 4:

“Here it is necessary to see in perspective a complex reality, but not an unsolvable one. It amounts to a clash of State and governance models that are incompatible, completely opposed, mutually exclusive in essence. To not understand the matter thusly is to renounce at the start all possibility of a solution.”

A MODERN HISTORY OF THE FREE SYRIAN ARMY IN DARAA

By By Lucas Winter, Foreign Military Studies Office

This paper looks at the genesis and development of the Free Syrian Army in the southern province of Daraa, from July 2011 to July 2013.

A careful analysis of the emergence and development of provincial FSA structures is merely a prelude to unraveling the complex dynamics of any given province, not to mention Syria as a whole. This study may provide a template for how to study other provinces, considering the broader Syrian conflict as a series of local conflicts rather than a single national one.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Free-Syrian-Army-Daraa.pdf>



OE Watch Commentary: *The Colombian military is expected to spend an estimated \$USD 99 billion during 2011-2016 in an attempt to counter internal and external security threats by utilizing strategic land, air, and sea power concepts.*

Colombia's Major Threats

The concept of strategic land, air, and sea power can be applied to Colombia's internal and external security threats. When looking at internal threats, Colombia is plagued by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN). Colombia's most pressing external security threat has been and continues to be Venezuela. Under the Hugo Chavez administration Venezuela began expanding its military ranks and purchasing large quantities of defense equipment, including 100,000 combat rifles, 24 Sukhoi-30 fighter bombers and 50 helicopters. This act initiated an arms race with which Colombia is still trying to catch up.

In February 2014 Colombia became aware that Venezuela may be looking to militarize its western border in Tachira, after Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro stated that if he had to declare a state of exception Tachira, he was ready to create it, and put all of Venezuela's military force there. To elaborate

The Modernization of the Colombian Military

LIG NEX-1, a South Korean Defense Company has signed a deal with the Colombian defense industry to develop projects aimed at designing, developing, manufacturing, assembling, integrating and testing the operation of sensors and radars. These sensors will be made in Villavicencio which is located in the Colombian Department of Meta. According to Lee Hyo Koo, the CEO of LIG NEX-1, the sensors that will be built in Colombia will "contribute to the maintenance of security and peace of the people." In addition to signing an agreement to build sensors and radars with LIG NEX 1, the Colombian government also purchased 16 missiles which will be utilized to modernize four Colombian war ships.

Colombia has also begun investing in equipment to monitor its borders as evidenced by the purchase of 52 IGS-4S Video Sighting Systems from Rippel Effect Systems (PTY) Ltd, a South African company. The Colombian government also purchased 13 MRAP Sand Cat vehicles from Plasan Sasa Ltd. for \$USD 5.3 million and 8 LAV III vehicles from General Dynamics Land Systems. Sand Cat's are specifically known for being lightweight and highly maneuverable in both urban and remote settings. Additional land based equipment to be purchased by the Colombian government during 2014 includes 12 M777, M109A5 and M109A6 Paladin artillery systems from BAE systems and 70 armored vehicles.

(continued)



Colombian Army EE-9 Cascavel manufactured by Brazil.
Source: <http://www.webinfomil.com/2013/09/ejercito-de-colombia-moderniza-los.html>

Continued: Colombian Land-Power

on this, Tachira is a Venezuelan state located along the Colombian-Venezuelan border, and, according to Maduro, the Mayor of Tachira is allegedly conspiring against the Venezuela government with the support of many other players. Although possible militarization in Tachira will occur on Venezuelan soil, a military buildup along the Colombian border represents a direct threat to Colombia.

Colombia's Strategic Look Ahead

In light of ongoing internal and external security threats, the Colombian military began planning modernization efforts in 2011 and is looking ahead strategically to modernize not only land power, but also air and sea power. For example, the defense minister is looking to procure new military hardware, including aircraft, armored vehicles and small arms. The military is also looking to purchase perimeter security protection systems, safety and survival accessories, maritime integrated technology and ship integration, and electronic warfare simulation and training.

As for immediate actions, Colombia is working on developing Persistent Wide Area Surveillance in the country. To do this Colombia has teamed up with LIG NEX-1, a South Korean defense manufacturer, to build sonars and radars that will be utilized to enhance border security and provide continuous surveillance along vulnerable border regions and in crime-prone areas. Colombia's partnership with South Korea also feeds into Colombia's goal of becoming a defense manufacturer and exporter, rather than remaining a net importer of defense and security equipment. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel and Gonzalez)**

An IGS-45 compact video sighting system utilised in conjunction with various vehicle-mounted weapons in calibres ranging from 7,62mm to 125mm.

Source: <http://www.webinfomil.com/2013/09/ejercito-de-colombia-moderniza-los.html>

As for technology upgrades in aircraft, the Colombian military is looking to replace their aged Cessna A-37 Dragonfly light strike jets and Rockwell OV-10 Bronco armed Forward Air Control Platforms. Possible candidates include the Czech L-159, BAE Systems' Hawk trainer, and the Alenia/Embraer AMX. The Colombian Air Force (FAC) is also looking to modernize EMB 321 Tucano T27 airplanes and was recently certified by the Brazilian firm Embraer Defense to do so. As part of their agreement with Embraer Defense, Colombia's Corporation of the Aeronautics Industry will obtain a certificate that will make it the only company able to modernize Tucano planes with the exception of those belonging to the Brazilian Air Force.

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Regional Ground Forces Exercise Programs in the Indo-Pacific on the Rise

April 2014

“The larger objective is to expand confidence and trust between two militaries, which are often grappling with tensions along the border.”

OE Watch Commentary: A key element of enhancing local strategic land power in the Indo-Pacific Asia region is seen in the increasing frequency and scope of bilateral ground force exercises among the region’s nations. India and China conducted their first combined counterterrorism exercise in 2007.

This groundbreaking event between the region’s two land power titans may have sparked a strategic trend. The past seven years have seen steady-state U.S. annual ground force exercises, such as Cobra Gold (Thailand) and Balikatan (Philippines), augmented by host nations, with new couplings of military-to-military exercises spanning the operational gamut from humanitarian and disaster relief to counterterrorism.

An article from The Hindu speaks to the continuing ground force exercises between India and China. Such articles give insight into the foreign (local) perspective of the importance of military-to-military contact and cooperation. Western press narratives often point to

Source: The Hindu, “With focus on terrorism, India-China begin joint military drills”, November 6, 2013 <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/world/with-focus-on-terrorism-indiachina-begin-joint-military-drills/article5317800.ece>

India and China ... began a joint military drill ...in southwestern China, with around 300 soldiers from both countries taking part in exercises aimed at boosting trust between the militaries.

... the two contingents — comprising ... the 16 Sikh Light Infantry and the 1st Battalion Infantry division of the PLA — will conduct counter-terrorism drills involving tactical hand signals, arrest and escort, hostage rescue, joint attacks and “a comprehensive anti-terror combat drill”, the Chinese State-run Xinhua news agency said.

...Chengdu is the headquarters of one of the People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA) seven Military Area Commands (MACs). The Chengdu MAC holds responsibility for the entire Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), as well as the middle and eastern sections of the border with India.

...Lieutenant General Yang, the deputy commander of the Chengdu MAC, highlighted terrorism “as a global challenge” and said... that India and China “face similar threats”... the training was intended “to exchange anti-terror experiences, enhance mutual understanding and trust, and boost cooperation between the Chinese and Indian Armies”.

Lieutenant General Bhatia said the exercise was “a perfect beginning” for renewed bilateral cooperation. “We intend on learning best practices of each other, which would be mutually beneficial for both the Armies,” he said.

(continued)



Source: <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/mediafile/201311/16/F201311161529582017369792.jpg>

Continued: Regional Ground Forces Exercise Programs in the Indo-Pacific on the Rise

the expansive growth of China's military power and presence in the Indo-Pacific Asia realm as potentially problematic. The nations of the region have found joint ground force exercises to be a tool for confidence building and mutual understanding. The official Chinese press is quick to report these joint exercises as clear signs of solidarity and Chinese equanimity. An article from The Xinhua News Agency regarding the 2007 exercise provides additional background.

Other land powers of the region are continuing to build strategic depth in their relations via an expanding exercise and engagement program. Thailand has also launched a ground force exercise regime with China. The accompanying article from China Military Online reveals the bilateral event, "Assault 2013," as an army special forces dominated exercise between the two nations. Interestingly, Chinese helicopter units flew from China to Thailand for the exercise. India has also reached out to near neighbors and conducted similar exercises with Indonesia. A blog site, Chinditsdefence, chronicles ground force exchanges for counterinsurgency and jungle warfare training.

*Gone are the Cold War days of superpower dominance and nonaligned disengagement. Each regional nation is exercising its sovereignty and seeking bilateral military-to-military relations that would have seemed improbable only a few years ago. Strategic land power is being built through increased cooperation and new relationships. **End OE Watch Commentary (Welch)***

...The exercise is the third round of the "hand-in-hand" drills that the two countries initiated in 2007 in Kunming, in southwestern Yunnan province. The second round was held in Belgaum, Karnataka, the following year.

...Last month, both sides signed a Border Defence Cooperation Agreement (BDCA) aimed at expanding confidence-building measures and preventing the recurrence of face-offs, by formalising rules such as no tailing of patrols and widening direct contact between military commands.

Source: Xinhuanet, "China, India wrap up anti-terror military training," December 25, 2007, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-12/25/content_7306697.htm

KUNMING, Dec. 25 (Xinhua) -- Chinese and Indian armies concluded their first-ever joint anti-terrorism military training...near Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province, with the participation of 206 ground troops from the two armies.

...The joint military training raised the combat ability of the Chinese and Indian armies to fight against terrorism and enhanced mutual understanding and trust between the two armies, said Lieutenant General Ma Xiaotian...

The training also promoted the development of bilateral strategic cooperative partnership, said Ma, who is also deputy chief of the General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA).

"It's the real reflection of the confidence and power of China and India and their armies to fight against terrorism," said Ma.

... "This is a momentous occasion for us," said Susheel Gupta, who is also deputy chief of Army Staff, Indian Army. "This first-ever joint training shows our resolve to fight against terrorism and ensure peace for the entire world."

...Pointing out that "military-to-military cooperation between the two countries is a very important aspect of diplomacy", Gupta expressed his belief that joint training and exercise will go a long way in improving bilateral relations...

Chinese army has presented itself to the world as being more open, more transparent and more confident by taking part in a series of anti-terror military exercises and trainings with foreign armies to safeguard regional peace and stability, said an official with the MND's newly-founded press office, who declined to give his name....

(continued)



Continued: Regional Ground Forces Exercise Programs in the Indo-Pacific on the Rise

Source: China Military Online, “China-Thailand joint anti-terrorism training wrapped up,” December 25, 2013 http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2013-12/25/content_5705958.htm

The army special forces of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and the Royal Thai Army held joint anti-terrorism training code-named “Assault-2013” from December 9 to 21, 2013 at the Aravan Barracks in Lopburi, Thailand. This is the fourth time for the China-Thailand special forces to hold joint anti-terrorism training.

The officers and men participating in the training are mainly from a special operation brigade of the Guangzhou Military Area Command (MAC), acknowledged as “South China Sharp Sword”, and a special operation regiment of the Royal Thai Army, acknowledged as “Jungle Tigers”. Besides, an army aviation brigade under the Guangzhou MAC provided training support for the Chinese side for the first time during the China-Thailand joint training, and it set many records for the long-distance flight and cross-border mobility, etc.

... the officers and men from the two militaries carried out the joint training on subjects such as reconnaissance and monitoring, anti-terrorist shooting, special sniping, building break-in, parachuting penetration and urban anti-terrorism ...

Source: [chinditsdefence.blogspot.com](http://chinditsdefence.blogspot.com/2012/03/indo-indonesian-joint-army-exercise.html), “Indo-Indonesian Joint Army Exercise-’Garud Shakti’,” March 1, 2012 <http://chinditsdefence.blogspot.com/2012/03/indo-indonesian-joint-army-exercise.html>

The Armies of India and Indonesia concluded a week-long joint military exercise ...at the Indian Army’s elite ‘Counter Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School’ (CIJWS), in Mizoram (India).

Training together to counter the scourge of insurgency in various contemporary scenarios including jungle warfare ... ended with the busting of a simulated insurgent hideout in Mizoram’s Lushai Hills, in the wee hours, after a grueling nightlong march.

The Indonesian National Army troops ... belonging to the 13th Infantry Brigade ... Troops from the 19th Madras Infantry Battalion, of 21 Mountain Division under Eastern Command, currently deployed in CI operations in the northeast sector, comprised the Indian side.

“They are very sincere, devoted, well-prepared and eager to learn,” said CIJWS Commandant, Maj Gen AK Sen, talking about the Indonesian troops while observing from close quarters the ‘slithering’ and ‘special heliborne operations’ from an IAF Mi-17 flown in from nearby Kumbhirgram airbase in Silchar, Assam. “The visiting troops were put through a rigorous initiation process, and they fared as good as their Indian counterparts,” he added.

Praising the professionalism of the Indian Infantry soldiers, the leader of the Indonesian troops, Col Gatot observed that the Indian troops are very well equipped to fight the insurgents. While finding some of the training tactics very similar, he said that the concept of ‘Buddy’ system was something they would like to emulate. “Back home we operate in big groups,” he says....



Indo-Indonesian Joint Army Exercise-’Garud Shakti’

Source: <http://chinditsdefence.blogspot.com/2012/03/indo-indonesian-joint-army-exercise.html>

Chinese Special Operations – Viewed with Increasing Importance



“... special operations and other such forces will be the key to force building in the future.”

OE Watch Commentary: *China's special operations forces have been evolving in many ways and are expected to become key instruments to build the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) land power force. According to a recent Chinese article, special operations forces are described as the “sharp knife” on future battlefields, making them an important link in the system of systems operations. The following two articles offer a glimpse into Chinese special operations, their functions and tools.*

In the first article Tian Wei, a PLA deputy to the National People's Congress and director of the support department of a special operations brigade in the Guangzhou Military Region, describes the role and importance of system support to special operations forces. The article describes these systems as “invisible and intangible.” Tian explains the difference between yesterday's special operations detachments and those of today. In the past, special operations forces would be dispatched to the depth of the enemy's rear area. Once dropped off, these forces were on their own, supporting themselves even to the extent of “surviving or vanishing by themselves.” Today, however, China has new communications equipment, ground satellite facilities, and other informatized equipment in place, according to Tian. Now they should be able to receive intelligence and fire support from their friendly force, offering a bigger advantage.

Tian goes on to give an overview of U.S.-led land power, special operations missions as examples of what system support looks like. It includes reconnaissance satellites, drones, transport helicopters, and other such systems that offer a direct link to the special operations group and that transform the battlefield from a two-dimensional domain to a multi-dimensional land, sea, air, space, and electromagnetic domain. Tian explains that

Source: Zhang Qi et al, “特战“尖刀”靠体系支撑 (The Special Operations Elite Force Relies on System Support),” Jiefangjun Bao, March 9, 2014, <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/2014-03-10/0730767879.html>

The Special Operations Elite Force Relies on System Support

“In the past, when we carried out operation tasks, we dispatched a special operations detachment to the depth of the enemy's rear area, and they basically took action on their own and exercised self-support even to an extent of “surviving or vanishing by themselves”. At present, through the new communications equipment, ground satellite facilities, and other informatized equipment, the rear base of the friendly force may provide intelligence and fire support for the special operations detachments, which will no longer be “flying cutters” being thrown out, but “sharp knives” being pushed out from the operation system with precise guidance!

Reporter: What is system support?

... the battlefield of the operation was expanded from a two-dimensional domain to a multi-dimensional land, sea, air, space, electromagnetic domain. Behind the special operations force, numerous reinforcement and support forces are simultaneously carrying out operation tasks from sensing the battlefield posture and sharing real-time battlefield information to accurately coordinating battlefield actions.

Reporter: Then, how does this change the contents of training for the special operations commandos in our time?

Deputy Tian Wei: The special operations force has increasingly become an important link in the “system of systems operations”, but their basic functions remain quite the same, and the special operations commandos will still mainly carry out such tasks as reconnaissance, harassing and sabotaging enemy forces, battlefield rescue, and decapitation action. The operation tasks and the operation patterns determine that the special operations force still need to keep a perfect condition of physical fitness and master consummate shooting skills with light weapons. Moreover, the special operations commandos of our time are also required to painstakingly practice the skills of operating and using informatized equipment, study and explore the law and the method of system of systems operations.



Chinese “snow Wolf” Special forces. Source: <http://www.sinodefenceforum.com>

(continued)

Continued: Chinese Special Operations – Viewed with Increasing Importance

while the special operations force is relying more on system of systems operations, its basic functions remain mostly the same. They still conduct reconnaissance, harass and sabotage enemy forces, and conduct battlefield rescues and decapitation action. However, in addition to training in these areas, special operations commandos are required to be well versed in operating informatized equipment, while also understanding the law and method of system of systems operations.

The second article reiterates the importance of China's special operations forces. According to the article, which highlights the Chinese military's steady incremental progress, special operations are expected to play an increasingly important role in China's military. According to the author, special operations and other such forces will be the key to force building in the future. Their new operational strengths will mostly include information operations, military aviation, and other operational forces in new security spaces. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**



Chinese special operations forces. Source: <http://www.infzm.com/content/98227>

Source: Yao Yijiang and Lu Zhengtao, “2013中国防务年鉴】解放军下一站：更专业、更职业, The 2013 China Defense Affairs Annual Report: Next Stop for the PLA – More Professional, More Career – Oriented,” Nanfang Zhoumo, February 21, 2014, <http://www.infzm.com/content/98227>

The 2013 China Defense Affairs Annual Report: Next Stop for the PLA

... During the past one or two years, special operations groups organized in the various military regions and subordinate to the group armies have been promoted one after the other from regiment level units to special operations brigades. This clearly shows that special operations and other such forces will be the key to force building in the future. These new operational strengths mainly include information operations, military aviation, and other operational forces in new security spaces. Some analysts posit that the possibility of the Chinese military setting up “network armies” and “space armies” is extremely great...

OE Watch Commentary: After the collapse of the Soviet Union the three new Central Asian states on China's western border – Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan – ended territorial disputes with China by ceding parts of their borderlands to China--a region General Liu Yazhou of the People's Liberation Army called the "thickest piece of pie that the heavens gave to modern China."

China's build-up of infrastructure, including pipelines and roads through these annexed territories into Central Asia, has, however, also resulted in negative effects on China, such as drug trafficking and terrorism. An article in xinhuanet.com on 3 March 2014 featured an analysis of China's "Zhujiang" border forces ("zhu" means "stationed" and "jiang" is an abbreviation for "Xinjiang), who are charged with protecting Xinjiang from the "three forces" of terrorism, separatism and extremism. The article also included an interview with a Uighur soldier, who discussed the challenges that his comrades in the Zhujiang border forces face in their work.

The Uighur soldier emphasized that the border forces carry out counterterrorism measures along Xinjiang's border because terrorism in China is not derived from "local events," but rather international terrorist networks. Since 2012 China has openly

"The fight against terrorism in China's front-line soldiers are stationed at an altitude of nearly 5,000 meters of altitude, working at minus 30-40 degrees in harsh environments Xinjiang's military equipment has been upgraded to enhance adaptability in a plateau, or in extreme conditions to ensure combat effectiveness."

Source: "新疆军区副司令员：驻疆部队是新疆反恐的强大后盾 (Xinjiang Military Region Deputy Commander: Zhujiang Forces are the Backbone of Anti-terrorism in Xinjiang), xinhuanet.com, 3 March 2014.

Xinjiang Military Region Deputy Commander: Zhujiang Forces are the Backbone of Anti-terrorism in Xinjiang

On the border of Xinjiang in northwest China, well-trained soldiers overcome the hostile environment in China and are the first line of fighting against terrorism. Deputy commander of the Xinjiang Military, Mamat, says the Zhujiang forces are the backbone of counter-terrorism in Xinjiang. The Uighur soldier in an interview with reporters says: "The current anti-terrorism measures in Xinjiang are not for a local event."

Neighboring a number of Central Asian countries, including Afghanistan, a major task is to ensure that the PLA border is stable, and the "three forces" do not have the potential to sneak into the Chinese border. Xinjiang border work can not be lax. "We real-time monitoring through a variety of means, Mamat says.

(continued)



Members of China's "Zhujiang" border security forces during a training exercise in China's Xinjiang Province. Source: <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/2/14/china-kills-eleven-terrorists-in-xinjiang1.html>

Continue: The Mission, Motives and Morale of China's "Zhujiang" Border Guards

alleged that Uighur militants receive training in Pakistan and Syria. The soldier also discussed the harsh conditions in which the border forces carry out patrols at nearly 5000 meters altitude and in freezing environments. However, the soldier noted that their equipment has been upgraded in recent years to enhance adaptability under extreme conditions.

*Most likely the article is intended to increase the Chinese public's admiration and respect for the Zhujiang forces, who will play an increasingly important role in preserving China's security from insurgents in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia, who vow that China is their new number one enemy. The interview of a Uighur soldier is also likely intended to show unity between ethnic Hans and Uighurs, especially after the attack in Kunming on 1 March 2014, in which eight Uighurs from Xinjiang stabbed to death 29 Hans in a train station in Kunming, Yunnan province, which the article called an "unexpected situation" that destroyed "social harmony." **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)***

In the fight against terrorism, China's front-line soldiers are stationed at an altitude of nearly 5,000 meters, working at minus 30-40 degrees in harsh environments. Mamat said, "Xinjiang's military equipment in recent years has been upgraded to enhance adaptability in the plateau, or in extreme conditions to ensure combat effectiveness."

Hard training courses are also essential. He said that "maintaining social stability in Xinjiang is the main duty of Zhujiang forces" and "counter-terrorism training is a part of our normal training, such as special forces training, fighting, arrest, interception and other skills, in addition, we develop each kind of plan to deal with unexpected situations."

Mamat said, undermining forces like Rebiya Kadeer of the "East Turkistan Islamic Movement" and other organizations often are seen in the newspapers as well as dozens of foreign terrorist organizations, which in Xinjiang are closely linked to the "three forces."

The CPPCC National Committee emphasizes that the "three forces" is not a religious issue or a cultural issue. "These forces are the common enemy of the people of all ethnic groups." After a serious violent terrorist incident occurred at the Kunming Railway Station, Mamat offered a severe reprimand. "This is a brutal anti-social, anti-human atrocity. They want to undermine national unity, social harmony and the unity of the motherland, but we can not let the thugs succeed."

Turkey and China: Unlikely Strategic Partners

By Ms. Karen Kaya

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



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

Chinese Strategist Proposes Special Forces “Targeted Killings” Overseas

“Modern terrorists have a growing capacity for counter-reconnaissance and a strong combat capacity. While at sea... the stealth performance of F91 is also essential for coping with non-traditional security threats.”

OE Watch Commentary: With the U.S withdrawing most of its troops from Afghanistan in 2014, China realizes that anti-Chinese insurgents based in Pakistan will be under less pressure. Abu Zar al-Burmi, the spiritual leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), who is based in Pakistan, warned in 2013 that China will be the number one enemy after the U.S. withdrawal. In 2014 he also appeared in a video of the Uighur-led and Pakistan-based Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), claiming that cutting off the heads of Chinese and Buddhists was permitted. American operations along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border were responsible for the elimination of Uighur militant networks after 11 September 2001, and American air strikes killed two TIP leaders in 2010 and 2012, respectively, as well as the IMU’s founder, Tahir Yuldashev, in 2010.

According to an article published on 3 March 2014 by Chinese military strategist and Executive President of the China Strategic Culture Promotion Association Luo Yuan, China may need to employ antiterrorism special forces to attack the hideouts of terrorists outside of Chinese borders.

Luo Yuan does not say that he recommends a shift in China’s generally defensive military posture. His main recommendations are that China protects its borders from smugglers, issues international arrest warrants for anti-Chinese militants, and “engage in targeted killings to prevent attacks from aboard.”

One reason why Luo Yuan is proposing a new direction for Chinese special forces is the rise in militancy spreading from Xinjiang to eastern Chinese cities, such as Beijing and Kunming, which suffered attacks by Uighur militants in October 2013 and March 2014. In addition, Chinese special forces may be called upon in the case of other exigencies, such as in response to the kidnappings of Chinese citizens in countries like Pakistan, where several times Chinese infrastructure workers were kidnapped and killed since 2001 without China, Pakistan or any other country attempting a rescue. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



Chinese Special Operation Forces Arrive in Pakistan for the YOUYI-IV (“Friendship-IV”) joint exercises with the Pakistani army in 2011. Source: <http://pakmr.blogspot.com/2011/11/chinese-special-operation-forces-reach.html>

Source: “建武 警特种部队反恐 定点清除境外窝点 (Launch the Armed Special Forces for Extraterritorial Targeted Killings on Terror Hideouts),” mil.huanqiu.com, 3 March 2014.

Launch the Armed Special Forces for Extraterritorial Targeted Killings on Terror Hideouts

I propose to strengthen counter-terrorism capabilities with the formation of armed counter-terrorism special forces. They will have vanguard equipment to carry out the counter-terrorism battle.

Armed counter-terrorism special forces should strengthen cooperation with the international counter-terrorism, with the approval of relevant countries on agreed on overseas training bases, command centers, intelligence and communications hubs, and equipment supply points, and they could engage in targeted killings to prevent attacks from abroad. Our borderline defense should raise our counter-terrorism alert and absolutely now allow dangerous goods to entry or exit.

For hazardous areas and sensitive areas, according to counter-terrorism situation, we should adjust our focus to ensure the safety of people’s lives and property in the region. The people of the region should be vigilant to enhance their self-protection awareness and take measures to promptly report suspicious people and things with rewards for meritorious persons and punishments for those who harbor.

Recommendations to strengthen the military’s counterterrorism functions also include that they receive necessary counter-terrorism training and are allotted the necessary equipment to perform the necessary defense tasks. We should also convene a forum to listen to the analysis of the counter-terrorism situation from minority compatriots. Most of the minority compatriots are against terrorism, and they are also the victims in terrorist attacks.

From Condemnation to Endorsement: Chinese Commentary on Using Drone Strikes Abroad

“China is also developing Unmanned Aerial Vehicles that emphasize the precision strike, maybe one day China will be able to play a role in the fight against terrorism.”

OE Watch Commentary: Within days of the U.S. unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) strike that killed Pakistani Taliban leader Hakimullah Mehsud on 1 November 2013, the Chinese Foreign Ministry sided with its ally Pakistan and publicly opposed the strike as an infringement on Pakistani sovereignty. Yet, as the accompanying article suggests (using a Chinese proverb), China may have been “lifting a rock and hurting its own feet” by “demonizing” U.S. strikes. The article reminded readers of the 28 October 2013 attack in Beijing, in which three members of a Uighur family blew up their car in Tiananmen Square, killing themselves and several tourists. That attack proved that “terrorism is not confined to the U.S.” and that China faces a threat deep in its heartland. The article emphasized that U.S. drones have eliminated Uighur militant leaders in Pakistan, such as Abd al-Haq al-Turkistani in 2010 and Abd al-Shakoor al-Turkistani in 2012, both of the Turkistan Islamic Party. The article also addresses the issue of civilian casualties, noting that conventional means to eliminate terrorists also lead to civilian deaths and that the Pakistani failure to prosecute terrorists leaves countries like the U.S. with few options but to carry out attacks unilaterally.

One of the most revealing parts of the article is a poll that showed that 30,432 readers understand the U.S. use of UAVs to carry out strikes against terrorists, while only 10,746 opposed this. This suggests China is considering the weight of popular domestic support for extraterritorial force, whether by air or land. China already has established a soft power presence in Pakistan through the more than 15 power projects it is developing in Pakistan, including in areas that threaten Indian interests, such as in Pakistani-controlled Kashmir. India fears that China infrastructure experts include intelligence agents who monitor India’s Himalayan territories near Tibet, where Chinese and Indian troops have clashed since the 1960s and tensions continue to flare.

China is already the leading economic power in Central Asia and South Asia, but has exercised restraint on employing its military power abroad. Nonetheless, this article suggests Chinese citizens could likely be sympathetic to China’s use of force abroad, especially if attacks originating in Pakistan continue to be carried out in major cities like Beijing or border tensions escalate with India in the Himalayas. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



Chinese troops hold a sign warning Indian troops, “You’ve crossed the border, please go back,” near the disputed Himalayan territory of Ladakh (officially part of India), where China is developing a highway and India is developing new infrastructure on land that both countries claim. Source: http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-05-06/news/39065109_1_indian-army-chumar-mountain-strike-corps

Source: “妖魔化美国无人机或许是搬石砸脚 [China also has Counter-terrorism Needs, and is Developing Unmanned Aerial Vehicles],” 9ask.cn, 28 October 2013.

China also has Counter-terrorism Needs, and is Developing Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

“10.28” Tiananmen terrorist attacks, prove once again that the threat of terrorism is not confined to the U.S. China also faces the real threat of terrorism, the threat is even deep into the Chinese heartland. A response to inhumane terrorism must find a kind of “least bad” choice. No one wants to harm innocent people, but if you consider it from a unilateral self-handicapping standpoint, probably this is unfair. Wait until the terrorists really cause terrible consequences, they are unrepentant. Obviously, the UAV should not be regarded as a natural choice, as there is original sin. Of course, there may be problems that should be carefully examined. But as an effective counter-terrorism measure, China should also pay attention to them. At present, China is also developing unmanned aerial vehicles, but also emphasizes precision strikes, maybe one day China will be able to play a role in the fight against terrorism. In fact, the perpetrators of the terrorist attack in Beijing were from the “East Turkistan Islamic Movement” camp in Pakistan. Several of its leaders in Pakistan have been killed by the United States drone attacks. So, now the “demonized” UAV is perhaps not necessary, for it is lifting a rock and hurting our own feet.

Japan Embrace of HA/DR Missions Reflects Strategic Vision for Ground Forces

11 March 2014

“Japan’s Defense Ministry will set up a new command in the Ground Self-Defense Force by fiscal 2018 to oversee the force’s five armies in the event of an emergency such as a massive natural disaster ...”

OE Watch Commentary: As Japan has explored expanded overseas roles for its Self Defense Forces (SDF) over the years, it has viewed humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions (HA/DR) as a natural and nonthreatening mechanism through which to engage the international community. This is evident in its prominent role in international exercises, such as Cobra Gold, as depicted in the first excerpt.

The Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011 highlighted the importance of HA/DR capability to Japan. As the second excerpt points out, even the current defense minister was directly affected. Japanese commentaries on international crises also reveal how prevalent the event remains in Japanese thought, exemplified, for example, by the November 2013 deployment of Japanese land forces to provide disaster relief in the Philippines, as reflected in the third excerpt.

Consequently, Japan has embraced HA/DR as a primary function of its SDF, especially the Ground Self Defense Force (GSDF). In December Japan nested its programmatic guidance within its National Security Strategy, making HA/DR operations an essential component of international missions, as described in the fourth excerpt. The final excerpt indicates that there are now plans to create dedicated coordination authorities within the GSDF.

Source: SFC Crista Mack, “Japanese military expand humanitarian aid training at Cobra Gold 2014,” U.S. Army Pacific Public Affairs, 27 February 2014, http://www.army.mil/article/120963/Japanese_military_expand_humanitarian_aid_training_mission_at_Cobra_Gold_2014/

Article 1:

The Japanese Ground Self Defense Force joined Exercise Cobra Gold 2014’s command post exercise with a 21 person team dedicated to Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief. From Feb. 10-20 they worked to improve natural disaster assistance. Although HA/DR table-top exercises are regularly conducted within the country of Japan, exercise Cobra Gold is a multinational multilateral exercise, this is an opportunity to participate with multiple nations, much like in real world HA/DR scenarios

Source: Ministry of Defense, “Press Conference by the Defense Minister Onodera,” 11 March 2014 <http://www.mod.go.jp/e/pressconf/2014/03/140311.html>.

Article 2:

Question: Moving onto another topic, today is the three-year mark since the outbreak of the Great East Japan Earthquake. The SDF played a vigorous role in disaster relief operations in the aftermath of the catastrophe. What thoughts crossed your mind looking back the event three years ago?

Minister: In the aftermath of the great earthquake, unlike my current position as Defense Minister, I was a disaster victim who was rescued by the SDF. I bathed in the bathing facility that was provided by the SDF and some of my family and relatives were also rescued by the SDF. In addition, I was informed that some of my other relatives, who unfortunately were killed in the disaster, were recovered by the SDF. Based on such

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HA/DR Operations on Izu Oshima Island
Image Source: http://www.mod.go.jp/e/jdf/no47/images/photo/web-only_01.jpg

Continued: Japan Embrace of HA/DR Missions Reflects Strategic Vision for Ground Forces

For centuries the ability of armies to mobilize and sustain large numbers of people has made military forces natural instruments which governments worldwide can use to conduct HA/DR operations. However, the unique political and legal constraints of Japanese military power, combined with Japan's intense recent experience of natural disaster, have led it to formalize and even embrace HA/DR as not a tangential function, but rather a core purpose of its own version of strategic land power. End OE Watch Commentary (Freese)

personal experience as a disaster victim, I think that the role the SDF plays in dealing with disaster is immense. In light of the experience gained from the Great East Japan Earthquake and to be consistent with the guidelines mapped out in the recently revised National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) and Mid-Term Defense Program (MTDP), we are currently making various preparations which will enable the SDF to adequately deal with disastrous situations. In anticipation of a major earthquake striking directly under the Tokyo area or a Nankai Trough earthquake, we intend to make sound preparations for such potential disasters. As we observe the third year anniversary of the great earthquake today, we would like to reaffirm the role of the SDF in responding to disasters and the plan to make steady and appropriate preparations.

Source: Editorial Staff Author(s), "A Helping Hand for the Philippines," The Japan Times, 23 November 2013 <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2013/11/23/editorials/a-helping-hand-for-philippines/>

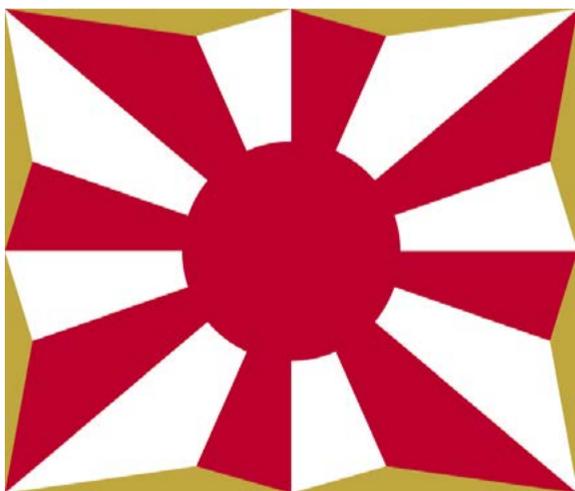
“I think that the role the SDF plays in dealing with disaster is immense.”

Article 3:

... The Philippines was one of the most important contributors to the relief effort after the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami in March 2011, and now Japan has the chance to return the favor. ... Already, Japan has sent medical workers, disaster relief experts and Ground Self-Defense Force members. Japan can help with the construction of roads and airports in remote areas, and help to provide housing. ... Japan should offer long-term support this time to ensure that buildings, roads and shelters are typhoon-resistant at last

(Right) GSDF Northeastern Army conducting HA/DR following earthquake
Source: http://www.mod.go.jp/e/jdf/no10/images/spe_ph_01.jpg

(Bottom) JGSDF flag
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_JSDF.svg



(continued)

Continued: Japan Embrace of HA/DR Missions Reflects Strategic Vision for Ground Forces

“SDF has been active in UN PKO, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) missions and post-conflict reconstruction missions. In terms of legal status, however, these missions had been categorized as miscellaneous activities as opposed to primary missions until 2007.”

Source: Noboru Yamaguchi, “On the New National Defense Program Guidelines,” Discuss Japan, 10 March 2014, <http://www.japanpolicyforum.jp/en/archives/politics/pt20140310004136.html>

Article 4:

On December 17, 2014, the Government of Japan (GOJ) released two key documents for its national security policy: the National Security Strategy (NSS) and the new National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG). ... The NDPG 2013 was released along with the GOJ’s first National Security Strategy describing a broader context encompassing the defense strategy. A defense strategy and policies to implement it in general should fit into the wider context of a national security strategy. ... SDF has been active in UN PKO, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) missions and post-conflict reconstruction missions. In terms of legal status, however, these missions had been categorized as miscellaneous activities as opposed to primary missions until 2007, when the SDF law was revised to list international cooperation activities as primary missions along with other key SDF missions such as the defense of Japan. The new NDPG declaring that Japan should “Proactively Contribute to Peace” properly placed the SDF’s international missions at the center of national security policy.

Source: Staff Author(s), “Japan To Create New GSDF Command For Disaster Response,” Jiji, 09 March 2014 <http://jen.jiji.com/jc/eng?g=eco&k=2014030900131>

Article 5:

Japan’s Defense Ministry will set up a new command in the Ground Self-Defense Force by fiscal 2018 to oversee the force’s five armies in the event of an emergency such as a massive natural disaster ... part of the ministry’s broader initiative to ensure the smooth deployment of troops tasked with search, rescue and recovery operations after a large-scale disaster...

The planned new GSDF command will control the Northern Army, the Northeastern Army, the Eastern Army, the Middle Army and the Western Army ... it will coordinate initial response, additional staff mobilization and troop rotation in an integrated manner ... [the command] will also consult with the commanders of the SDF fleets of ships and aircraft on the transportation of troops so that troops can be deployed speedily to disaster-afflicted areas.

In addition, the ministry is looking at the possibility of using private ferries when Maritime SDF ships that carry GSDF personnel are in short supply

The Inventories of Central Asia's Militaries

Originally published in
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“While these are the most accurate numbers on weapons and equipment available, no mention is made of how many of them are currently serviceable, which is difficult to determine.”

OE Watch Commentary: A number of defense and security analysts rate the militaries of Central Asia, in particular Tajikistan, as being of low quality. Part of the reason for this is the lack of modern weapons systems and equipment, as the accompanying article discusses. The article lists the number of tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, and attack and transport helicopters, all taken from the International Institute for Strategic Studies' annual publication, Military Balance. While these are the most accurate numbers on weapons and equipment available, no mention is made of how many of them are currently serviceable, which is difficult to determine.

As the author notes, Tajikistan has taken longer than its post-Soviet neighbors to develop its armed forces. This is worth noting amid the estimated \$1.1 billion in military assistance Russia will provide to Kyrgyzstan (another post-Soviet country that has been slow to develop its armed forces) starting in 2013. Tajikistan is slated for \$200 million in military assistance; both countries reached deals with Russia in November 2012.

Unlike newspaper articles in Kyrgyzstan, this article does not go into detail of how the \$200 million should be allocated. The author only mentions that Tajikistan's aviation assets are weak. If the Taliban is one of the biggest threats to Tajikistan's future stability, as is mentioned at the end of the article, it will be worth watching how the money is spent, whether on weapons systems, equipment, or training. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, while the author suggests that the Army and Air Force (Ministry of Defense) need to improve their weapons systems, the Border Guards (National Security Committee) will play a major role in Tajikistan's security, particularly related to Afghanistan.

End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)

Source: Shodiev, Haydar. “Страны ЦА: курс на вооружение (The Countries of Central Asia: A Course on Arms),” Asia-Plus, 14 March 2013.
<http://news.tj/ru/newspaper/article/strany-tsa-kurs-na-vooruzhenie>

The Countries of Central Asia: A Course on Arms

In recent years the countries of Central Asia are increasingly focused on their armed forces. What consequences will this have for our country, given the upcoming withdrawal of NATO soldiers from Afghanistan?...Twenty-one years ago, in December 1991, the almost four million strong armed forces of the Soviet Union were divided up. Each of the republics gained a share. Only Tajikistan was “left out”, busy with its internal problems.

The formation of the armed forces of Tajikistan took place in a complex military-political situation. Unrest and civil war caused great losses and outflow of personnel to neighboring countries. Unlike the armies of the other Central Asian republics, created on the basis of the Turkestan Military District, the basis of the Tajik Army was made of the Popular Front, scattered militias led by warlords each pursuing his own goal...For twenty years, the armed forces of Tajikistan are noticeably stronger, but remain behind the armies of other post-Soviet states in almost all components...

Today, the country's armed forces consist of two structures – the Army and the Air Force (and Air Defense). The Army consists of two infantry brigades and an artillery and air assault brigade...According to the IISS Military Balance, in 2012, the Tajik Army had about thirty T-72 tanks, seven T-62 tanks, eight BMP-1 and fifteen BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles, and twenty three armored personnel carriers of various modifications...Aviation is weak: only four Mi-24 (attack) helicopters and thirteen Mi-8 and Mi-17 transport helicopters...

According to Hamid Saidov, professor of history and international relations at the Russian-Tajik Slavonic University, Tajikistan should not be afraid of threats from post-Soviet neighboring countries, but from Afghanistan. “We have more than a 1500 kilometer border with Afghanistan. This is a large area which is not possible to establish a solid barrier,” – said Saidov. In his opinion, after the withdrawal of NATO forces, the Taliban would soon come to power and they have not forgotten that Tajikistan once helped the Northern Alliance in the fight against them...



“Tajik soldiers during training exercise in 2009 with one of the country's BMP variants”
Source: <http://centralasiaonline.com/ru/articles/caii/features/main/2012/04/18/feature-01>

Kyrgyzstan's Minister of Defense: More with Less

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“Omuraliev’s experiences in Afghanistan and in various commands in southern Kyrgyzstan appear to have an impact on the kind of training Kyrgyzstan’s forces are currently conducting, mostly through small unit exercises, and that the military is focused on training and not just procurement.”

OE Watch Commentary: *As the accompanying article mentions, when Russia and Kyrgyzstan reached an agreement on military cooperation in September 2012 it helped set up the November agreement in which Russia agreed to provide \$1.1 billion in military assistance to Kyrgyzstan. The two governments will discuss how the money will be allocated sometime this spring. The article features an interview with Kyrgyzstan’s Minister of Defense, Major General Taalaybek Omuraliev, who discusses his country’s military cooperation with Russia and gives some insight into the Kyrgyz Army’s training.*

Major General Omuraliev, who has been in his current position since December 2011, has a unique background that might help Kyrgyzstan’s military capabilities in the long run. Despite the seemingly-generous military assistance package from Russia, Kyrgyzstan’s military is restrained by budget and other challenges, particularly when compared to neighboring countries. However, Omuraliev’s background of serving in Afghanistan and various command assignments in the early days of the Kyrgyz military in the 1990s could be an indication of Kyrgyzstan’s effort to do more with less, specifically with how the military conducts training.

Omuraliev’s experiences in Afghanistan and in various commands in southern Kyrgyzstan—emphasizing small unit actions appear to be having an impact on the kind of training Kyrgyzstan’s forces are currently conducting, mostly through small unit exercises and related procurement and facilities development. This “think small” approach is an affordable and effective way for Kyrgyzstan to develop its military, especially if Russian funding does not materialize. End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)



“Kyrgyzstan’s Minister of Defense Major General Taalaybek Omuraliev meets with Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu at the Collective Security Treaty Organization’s Council of Defense Ministers in Bishkek on May 27, 2013”. Source: <http://www.arms-expo.ru/049056050057124051049056052053.html>

Source: Khayrullin, Shamil. “В прямой увязке с существующими угрозами (In direct with existing threats),” *Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star)*, 26 March 2013. <http://www.redstar.ru/index.php/news-menu/v-armiyakh-sng/kyrgyzstanarmy/item/8244-v-pryamoj-uvyazke-s-sushchestvuyushchimi-ugrozami>

In direct relation with existing threats

The working meeting of Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Kyrgyz counterpart Almazbek Atambayev in Bishkek in September of last year, without a doubt, gave new life to cooperation between the two countries, including military cooperation. Documents were signed on the status and conditions of the joint Russian military base in Kyrgyzstan and protocols on military cooperation. “Red Star” asked the Minister of Defense of the Kyrgyz Republic, Major-General Taalaybek Omuraliev his opinion on key points of the new documents.

(Khayrullin): “Taalaybek Baryktabasovich, what, in your opinion, is the practical effect of the agreement on the status and conditions of the joint Russian base in the republic?”

(continued)

Continued: An Interview with Kyrgyzstan's Minister of Defense

(Omuraliev): “Let me start by saying that one of the most important tasks of our armed forces is a timely warning of the dangerous development of the military-political situation and the preparation of an armed attack on the republic...Our country already has experience in the fight against illegal armed groups of Islamic extremists, who invaded the Batken region of Kyrgyzstan in the summer of 1999. The army defeated the group of extremists...Incidentally, the Batken events and the threat of armed incursions of terrorists have stepped up joint efforts of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to decisive, practical action. As a result, in 2003, on our initiative in the town of Kant a Russian air base was established.”

(Khayrullin): “To combat extremist groups the armed forces of the (Kyrgyz) Republic created special forces units...What other features of recruitment and training of soldiers are used in the formation of the Kyrgyz Army?”

(Omuraliev): “Individual training of soldiers in our army is done by specialty. For example, gunners, drivers, and snipers are trained separately according to the best practices of contract servicemen who have served more than three years. After this is completed we immediately proceed to training in small units – departments or groups, then in a platoon. The next step – holding platoon exercises, etc. The training period is completed with obligatory tactical exercises composed of stages, and in the summer one of the units conducts live-fire exercises. This is how we determine the degree of readiness of these units.”

(Khayrullin): “You fought in Afghanistan, served on the Tajik-Afghan border, commanded detachments in Batken, and took an active part in the establishment of peace and stability in the June 2010 events in Osh. How much of your personal experience goes into the organization of combat training?”

(Omuraliev): “One hundred percent. Everywhere I served, I had to fight the same enemy – international terrorism...in Afghanistan we confronted the enemy using the same methods of guerilla warfare: mining, carrying out small group ambushes, etc. The most important lesson I learned after the war in Afghanistan is that every officer must train their soldiers for combat in small groups, alone, day and night, in all weather and climate conditions, and independently make quick decisions in accordance with the situation...”

Strategic Implications of the Afghan Mother Lode and China's Emerging Role

By Cindy A. Hurst and Robert Mathers

http://www.ndu.edu/press/lib/pdf/jfq/jfq-72/jfq-72_75-81_Hurst-Mathers.pdf

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As the 2014 withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops draws closer, the question on many minds is what will become of Afghanistan. Will the country slip back into its usual pattern of power struggles, be taken over by the Taliban, or continue to develop into a global economic player? This report talks about many of the hurdles Afghanistan must overcome before being able to achieve success. It also discusses one possible outcome – a growing alliance with neighbor China, in which both countries stand to benefit. Although this prospect may initially be distasteful to those who have shed blood and treasure over the past decade to create a viable state within Afghanistan, it may be the best way to achieve the end state those nations strived to establish.

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“According to experts, the 57 year old Major General is the most appropriate figure for the position... He is respected by colleagues, particularly those who served in the Soviet Forces in Afghanistan”

OE Watch Commentary: The recent appointment of Major General Asanbek Alymkozhoyev as the new Chief of the General Staff (an entirely new position) of Kyrgyzstan's Armed Forces has received considerable attention within the country, and could be an indication of what the government is prioritizing in the Ministry of Defense (MoD). The accompanying article is one of several from Kyrgyz news sources that approve of this appointment. These articles have expressed hope that the general will be able to reform and strengthen the armed forces, particularly by reducing corruption and strengthening the military following the recent incident on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border (see: February 2014 OE Watch, “Debriefing the Latest Border Incident”).

The accompanying article mentions a few other things that reveal how General Alymkozhoyev might carry out reform in the military. The first of these may come from his assignments and combat experience in the Soviet-Afghan War and against the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in 1999 and 2000. In the past, the Minister of Defense, Major General Taalaybek Omuraliev (who also served in Afghanistan) had emphasized that Kyrgyz Ground Forces train on small unit tactics. In General Alymkozhoyev's new assignment as Chief of the General Staff, he will be in operational control of Kyrgyzstan's military, while General Taalaybek will focus more on administrative duties. Based on General Alymkozhoyev's experiences, training will likely remain a priority alongside any reforms.

The second area of reform worth noting in the article is that it mentions how the General Staff's powers may expand. The article does not mention any specific expansion of powers, but does mention how the Chief of the General Staff nominates commanders and deputies for the National Guard, a unit that former president Kurmanbek Bakiyev transferred out of the MoD in 2009. General Alymkozhoyev was the commander of the National Guard from 2006-09 and again from July 2013 to the present. The National Guard has in the past been known as one of the elite units within the MoD and could play an important role moving forward. Ultimately, it will be worth watching to see what reforms General Alymkozhoyev might make as the new Chief of the General Staff. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**



“Members of Kyrgyzstan's National Guard in 2012 during the 20th anniversary ceremony of the founding of the unit”

Source: <http://www.time.kg/otrezok-vremeni/4109-nacionalnoy-gvardii-kyrgyzstana-ispolnilos-20-let.html>

Source: Bek, Ali. “ГЕНЕРАЛЬНАЯ ЛИНИЯ Асанбека Алымкожоева (The GENERAL's line of Asanbek Alymkozhoyev),” K News, 10 February 2014. http://www.knews.kg/politics/44771_generalnaya liniya_asanbeka_alymkojoeva/

The GENERAL's line of Asanbek Alymkozhoyev

Almazbek Atambayev has appointed Asanbek Alymkozhoyev as the head of the General Staff of the (Kyrgyz) Armed Forces. According to experts, the 57 year old Major-General is the most appropriate figure for the position...He is respected by colleagues, particularly those who served in the Soviet Forces in Afghanistan...

Experts believe that Alymkozhoyev will be able to take decisive action on sensitive issues regarding external geopolitical problems (strengthening borders in disputed areas, cooperation with the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and the modernization of the armed forces with the help of foreign allies) and internal problems (poor discipline of personnel, corruption, etc.)...The new Chief of Staff was an active member of both Batken campaigns to repel the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in 1999 and 2000...

What can be expected from the general?

...according to plans of the presidential administration, reflected in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for the years 2013-2017, the General Staff has been given broad powers and must develop a new type of armed force that can respond to any kind of threat...Alymkozhoyev is personally entrusted to make nominations for the commander and deputy of the National Guard...The General Staff and its subordinates are designed to promptly respond to all emergencies, including armed rebellion, interethnic conflict, and terrorist attacks...